

REVISED.

1980'

21<sup>a</sup>

(17 pages)

COMMITTEE ON TRANSLATION AND REVISION OF  
CONFESSIONAL AND LITURGICAL FORMS

Liturgical Forms - Introductory Remarks

Mandate

Synod 1977, while giving with respect to the Creeds only mandate to provide a more modern translation, set some precedents as to how the Committee should understand its task re: the Liturgical Forms.

1. It adopted 'provisionally' a Form for the Ordination of Missionaries, which is a translation of the one adopted by the Dutch sister-churches, thus benefitting from what was done in the Netherlands.
2. It obviously took into account objections and/or wishes from the churches regarding some Liturgical Forms, like the one for the Holy Supper, and the Marriage Form. A revision of these Forms was considered desirable.
3. Thus, in its mandate, Synod 1977 mentioned revision in addition to the updating of the language, while reminding us of what had been accomplished in the Netherlands with respect to the Form for the Ordination of Missionaries. The Committee thankfully made use of this 'room' for revision, as will become clear from the first results of our work. The new Dutch Forms, published in Gereformeerd Kerkboek 1975, have been consulted extensively and profitably, though not slavishly, as especially appears from the Marriage Form.

FORM FOR THE BAPTISM OF INFANTS.

This Form was maintained in its present set-up. One will find that the sentences are shorter. Also, though no new texts were added in the Form, several references have been put in margin. This may serve two

purposes:

1. to indicate that every part is solidly founded in Scripture;
2. to promote the study of this (and the following) Forms.

FORM FOR THE BAPTISM OF ADULTS

The same can be said of this Form. After some discussion pro & con a Preamble, it was decided to maintain it, be it then now as the translation of the new Dutch Preamble

N.B. Re: the addition of the Lord's Prayer to most of the Forms (and Prayers), the Committee left this unchanged in the Forms and Public Prayers. We propose that Synod decide to:

- either make the use by the officiating minister or elder optional
- or establish that this Prayer should be said in unison by the congregation.

FORM FOR THE PUBLIC PROFESSION OF FAITH.

The Committee became convinced that for this occasion, so important for the candidates, for their parents, and for the whole congregation, we should have a short Form, and not just a list of questions with an opening and concluding clause. Elements of such a Form should be:

1. expression of our gratitude for the faithfulness of our Father, Who brought our children this far;
2. ~~evidence~~ that profession of faith is Biblical;
3. a charge to the candidates to commit their lives to the Lord;
4. a prayer of thanksgiving.

N.B. To the first question was added, "and do you reject all heresies and errors conflicting with God's Word?"

We propose as names for the Forms for Excommunication and readmission

1. FORM FOR EXCOMMUNICATION OF COMMUNICANT MEMBERS

2. FORM FOR EXCOMMUNICATION OF MEMBERS BY BAPTISM

Synod 1977 decided to add a "First Admonition" which will appear in the renovated Form.

3. FORM FOR RE-ADMISSION INTO THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

These Forms will be submitted as soon as possible.

FORM FOR THE ORDINATION OF MISSIONARIES.

Synod 1977 adopted, with minor changes, a translation of the newly adopted Form of the Dutch sister-churches.

This translation will be checked.

The Committee hopes to submit a revision of the Form for the Ordination of Ministers and the Form for the Ordination of Elders and Deacons later on.

FORM FOR THE SOLEMNIZATION OF MARRIAGE

This Form is a Translation and Revision of the new Dutch Form.

On behalf of the Committee

Cl. Stam

G. VanDooren

Reporters on the Section of Forms.



FORM FOR THE BAPTISM OF INFANTS

Doctrine of Baptism Beloved congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ. The doctrine of holy baptism is summarized as follows:

First,

We and our children are conceived and born in sin and are therefore by nature children of wrath so that we cannot enter the kingdom of God unless we are born again.

Eph. 2:3  
John 3:3,5

The immersion ~~in~~ or sprinkling with water signifies this impurity of our souls so that we may ~~loathe~~ <sup>detest</sup> ourselves, humble ourselves before God and seek our cleansing and salvation outside ourselves.

Second,

Baptism signifies and seals to us the promise of the cleansing from our sins through Jesus Christ.

We are, therefore, baptized into the Name of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Matt.28:19

When we are baptized into the Name of the Father, God the Father testifies and seals to us that He establishes an eternal Covenant of grace with us. He adopts us for His children and heirs, and promises to provide us with all good, avert all evil or ~~cause all things to work together for our good.~~ <sup>turn it to our benefit.</sup>

Rom. 8:28

When we are baptized into the Name of the Son, God the Son promises us that He washes us in His blood, ~~cleanses us~~ from all our sins and unites us with Him in His death and resurrection. Thus we are freed from our sins and <sup>ac</sup> counted righteous before God.

Rom.6:5

When we are baptized into the Name of the Holy Spirit, God the

5  
Holy Spirit assures us by this sacrament that He will dwell in  
Rom.8:5 us, make us living members of Christ and partakers of what we  
have in Christ, namely the cleansing from our sins and the  
daily renewal of our lives till we shall finally be presented  
Eph.5:27 without ~~spot~~<sup>blemish</sup> among the assembly of God's elect in life eternal.

Third,

Since every covenant contains two parts, we are, through baptism,  
called and obliged by the LORD to a new obedience. We are to  
cleave to this One God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit; to trust  
Matt.22:37 in Him and <sup>to</sup>/love Him with our whole heart, soul and mind, and  
1 John 2:15 with all our strength. We must not love the world but put off  
Eph. 4:22 our old nature and lead a God-fearing life.  
Col.3:5

And if we sometimes through weakness fall into sins, we need  
not despair of God's mercy nor continue in sin because baptism  
is a seal and trustworthy testimony that we have an eternal  
covenant with God.

Although our children do not ~~yet~~<sup>yet</sup> understand all this, we may  
not exclude them from baptism. Just as they <sup>share</sup>/without their  
knowledge ~~share~~<sup>are</sup> in the condemnation of Adam, so <sup>are</sup>/they, without  
their knowledge, ~~are~~ received unto grace in Christ.

For the LORD spoke to Abraham, the Father of all believers,  
Gen. 17:7 and thus also speaks to us and our children, I will establish  
My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you  
throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to  
be God to you and to your descendants after you.

Acts 2:39 Peter also testifies this when he says, For the promise is to  
you and to your children, and to all that are far off, everyone  
whom the LORD our God calls to Him.

6

In the old dispensation God, therefore, commanded to circumcise infants; this circumcision was a seal of the covenant and of Rom. 4:13 the righteousness of faith.

Mark 10:16 Christ Himself took them in His arms and blessed them, laying His hands upon them.

In the new dispensation baptism has come in the place of Col.2:11 circumcision. Infants must, therefore, be baptized as heirs of the kingdom of God and of His covenant. *As the children grow up, their* Parents are (in) duty bound to instruct them in these things. ~~as they grow up.~~

In order that we may now administer this holy sacrament of God to His glory, for our comfort and to the upbuilding of the congregation, let us call upon His holy Name.

#### Prayer before Baptism

Almighty, eternal God, in Thy righteous judgment Thou hast punished the unbelieving and unrepentant world with the flood, but in Thy great mercy has saved and protected believing Noah and his family. Thou hast drowned all the host of the obstinate Pharaoh in the Red Sea, but led Thy people Israel through the midst of the sea on dry ground, thus signifying baptism.

We beseech Thee by Thy infinite mercy that Thou wilt graciously look upon this Thy child (these Thy children) and incorporate him (her, them) by Thy Holy Spirit into Thy Son Jesus Christ, so that he (she, they) with Him may be buried into death and be raised with Him to walk in newness of life.

We pray that he (she, they), following Him day by day, may joyfully bear his (her, their) ~~own~~ cross and cleave to Him in true faith, firm hope and ardent love.

7  
Grant that he (she, they), comforted in Thee, may leave this life which is a constant death, and at the last day may appear without fear before the judgment seat of Christ Thy Son.

All this we ask through Him our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son who with Thee and the Holy Spirit, one only God, lives and reigns forever, Amen.

Address to the Parents

Beloved in Christ the Lord:

You have heard that baptism is an ordinance of the LORD our God to seal to us and our children His covenant; we must, therefore, use this sacrament for that purpose and not out of custom or superstition.

That it may be clear then that you desire baptism for the right purpose, you are to answer sincerely the following questions.

First,

do you confess that our children, though conceived and born in sin, and therefore subject to all sorts of misery, even to condemnation, are sanctified in Christ and thus as members of His church ought to be baptized?

Second,

do you confess that the doctrine of the Old and the New Testament, summarized in the Apostles' Creed and taught here in this Christian church, is the true and complete doctrine of salvation?

Third,

do you promise as father and mother to instruct your child in this doctrine and to have him (her) instructed therein to the utmost of your power?

What is your answer?

Answer

I do (to be given by each parent).

Baptism

(given name(s) and family name) I baptize you into the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.



8

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Almighty, merciful God and Father, we thank and praise Thee. Thou hast forgiven us and our children all our sins through the blood of Thy beloved Son Jesus Christ. Thou hast received us through Thy Holy Spirit as members of Thy only Son Jesus Christ, and so adopted us to be Thy children. Thou hast sealed and confirmed this to us by holy baptism.

(Dear)  
We beseech Thee through Thy beloved Son, that Thou wilt always govern this child (these children) by Thy Holy Spirit, that he (she, they) may be ~~brought up~~ <sup>nurtured</sup> in the christian faith and in godliness, and may grow and increase in the Lord Jesus Christ. Grant that he (she, they) thus may acknowledge Thy fatherly goodness and mercy which Thou hast shown to him (her, them) and to us all. May he (she, they) live in all righteousness under our only Teacher, King and High Priest, Jesus Christ, and valiantly fight against and overcome sin, the devil and his whole dominion, so that he (she,they) may forever praise and magnify Thee, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the one only true God, Amen.

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FORM FOR THE BAPTISM OF ADULTS

(Those who were not baptized in their infancy, and at a later age declare to desire the christian baptism, must first be thoroughly instructed in the essentials of the christian doctrine.

After having confessed this doctrine before the overseers, they shall be admitted to the public profession of their faith and to baptism.

For the administration of their baptism the following Form shall be used).

Beloved congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The doctrine of holy baptism is summarized as follows:

First,

Eph. 2:3 We and our children are conceived and born in sin and are,

John 3:3,5 therefore, by nature children of wrath so that we cannot enter the kingdom of God unless we are born again.

The immersion ~~in~~ or sprinkling with water signifies this impurity of our souls so that we may ~~loathe~~ <sup>detest</sup> ourselves, humble ourselves before God and seek our cleansing and salvation outside ourselves.

Second,

Baptism signifies and seals to us the promise of the cleansing from our sins through Jesus Christ.

Mat.28:19 We are, therefore, baptized into the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

When we are baptized into the Name of the Father, God the Father testifies and seals to us that he establishes an eternal Covenant of grace with us. He adopts us for His children and heirs and promises to provide us with all good, avert all evil

Rom.8:28 <sup>turn it to our benefit.</sup>  
or ~~cause all things to work together for our good.~~

When we are baptized into the Name of the Son, God the Son promises us that He washes us in His blood, ~~cleanses us~~ from

Rom.6:5 all our sins and unites us with Him in His death and resurrection. Thus we are freed from our sins and counted righteous before God. When we are baptized into the Name of the Holy Spirit, God the Holy Spirit assures us by this sacrament that He will dwell in us, make us living members of Christ and partakers of what we have in Christ, namely the cleansing from our sins and the daily renewal of our lives, till we shall finally be presented without ~~spot~~<sup>blemish</sup> among the assembly of God's elect in life eternal.

Eph.5:27

Third,  
 Since every covenant contains two parts, we are, through baptism, called and obliged by the LORD to a new obedience.

Matt.22:37  
 I John 2:15  
 Eph. 4:22  
 Col.3:5

We are to cleave to this One God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, to trust in Him and <sup>to</sup> love Him with our whole heart, soul and mind and with all our strength. We must not love the world but put off our old nature and lead a God-fearing life.

And if we sometimes through weakness fall into sins, we need not despair of God's mercy nor continue in sin, because baptism is a seal and trustworthy testimony that we have an eternal covenant with God.

Although the children of believers are not able to understand these things, they must be baptized by virtue of the Covenant. Adults, however, may not be baptized unless they, conscious of their sins, repent and profess their faith in Christ.

For this reason John the Baptist, following the command of God,

Mark 1:4,5

preached a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins

Luke 3:3

and only those who confessed their sins were baptized.

Our Lord Jesus Christ also commanded His apostles to go and

11  
Mat. 28:19 make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; He added

Mark 16:16 the promise, He who believes and is baptized will be saved.

Acts 2:38, 41 According to this rule the apostles baptized only those adults  
8:36, 37; *repented and professed their faith.*  
10:47, 48 who had made ~~confession of their repentance and faith.~~  
16:14, 15,  
31-33

Therefore today also no other adults should be baptized except those who have learned to understand, by the preaching and instruction of the Gospel, the glorious contents of holy baptism, and are thus able to give account of their faith by personal profession.

#### Prayer before Baptism

In order that we may now administer this holy sacrament of God to His glory, for our comfort and to the upbuilding of the congregation, let us call upon His holy Name.

Almighty, eternal God, in Thy righteous judgment Thou hast punished the unbelieving and unrepentant world with the flood, but in Thy great mercy hast saved and protected believing Noah and his family. Thou hast drowned all the host of the obstinate Pharaoh in the Red Sea, but led Thy people Israel through the midst of the sea on dry ground, thus signifying baptism.

We beseech Thee by Thy infinite mercy that Thou wilt graciously look upon this brother (sister) ~~who is about to be baptized,~~ and incorporate him (her) by Thy Holy Spirit into Thy Son Jesus Christ, so that he (she) with Him may be buried into death and raised with Him to walk in newness of life.

We pray that he (she), following Him day by day, may leave this life which is a constant death, and at the last day may appear without terror before the judgment seat of Christ Thy Son.

8 *joyfully bear his (her, their) cross and cleave to Him in true faith, firm hope and ardent love. Grant that he (she, they), comforted in Thee, may*

All this we ask through Him, our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son who with Thee and the Holy Spirit, one only God, lives and reigns forever, Amen.

Public Profession of Faith

Beloved brother (sister) N.....

You desire to receive holy baptism as a seal of your incorporation into the Church of God. You have been instructed by us in the christian religion and have made profession of it before the overseers. Now it must become clear to all that you not only accept the christian doctrine, but also intend, by the grace of God, to live accordingly. You are therefore to answer sincerely before God and His Church the following questions.

First, do you believe in the <sup>one and</sup> only true God, distinct in three Persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Who has created of nothing heaven and earth with all that is in them; and still upholds and governs them so that nothing happens without His divine will?

Second, ~~do~~ do you believe that you were conceived and born in sin and therefore by nature are a child of wrath, <sup>totally unable to</sup> ~~wholly incapable of~~ <sup>do</sup> ~~doing~~ any good and inclined to all evil? Do you confess that you have often transgressed the commandments of the LORD in thought, word and deed, and do you sincerely repent of these your sins?

Third, ~~do~~ do you believe that Jesus Christ, who is both true, ~~and~~ eternal God and real man, who assumed His human nature from the virgin Mary, is given by God as your Saviour? do you confess Believing in Him, that you receive the remission of sins in His blood and that by the power of the Holy Spirit you have become a member of Jesus Christ and His Church?

Fourth, do you wholeheartedly agree with the doctrine of the Word of God as summarized in the Apostles' Creed and taught in this Christian Church? Do you promise to continue steadfastly in this doctrine to the end of your life, and do you reject all heresies and errors conflicting with this doctrine? Do you promise to persevere in the fellowship of this Christian Church in the hearing of the Word of God and in the use of the holy sacraments?

Fifth, do you firmly resolve, as is proper for a member of Christ and His Church, ~~to~~ always <sup>to</sup> lead a Christian life and not to love the world and its evil lusts? Do you promise to submit willingly to the christian admonition and discipline of the Church? What is your answer?

Answer: I DO.

The good and great God mercifully grant you His grace and blessing to fulfill this your holy <sup>intention</sup> ~~resolve~~ through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Baptism N.....(given name(s) and family name)

I baptize you into ~~the~~ Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Prayer of thanksgiving

Almighty, merciful God and Father, we thank and praise Thee. ~~that~~ Thou hast forgiven us and our children all our sins through the blood of Thy beloved Son Jesus Christ. Thou hast received us through Thy Holy Spirit as members of Thy only Son Jesus Christ and so adopted us to be Thy children. Thou hast sealed and confirmed this to us by holy baptism.

We beseech Thee through Thy beloved Son that Thou wilt always

govern this brother (sister) by Thy Holy Spirit, that he (she) may live a truly christian and godly life and grow in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Grant that he (she) may acknowledge Thy fatherly goodness and mercy which Thou hast shown to him (her) and to us all.

May he (she) live in all righteousness under our only Teacher, King and High Priest Jesus Christ, and valiantly fight against, and overcome sin, the devil and his whole dominion, so that he (she) may forever praise and magnify Thee, <sup>the</sup> Father, together ~~with~~ the Son and the Holy Spirit, the one only true God, Amen.

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FORM FOR THE PUBLIC PROFESSION OF FAITH

Beloved in the Lord Jesus Christ,

We thank the LORD our God for the grace given to our children whom He adopted together with us in His holy Covenant. We also acknowledge His grace when He instills in them the desire to profess their faith in Him publicly in the presence of His holy church, so that they may receive admission to the holy supper.

We know from the Word of God that faith is not our own doing, it is the gift of God.

Eph.2:8

This faith must be confessed, as the apostle says, If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord, and believe with your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

Rom.10:9

For man believes with his heart and so is justified, and he

Rom.10:10

confesses with his lips, and so is saved. The Lord Jesus

Himself promised: everyone who acknowledges Me before men, I

Matt.10:32

will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven. But He also

warned: whoever denies Me before men, I also will deny before

Matt.10:33

My Father who is in heaven.

With this promise and warning in mind, you, beloved who have expressed your desire to profess your faith, are now requested to answer sincerely the following questions.

**First,** do you wholeheartedly agree with the doctrine contained in the Word of God, summarized in the Apostles' Creed and taught in this christian church? Do you promise by the grace of God to continue steadfastly in this doctrine to the end of your life, and do you reject all heresies and errors conflicting with God's Word?

**Second,** do you <sup>publicly</sup> ~~openly~~ accept God's covenant promise, which has been



signified and sealed to you in your baptism? Do you confess that you abhor and humble yourself before God because of your sins, and that you seek your life outside yourself in Jesus Christ, the only Saviour?

Third, do you declare that you love the LORD, and that it is your heartfelt desire to forsake the world and crucify your old nature? \_\_\_\_\_

do you

Do you, convinced that with body and soul you belong to your faithful Saviour Jesus Christ, firmly resolve as a living member of His Church? to commit your whole life to His service

Fourth, do you promise to ~~obey the office bearers in the Church and,~~

~~if you should become delinquent in doctrine or life, to submit to the admonition and discipline of the church, if you should become delinquent in doctrine or life, which God graciously may prevent?~~ *to their christian admonition and discipline? willingly*  
N....., what is your answer?

Answer I DO (to be given by each individually).

I charge you now, beloved, that you persevere in the fellowship of this christian church, in the hearing of God's Word and in the use of the holy sacraments.

1 Tim.6: Aim at righteousness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness.  
11 - 14 Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, when you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. In the presence of God who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus who in His testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you to keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Pet.5: And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all  
10,11 grace, who has called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will

Himself restore, establish and strengthen you.

To Him be the dominion for ever and ever, Amen.

Thanksgiving and Prayer

Heavenly Father, we thank Thee that Thou hast from the beginning embraced in Thy covenant the children together with their believing parents, and hast included them from their birth in the Christian church, thereby granting them the manifold blessings of Thy grace.

We praise Thee that Thou has worked in them by Thy Holy Spirit, so that they came here today to profess Thy truth and to commit their lives to Thy service.

We earnestly beseech Thee that Thou wilt continue the good work Thou hast begun in them, and bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

Increase in them daily the gifts of Thy grace, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.

*desire and*

Grant them the joy to promote the glory of their Lord and the upbuilding of His church and kingdom.

*Strengthen  
good fight*

Deliver them in the temptations of this life, *that they may fight the* ~~and in the final~~  
*of the faith, be victorious and* ~~trial of death, so that they~~ may praise and magnify Thee for  
ever and ever, Amen.