

Summaries of dissertations

The Flood before us*

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This book aims to be a critical dialogue between two ways of thinking about the baptism liturgy. On the one hand are developments within the ecumenical movement of the last decades and on the other are the classic ideas about baptism which came out of the Reformed tradition especially in the Netherlands. The starting point for this study is the new draft baptism liturgy which was published in the autumn of 1993. This liturgy was intended for the use of the Netherlands Reformed Church (Hervormde Kerk), the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Gereformeerde Kerken) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Netherlands.

In order to prevent the research from becoming too abstract, I have chosen for this study a specific part of the liturgical text known as the 'Flood Prayer' (het zondvloedgebed). This baptismal prayer was taken from the classic Reformed baptismal liturgy and enjoys a growing interest within the liturgical and ecumenical movement of recent years. The choice of this particular subject offers the possibility of clarifying the questions that this thesis seeks to address. I pose two questions: Firstly, how are the developments in the baptism liturgy of recent decades related to the historical and global ecumenical process? Secondly, how are these liturgical developments related to the classic Reformed tradition?

In the first chapter I give a rough sketch of the historical development of the 'Flood Prayer'. My intention in doing this is not to discuss the historicity or authenticity of this baptismal prayer, but rather to give an insight into the theological background of the prayer. We know the 'Flood Prayer' mainly from Luther's *Taufbüchlein*, published in 1523. In the same year, Leo Judae in Zurich largely adopted this baptismal booklet as the local baptismal rite. Judae, however, made a few changes to the 'Flood Prayer', the most striking of which is the deletion of the phrase about Jesus' baptism in the Jordan (the so called *Jordanpassus*). From Judae in Zurich the (altered) 'Flood Prayer' was then adopted by Zwingli and Olevianus in Heidelberg in 1563 before being finally included in the classic Reformed baptism liturgy. It is striking that in all the newly adapted or paraphrased versions of the 'Flood Prayer' in contemporary baptism liturgies this *Jordanpassus* has been re-included. At the same time, the typological relation between baptism and circumcision which was so important to the Reformed tradition was left out. This link between circumcision and baptism fits in with the Reformed theology of baptism and covenant: once a person has been adopted into the covenant baptism does not add anything new but puts a seal on what has already happened. A person is not *baptised* into the covenant but is *born* into it. This idea can lead to the danger of an uncritical identification between a person's birth, especially birth into a nation, and belonging to God's Kingdom. There is another, similar idea within the same classic Reformed theological framework out of which the baptism liturgy comes. This idea

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suggests that because baptism has replaced circumcision, the church has become the new Israel and has replaced the old Israel. However, Reformed protestantism, on the basis of the same Covenant theology, is extremely dismissive of this implication of the circumcision typology. How can these facts come to terms with each other and how should we understand this typologies?

The second chapter takes a closer look at the theology of the covenant. In brief, it may be said that the Reformers of the 16th century took their thoughts about the covenant from the late medieval concept of the *pactum* and that Covenant theology became an essential part of the Reformed way of doing theology. It was the often fierce confrontation with Anabaptists that sharpened the thinking of the Reformers about the covenant. Heinrich Bullinger, especially, dwelt deeply on questions of the unity and uniqueness of the covenant. It was Bullinger who made the *calling* which comes out of the covenant his central theme. It was with John Calvin that the concept of *election* entered the theology of the covenant. Calvin's emphasis was not so much on a believer's calling but rather the assurance of salvation and eternal life. It was here that Calvin developed his doctrine of election. Election was for Calvin the most important aspect of the covenant, but it was always an election in Christ.

Barth made election in Christ even more central to his theology. For him it was impossible to speak about God's election outside of Jesus Christ: "Jesus Christ is the God who elects and the human being who is elected." The ethos of a reconciled person should be: 'Remain with your redeemer'. In Jesus Christ God created a covenantal space for a life with God in love. This ethos is the consequence of the *unio cum Christo*. Barth then gave baptism a place in the ethics of the doctrine of reconciliation as a response of the new believer to what had happened to him in Jesus Christ. At the end of this second chapter I show how central the notion of covenant is also in Judaism and Rabbinical theology.

The third chapter contains a close analysis and exegetical-hermeneutical exposition of the 'Flood Prayer'. A detailed study of the early church typologies used in this prayer shows us how we as (post) modern exegetes should understand these typologies in relation to Christian baptism. It is striking to discover that the blood rite of circumcision is linked with baptism. In baptism catechisms from the early church the anointing is linked with Jewish circumcision. In order to be able to understand this Christian typology a separate section looks at the rite of circumcision within Judaism. The typology of the Jordan in the 'Flood Prayer' turns out to have come into existence later: only by the time that the conflict with Judaism had developed. The theme of this typology is that it was not Moses who led the people into the promised land but Joshua whose name translated into Greek is Jesus. The Jordan typology refers therefore strongly to the Promised Land and the final fulfillment of the promise. It was the early christianity that took up this theme to underline the superiority of Christianity over Judaism. We can therefore see that the Reformers, following Leo Judae, did not mutilate the 'Flood Prayer' by removing a core passage (the *Jordanpassus*) from it. Rather, it is the consequence of their theology of the unity of the Old and New Testaments.

The fourth chapter focuses on recent ecumenical developments in the baptism liturgy. Attention is given to the Lima document of the World Council of Churches and the ecumenical baptism report of the Council of Churches in the Netherlands. A special focus is Part Three of the texts entitled, 'Proeven voor de Eredienst' (Liturgical texts for use in worship services) of the Samen-op-Weg ('Together on the Way') churches in the Netherlands. This chapter also begins to respond to the question of how the

ecumenical movement and the Reformed tradition can enrich one another in the theological debate about baptism.

Chapter Five looks at topical themes which are at issue in contemporary baptism theology and liturgical expression and tries to understand these anew from the Reformed theology of the covenant, the unity of the Scriptures and the position of Israel.

The final chapter is an evaluation which tries to make this central part of the Reformed baptism theology and liturgy fruitful for the worldwide church debate as well as the determination of the (theological) meaning of Israel and the Christian understanding of baptism. As such it aims to be a modest starting point for further reflection and study.

The Roman Catholic rite of betrothal and marriage in the Low Countries, from the 13th century until the end of the Ancien Régime*

Jeroen van de Ven

This study is devoted to the Roman Catholic Dutch marriage liturgy in written and printed liturgical and juridical sources up to c. 1795. In addition, the question is also raised, to what degree prevailing ecclesiastical standards of engagement and marriage are present in vernacular works by Dutch authors and preachers from that same period, books that were meant for religious education of the faithful. After the Introduction, in which the object of this study is introduced and commented upon, along with definitions, objectives and standard research methods, follow six chapters in three parts (I: Historiography, chapters 1-2; II: Rituals, chapters 3-4; III: Contemporary appreciation and evaluation, chapters 5-6).

In the first section of chapter 1 I discuss the history of the Christian conception of engagement and marriage in Western Europe up to the end of the Middle Ages, as well as ceremonials that are linked to these life-cycle rites. Up to the 11th century rituals surrounding betrothal and marriage were primarily domestic rites of passage, that, unseen by other community members than kinsmen and friends, occurred within the private family group, and needed presumably the presence of a priest. In the 12th century betrothal (*sponsalia*) and marriage (*matrimonium*) were placed under the control of the Church and were gradually taken out of the reach of the family group. When in the 13th century canonists and theologians finally accepted marriage as a sacrament of mercy, the Church assumed and kept all power in marriage matters up to the 16th century. From the 12th century onward most bishops in their so-called synodal statutes – bodies of regulations that touch both discipline and pastoral care including marriage regulation – lay stress on the public character and legality of engagement and the marriage ceremony. As a result of that, they enacted that these rituals have to be solemnly contracted in public: in the portal, nearby the door(s) of the church, in a chapel, or even in the churchyard (*in facie ecclesiae*). In this way these late medieval

* *In facie ecclesiae. De katholieke huwelijksliturgie in de Nederlanden, van de 13de eeuw tot het einde van het Ancien Régime*, reeks *Miscellanea Neerlandica* nr. 22, Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 2000), 1-XXXI/1-790 pp., gcill., ingen., ISBN 904290965X. Promotie op 20 december 2000, Theologische Faculteit Tilburg.