



Reformed Presbyterian Church General Assembly

A DECLARATION ON ROMAN CATHOLIC BAPTISM

(Position Paper No. 6)

The 2010 General Assembly of the Reformed Presbyterian Church General Assembly in keeping with the historical determination of the 1845 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, hereby affirms the following:

Whereas, baptism is an ordinance established by Christ in His Church (WCF Chapter 28:1; Matthew 28:19-20), and is to be administered only by a lawful minister of Christ, duly called and ordained to be a steward of the mysteries of God (WCF Chapter 27:4), it follows that no rite (Baptism or the Lord's Supper) administered by one who is not himself a duly ordained minister of the true Church of God visible (WCF Chapter 25:1 & 2), can be regarded as an ordinance of Christ, whatever be the name by which it is called, or whatever form employed in its administration. The so-called priests of the Romish communion are not ministers of Christ, for they are commissioned as agents of the papal hierarchy, which is not a Church of Christ, but that Man of Sin, apostate from the truth, the enemy of righteousness and God. (WCF Chapter 25:6)

Whereas, when the doctrine and the form of each particular sacrament (Baptism and the Lord's Supper) has been so corrupted and entangled with a spurious gospel that rejects the biblical teaching on Salvation by Faith alone, and wherein those sacraments are seen as the means of conveying salvation in and of themselves, each being integrated with one another, such sacraments cannot in any form or meaning represent the true Scriptural use and meaning as divinely appointed by Christ for His Church. They are therefore to be considered spurious as representing the false gospel propagated by Roman Catholicism.

Therefore, as an apostate church the Roman Catholic Church, having long been under the curse of God, who has called His people to come out from her, that they be not partakers of her false gospel and practices, falling under the just condemnation of the plagues that God has pronounced upon this sacerdotalistic religion of men, her Baptism, the mass (and all other so-called sacraments) as taught and practiced by the Roman Catholic Church violate the Holy Scriptures and our confession of faith.

Allowed Exceptions to the Declaration on Roman Catholic Baptisms:

Ordered: That the following language be included in the BCO as exceptions to Roman Catholic Baptism:

Acknowledging that reformed and godly men have differed regarding the validity of Roman Catholic Baptism, it is determined that particular churches of this denomination which desire to retain the right of acceptance of Roman baptism must notify their Presbytery within 90 days after this assembly, of their desire.

Exceptions shall be allowed only as follows:¹

¹ Irregular baptisms were refused by the Reformers and Puritans, such as, "emergency baptisms by Roman Catholic laymen," "baptisms by self-appointed ministers," and "baptisms at home by fathers," and are not included in these exceptions. All suspect baptisms shall be referred to the Presbytery if in question by a church session.

1. *Ministers of this denomination who presently adhere to the validity of Roman Catholic baptism will not be required to administer a Protestant baptism. This further implies that these Churches may admit former Roman Catholics as new members without requiring a Protestant baptism. Ministers adhering to the validity of Roman Catholic Baptism must register their exception with their presbytery.*
2. *Members in this denomination who have received the Roman rite only will not be required to receive Protestant baptism. However, they are required to receive instruction on this issue as determined by the church sessions, and to register their exception with their session.*
3. *New churches joining this denomination with members who have received the Roman rite only will not be required to administer Protestant baptism to those members. However, they are required to receive instruction on this issue as determined by their respective presbytery, and to register their exception with the presbytery at the time of their joining the RPCGA.*
4. *No member of this denomination can be withheld from the Lord's Supper because they have only a Roman baptism. This applies to members from other Churches of like faith and practice who are visiting particular congregations of the RPCGA*
5. *Any member who transfers from a church where Roman baptism is accepted shall continue in their current status.*
6. *The above noted exception clauses by this General Assembly are given in the spirit of pastoral care being exercised at a time of further reformation in our churches.*