

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THEOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL CONCERNS

The Committee on Theological and Social Concerns was tasked “to write a concise position statement on the New Perspective/Federal Vision theology.” The Committee met on September 25, 2008 to consider the matter referred to it. Presented below is the committee’s response.

Position Statement

"The Theological and Social Concerns Committee reminds the Synod that the Scripture is sufficient being 'The supreme judge by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture'. (Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 1, Section 10.) Further, we affirm that the subordinate standards of our church (The Westminster Confession of Faith and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms) present in a systematic manner the soteriology that is unfolded in Holy Writ.

As such, it is our counsel to the church that in the hearing of, or reading and scholarly study of works related to the 'New Perspectives on Paul', and the 'Federal Vision', our evaluation of such material be handled in light of the Scripture. We also affirm that the Westminster Standards presentation of the doctrines of Justification and Sanctification as stated in chapters 11 and 13 of the Westminster Confession and Questions 33 and 35 of the Westminster Shorter Catechism and Questions 70, 71, 72, 73, and 75 of the Westminster Larger Catechism remain a sufficient articulation of God’s working salvation in mankind. As such they are to guide us in evaluating issues related to the 'New Perspectives on Paul', and the 'Federal Vision'. The 'New Perspectives on Paul', and the 'Federal Vision', are in conflict with the teaching of our Standards. The 'New Perspectives on Paul', and the 'Federal Vision', are in conflict with the teaching of Scripture and as such they are unacceptable."

Prior to recessing from its work, the committee thought there would be wisdom in presenting a brief bibliography as a resource. The following partial listing of resources is a starting point for those who might wish to study further on this subject.

BOOKS:

Carson, D. A., *Justification and Variegated Nomism: The Complexities of Second Temple Judaism/The Complexities of Second Temple Judaism/The Paradoxes of Paul.* (2 Vols.) Baker Academic, 2004. ISBN 0801027926, 9780801027925.

Das, A. Andrew, *Paul, The Law and The Covenant*, Hendrickson Publishers,

Inc., 2001. ISBN 1-56563-463-2

Johnson, Gary L.W., Wells, David F., Waters, Guy Prentiss, *By Faith Alone: Answering the Challenges to the Doctrine of Justification*, Good News Publishers, 2007. ISBN 1581348401, 9781581348408.

Kruse, Colin G., *The Law and Justification*, Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1997. ISBN 1-56563-277-X

Stuhlmacher, Peter, *Revisiting Paul's Doctrine of Justification*, InterVarsity Press, 2001. There is an essay at the end of this volume by Donald A. Hagner that has a helpful summary of the issues of concern related to the "New Perspectives." ISBN 0-8308-2661-0.

Waters, Guy Prentiss, *Justification and the New Perspectives on Paul*, P & R Publishers, 2004. ISBN 0-87552-649-7

Westerholm, Stephen, *Perspectives Old and New on Paul*, William B. Erdmans Publishing Company, 2004. ISBN 0-8028-4809-5

WEBSITES

Information on this issue can be found on the following websites:

<http://opc.org/GA/JustificationBook.pdf> Orthodox Presbyterian Church

<http://www.pcahistory.org/pca/07-fvreport.html> Presbyterian Church in America

http://www.rcus.org/main/pub_papers.asp (Federal Vision and New Perspective) Reformed Church in the U. S.

<http://www.covenant-urc.org/urcna/SynodAgenda06.pdf> Pg. 52 and following) United Reformed Church

AUDIO FILES:

The following web page on Monergism.com has links to mp3 audio files of talks on the NPP by a variety of Reformed men:

http://www.monergism.com/directory/link_category/New-Perspective_on-Paul/Audio-and-Multimedia/

The Theopedia site:

http://www.theopedia.com/New_Perspectivism

D A Carson's talk on the European Leadership Forum site:

<http://www.euroleadershipresources.org/resource.php?ID=240>

J. Ligon Duncan discusses the NPP with Mark Dever here:

<http://resources.christianity.com/details/mrki/20040731/2A9DB05B-4E8E-4F91-9A00-02E5DC276533.aspx>

Criswell Theological Review devoted to the NPP, which had some very good articles. You can see some of it online at :

<http://criswell.wordpress.com/2005/03/27/the-new-perspective-on-paul-vol-2-issue-2-2005/>