

Theological View on Infant Baptism

By Anand Peter

A family member once put a searching question to me: what, he asked, is the real basis for the infant baptism practised in our church? Infants are no longer at any particular risk of death, as they may once have been, and there is no direct warrant for the practice to be found in Scripture — after all, even Jesus Himself was not baptised until the age of thirty.

The practice of baptism, as we now understand it, became distinctly explicit within the ministry of John the Baptist. Evidently, his central message of repentance and preparation for the Kingdom of Heaven would not have applied to infants or small children. Consequently, your perspective is quite sound: the practice, as currently observed, achieves little purpose beyond introducing a further ritual — certainly not a Sacrament, but at best a sacramental rite — into the established Christian tradition.

I also hold very firm convictions regarding the true nature of Baptism, as expounded by Jesus in His pivotal conversation with Nicodemus (John 3:1-8) and later detailed meticulously by the Apostle Paul (Romans 6:3-4). This is fundamentally a process requiring a radical change of heart and a public profession of faith, which scarcely applies to little children.

The New Testament clearly connects this spiritual rebirth with a conscious act of personal faith and will — elements entirely absent in the life of a newborn. Instead, a ceremony of dedication or presentation to the Lord is surely the more appropriate response.

The pertinent question remains: who exactly is the driving force behind the practice of infant baptism? Is the impetus coming from the parents themselves, or from the institutional Church?