

Big Ridge Presbyterian Church

Serving Christ in the Big Ridge Community, of Haysi, VA

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On the seventh day of March 2007, here comes the Session of Big Ridge Presbyterian Church of Haysi, Virginia to overture Westminster Presbytery as follows:

Whereas we are a confessional Presbyterian denomination and;

Whereas the Scripture and the *Westminster Confession of Faith* and *Catechisms*

are clear in their teaching on the doctrines of Election, the Law of God, the Covenant of Works, the Covenant of Grace, Christ’s Mediatorial Work, Effectual Calling, Justification, Justifying Faith, Perseverance, Assurance, The Church, and the Sacraments, and;

Whereas there is false teaching on these fundamental doctrines of the Church being espoused, propagated and spread in Presbyterian and Reformed denominations commonly referred to as the New Perspective on Paul, and/or the Federal Vision;

Therefore be it resolved that Westminster Presbytery adopt the attached series of Affirmations and Denials in order to preserve and protect our church from these errors in doctrine.

This overture was approved and adopted by the Session on March 7th 2007 and I hereby attest to this fact as Moderator.

TE Daniel J. Jarstfer

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23 Affirmations and Denials

24 Preface

25 This document will proceed on the basis of a series of affirmations and denials based on
26 the Westminster Standards, particularly those *loci* that are most affected by the New
27 Perspective(s) on Paul, the theology of Norman Shepherd, and the Federal Vision.
28 “WCF” means the Westminster Confession of Faith, “WLC” means the Westminster
29 Larger Catechism, and “WSC” means the Westminster Shorter Catechism.

30 Election:

31 1. a. We affirm that God has appointed the elect unto glory, and that all those who are
32 elect unto glory, *and those only*, will be redeemed, justified, adopted, sanctified,
33 and kept by His power through faith unto salvation (WCF 3.6).

34 b. We deny that these saving benefits accrue to members of the visible church simply
35 by baptism.

36 c. We deny that any who are not elect unto glory have in any manner or sense the
37 saving benefits of justification, adoption, or sanctification.

38 2. a. We affirm that this doctrine of election is highly useful for the glory of God and
39 the comfort of believers (WCF 3.8).

40 b. We deny that this doctrine of election is of little use or should not be taught in the
41 Church.

42 3. We deny that election cannot be a part of our assurance.

43 The Law of God:

44 1. We affirm that every sin both original and actual is a transgression of the righteous
45 law of God and makes him liable to temporal and eternal death (WCF 6.6).

46 2. We affirm that the law of God is useful for unbelievers *and believers* to show them
47 the corruption of their lives, to convict them of sin, and give them a clearer view
48 of the need they have of Christ, and as a rule of life informing them of the will of
49 God (WCF 19.6).

50 3. a. We affirm that the same Ten Commandments that were given on Mt. Sinai were
51 given to Adam as a covenant of works (WCF 19.1).

52 b. We deny any formulation that entirely excludes the covenant of works from the
53 Ten Commandments.

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55 **Covenant of Works:**

- 56 1. We affirm that for man to enjoy God as his blessedness and reward requires a
57 voluntary condescension on God's part.
- 58 2. We affirm that God did make such a voluntary condescension in the covenant of
59 works (WCF 7, WLC 20, 22, WSC 12, 16).
- 60 3. a. We affirm that in this covenant God promised life to Adam and all his posterity
61 on the condition of perfect and personal obedience (WCF 7.2).
- 62 b. We deny that this condition of the covenant of works can be equated with the
63 instrumentality of faith in relation to justification in the covenant of grace.
- 64 4. We affirm that the penalty of the covenant of works was eternal death for Adam
65 and all his posterity descending from him by ordinary generation (WLC 22).
- 66 5. We affirm that Adam's violation of the covenant of works brought all mankind
67 descending from him by ordinary generation into an estate of sin and misery
68 wherein they are incapable of any spiritual good and wholly and continually
69 inclined to all evil (WLC 25).

70 **Covenant of Grace:**

- 71 1. We affirm that in addition to the covenant of works made with Adam, God made a
72 covenant of grace with Christ as the second Adam and all the elect in him as his
73 seed in order to deliver the elect out of a state of misery and bring them into an
74 estate of salvation (WLC 30-31).
- 75 2. We affirm that in this covenant of grace God not only offers to sinners salvation
76 and life by faith in Jesus Christ, but also promises to give unto all the elect the
77 Holy Spirit to make them willing and able to believe (WCF 8.2).
- 78 3. Consequently, we deny any definition of the covenant of grace that would make it
79 apply equally to the elect and reprobate.

80 **Christ's Mediatorial Work:**

- 81 1 a. We affirm that God's eternal purpose was to give a people to Christ as His seed
82 who would be by him in time redeemed, effectually called, justified, and glorified
83 (WCF 8.1).

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86 b. We deny that Christ purchased any temporal saving benefits for the reprobate, even
87 those that are members of the visible Church, such that they would be, for a
88 certain time only, redeemed, effectually called, justified, or sanctified.

89 2 a. We affirm that Christ did purchase not only reconciliation but an everlasting
90 inheritance in the kingdom of heaven for all those whom the Father gave to Him
91 (WCF 8.5).

92 b. We deny that any for whom Christ purchased reconciliation will not inherit the
93 kingdom of heaven.

94 **Effectual Calling:**

95 1. We affirm that all those whom God has predestined unto life, *and those only*, He
96 calls effectually out of the state of sin and death unto grace and salvation by Jesus
97 Christ (WCF 10.1).

98 2. a. We affirm that the reprobate may experience some common operations of the
99 Spirit with the elect (WCF 10.4).

100 b. We deny that these common operations cause the reprobate, even those reprobate
101 who are baptized, to truly come to Christ, be saved, effectually called, justified,
102 adopted, or sanctified.

103 **Justification:**

104 1 a. We affirm that justification is an act of God's grace whereby God pardons the
105 sins of those he calls, and imputes the perfect obedience and full satisfaction of
106 Christ unto them (WCF 11.1 and WLC 70).

107 b. We deny that God imputes faith itself, the act of believing, or any other obedience
108 as their righteousness (WCF 11.1).

109 c. We deny that justification is by anything done by or wrought in the believer. We
110 affirm that Christ's perfect obedience and full satisfaction is imputed or reckoned
111 to the believer (WLC 70).

112 2. a. We affirm that those who are justified are justified perfectly in this life (WLC
113 77).

114 b. We affirm that those who are justified can never fall from the state of justification
115 (WCF 11.5).

116 c. Consequently, we deny that any but the elect are justified (WCF 3.6).

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118 d. Consequently, we deny any definition of justification that would extend it in any
119 way whatsoever to the reprobate.

120 3. We deny that justification has primary reference to membership of the Church;
121 rather, it has primary reference to the acceptance of the individual sinner before
122 God.

123 4. We deny that any so-called reconstruction of Second Temple Judaism requires us
124 to reformulate the above truths.

125 **Justifying Faith:**

126 1. a. We affirm that justifying faith receives and rests upon Christ and his
127 righteousness held forth in the Gospel for pardon of sin and for the accepting and
128 account of his person righteous in the sight of God for salvation (WLC 72).

129 b. We deny that justifying faith justifies a sinner because of any of those other graces
130 that do always accompany it, or because of any act of justifying faith being
131 imputed to him for his justification (WLC 73).

132 2. a. We affirm that justifying faith is an instrument by which a sinner receives and
133 applies Christ and his righteousness (WLC 73).

134 b. Consequently, we deny that prelapsarian Adam or Christ could have had or did
135 have this justifying faith and so be counted righteous by such a faith.

136 **Perseverance:**

137 1. a. We affirm that those whom God has effectually called can neither totally nor
138 finally fall away from the state of grace but shall certainly persevere therein to the
139 end, and be eternally saved (WCF 17.1).

140 b. We deny that anyone who truly comes to Christ falls away (WCF 10.4).

141 c. We deny that there is any temporary participation in the benefits of justification,
142 adoption, and sanctification.

143 **Assurance:**

144 1. We affirm that a Christian may “be certainly assured that they are in the state of
145 grace” (WCF 18.1).

146 2. We affirm that this assurance is not a bare and conjectural persuasion grounded
147 upon a fallible hope but an “infallible assurance of faith” (WCF 18.2-3).

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149 3. a. We affirm that the following are grounds for assurance: the promises of salvation
150 (WCF 18.2), the inward evidence of grace (WCF 18.2), the testimony of the Holy
151 Spirit of adoption (WCF 18.2), the doctrine of election (WCF 3.8), the presence
152 of true faith (WLC 80), and the endeavor to walk in all good conscience before
153 God (WLC 80).

154 b. We deny that baptism is the sole or primary means of assurance.

155 **The Church:**

156 1. a. We affirm that the church is rightly distinguished into the invisible church
157 consisting of all the elect and the visible church consisting of all those who
158 profess true faith and their children (WCF 25.1-2).

159 b. We deny that all those who are in the visible church are saved (WLC 61).

160 2. a. We affirm that all those who are in the visible church possess certain privileges
161 and blessings that are not possessed by those who are not members of the visible
162 church (WLC 63).

163 b. We deny that all those who are in the visible Church are united to Christ spiritually
164 and mystically, yet really and inseparably, as their head and husband (WLC 65).

165 3. We affirm that this uniting to Christ occurs in effectual calling and that only the
166 elect are effectually called (WLC 65, 68).

167 4. We affirm that the benefits of the invisible Church include justification, adoption,
168 and sanctification and that these are *only* given to the elect (WLC 68-69).

169 **Sacraments:**

170 1. We affirm that the promise of benefit in the sacrament is only given to worthy
171 receivers (WCF 27.3).

172 2. a. We affirm that the grace of baptism is not only offered but really exhibited and
173 conferred by the Holy Spirit to such as that grace belongs to according to God's own
174 will (WCF 3.6, 8.1) (namely, the elect) in His own time (WCF 28.6).

175 b. We deny that baptism is so necessary that no person can be regenerated or saved
176 without it (WCF 28.5).

177 c. We deny that grace and salvation are so inseparably annexed unto baptism that all
178 who are baptized are undoubtedly regenerated (WCF 28.5).

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180 d. We deny that the efficacy of baptism is tied to the moment of time in which it is
181 administered (WCF 28.6).

182 3. a. We affirm that worthy receivers who outwardly partake of the Lord's Supper do
183 really and truly but not corporally and carnally feed upon Christ crucified and all his
184 benefits (WCF 29.7).

185 b. We deny that ignorant or wicked men who receive the outward elements of the
186 sacrament of the Lord's Supper receive the things signified (WCF 29.8).

187 c. We affirm the parallel between the Lord's Supper and baptism in this respect
188 (namely, of what is said in 3b).

189 Concerning the advocates of the Federal Vision, and the advocates of the New
190 Perspective on Paul:

191 1. Whereas, all those men who contradict and call into question some or all of these
192 affirmations;

193 2. And whereas we affirm that any affirmation of what is here denied or any denial of
194 what is here affirmed is a contradiction of the Scriptures and the Westminster
195 standards and therefore it is necessary to conclude that those men who are
196 contrary are outside the system of doctrine expressed in the Westminster
197 standards;

198 We conclude the following:

199 Whenever and wherever the proponents or advocates of the Federal Vision and/or the
200 New Perspective on Paul do deny what is affirmed above or affirm what is denied
201 above, be it understood that their views are outside the system of doctrine of the
202 Westminster standards and do contradict the Scriptural teaching.

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