

Calvin on Baptism and Election of Infants

Item: 16-03: On Amending W-2.3008b Regarding Baptism of Children

GA Committee Assignment: 16- Theological Issues and Institutions

Summary of the business and what it wants the Assembly to do:

The Presbytery of Missouri Union seeks to add a John Calvin quote to the Directory of Worship section W-2.3008b so that it would read:

The Baptism of children witnesses to the truth that God's love claims people before they are able to respond in faith *and* "God pronounces that he adopts our infants as his children, before they are born."

(John Calvin, The Institutes of the Christian Religion, IV:15:20)

Background:

The rationale cites several helpful Scripture passages which illuminate the truth that God's love and calling extend to those members of the human family who are yet in the wombs of their mothers.

Analysis of the business and how it would affect the Church:

This overture if approved would not change the baptism practices of the church. It would, however, provide comfort to parents who have lost children before birth. It would enhance our understanding of the reach and extent of God's grace and election of human beings, to include those of our children yet in the womb. Its effect ought to be that it increases our understanding of the extent and reach of God's love toward us, his calling before we are able to respond, and his sovereignty in our election as believers.

This overture will not change the church's social witness policy on abortion, but it might help us to consider more seriously God's interest in life in the womb. It could serve as a balancing influence for those making abortion decisions under the current pro-choice policy of the denomination.

Pertinent Resources:

[Book of Order](#) W-2.3008b

Calvin: <http://www.reformed.org/master/index.html?mainframe=/books/institutes/>

Action by GA that will help the Church:

Approve

Advisory prepared by: Marie Bowen

[Presbyterians Pro-Life](#)

April 2010

An Advisory on Business to the 219th General Assembly (2010)

From the Joint Renewal GA Team