

MWP Candidates and Credentials Committee

My Understanding of the “Federal Vision”

Christopher Curtis Schrock

September 2, 2023

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to explain my understanding of the “Federal Vision” (FV). This paper will examine a variety of books, articles, and websites by both FV proponents and opponents, analyze and demonstrate that the FV exhibits significant error and is contrary to the Scriptures and the Westminster Standards, and, as appropriate, throughout this paper I will address commensurate pastoral concerns.

FV Confusion

Discussing the FV feels like braiding a rope out of sand. Whether or not FV theology can be coherently discussed, much less defined, is a matter of mixed consensus. In 2013, one FV proponent claimed, “there is not really a “Federal Vision position” on any one subject, much less a homogenous “movement” with an agenda and unified theology,”¹ and “there is no monolithic “vision” being articulated, if by “vision” one imagines a fixed, systematized package of ideas.”² In 2007, however, another FV proponent wrote:

To keep things simple, the Federal Vision in its essential FVness should be defined by the Joint Federal Vision Statement [referring to the 2007 statement titled “A Joint Federal Vision Profession”]. This is a doctrinal statement on the controversial points that all the leading figures on the FV side of things agreed. Related to this, the FV should *not* be defined in terms of a position that is not in that statement.”³

Even among FV proponents there has been a spectrum of FV-self-awareness and willingness to define FV theology. This intra-FV variety notwithstanding, in an online, multi-

¹ From the new “Foreword” by Steve Wilkins in *The Federal Vision* (2004; reprint, Monroe: Athanasius Press, 2013), viii.

² “Foreword” by Steve Wilkins in *The Federal Vision*, ix.

³ Douglas Wilson, *The Auburn Avenue Chronicles: The Complete Collection of Blog & Mablog Posts on the Federal Vision* (Moscow: Blog & Mablog Press and Tire Center, 2018), 593. Note: As of January 17, 2017, Douglas Wilson no longer identifies with the FV: “I have decided, after mulling over it for some years now, to discontinue identifying myself with what has come to be called the *Federal Vision*” (“Federal Vision No Mas” in *The Auburn Avenue Chronicles*, 872-878).

installment publication analysis and historical overview of the FV,⁴ even an author critical of the FV acknowledged the difficulty of summarizing FV theology:

Identifying FV theology is difficult because of the variety within its advocates. Along with the diversity of personalities associated with FV, the theological goals of FV differed according to these personalities . . . The problem with summarizing the theology of the Federal Vision is that it was always a matrix of concepts and ideas. There simply is no “FV theology” as such.⁵

Other FV opponents, however, have not hesitated to discuss, describe, summarize and/or

⁴ See the following six articles by Steven Wedgeworth at website “The Calvinist International”: “Giving up the Ghost: What To Think of the Federal Vision After All These Years” – November 8, 2019 (<https://calvinistinternational.com/2019/11/08/giving-up-the-ghost-what-to-think-of-the-federal-vision-after-all-these-years/>, accessed April 20, 2023); “A Federal Vision History” – November 18, 2019 (<https://calvinistinternational.com/2019/11/18/a-federal-vision-history/>, accessed April 20, 2023); “Beginning to Explain The Theology of Federal Vision” – December 19, 2019 (<https://calvinistinternational.com/2019/12/19/beginning-to-explain-theology-federal-vision/>, accessed April 20, 2023); “Douglas Wilson and Justification” – January 3, 2020 (<https://calvinistinternational.com/2020/01/03/douglas-wilson-and-justification/>, accessed April 20, 2023); “The Federal Vision: Two Understandings of Salvation Held Together By One Name” – January 8, 2020 (<https://calvinistinternational.com/2020/01/08/the-federal-vision-two-understandings-of-salvation-held-together-by-one-name/>, accessed April 20, 2023); “The Federal Vision: A Systematic Critique” – January 13, 2020 (<https://calvinistinternational.com/2020/01/13/the-federal-vision-a-systematic-critique/>, accessed April 20, 2023).

⁵ Steven Wedgeworth, “Beginning to Explain The Theology of Federal Vision” (<https://calvinistinternational.com/2019/12/19/beginning-to-explain-theology-federal-vision/>, accessed April 20, 2023).

define FV theology.⁶ Since there is disagreement about the particulars of the FV controversy, one may be tempted to write off the 20+ years of theological controversy as indiscernible.⁷ FV opponents contend that the FV is misguided and in significant theological error, therefore, Reformed ministers ought to prevent FV errors from permeating the

⁶ The first denominational critique/condemnation of FV teaching was in a resolution titled “A Call to Repentance,” adopted on June 22, 2002, by the Reformed Presbyterian Church in the United States (RPCUS). This resolution was in response to the January 2002 “Federal Vision” Pastors’ Conference held at Auburn Avenue Presbyterian Church (AAPC), in Monroe, Louisiana. This conference has been recognized as the source and origin of the FV controversy. The RPCUS resolution can be accessed at: <https://web.archive.org/web/20070928130145/http://rpcus.com/content/Resolutions.pdf>. Subsequently a RPCUS minister, John M. Otis, wrote a book-length criticism of FV teaching. The author stated a dual purpose: “One purpose of this book is to enable church members to have a thorough but not an exhaustive understanding of the nature of the [FV] controversy . . . Another purpose of this book is to be a clarion call to Reformed churches throughout the world to resist this aberrant theology” (*Danger in the Camp: An Analysis and Refutation of the Heresies of the Federal Vision* [Corpus Christi: Triumphant Publications, 2005], Loc. 156). See also another denominational report, “Report of the Synodical Study Committee on the Federal Vision and Justification,” adopted July 2010 by Synod London of the United Reformed Churches in North America (URCNA). In this report, the study committee identified four “distinctive features of the FV viewpoint on the covenant [that have] generated so much controversy in the churches.” The four distinctive features listed: “Covenant and Salvation,” “Covenant and Election,” “The Pre-Fall Covenant,” and “Law and Gospel in the Covenant.” This study committee was appointed at 2007 Synod of the URCNA, and the decision to appoint the study committee was in response to an “overture from Classis Michigan (Overture #5), which asked Synod to adopt the 2004 RCUS [Reformed Church in the United States] *Report of the Committee to Study Justification in Light of the Current Justification Controversy*.” (https://www.urncna.org/urncna/StudyCommittees/FederalVision/Federal_Vision_Study_Committee_Report.pdf, accessed April 22, 2023). Note: The RCUS report can be accessed at: <https://rcus.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/RCUS-Position-Justification-Shepherd-2004.pdf>. Another prominent FV opponent wrote a book-length analysis and critique of FV theology, cf., Guy Prentiss Waters, *The Federal Vision and Covenant Theology: A Comparative Analysis* (Phillipsburg: P & R Publishing, 2006). Dr. Waters disagrees with the claim there is no identifiable FV theology: “Some proponents of the FV have strenuously objected that there is no such thing as a “federal vision” – whether in the sense of a movement or a theological system. We may certainly recognize that there are genuine limitations and conceivable liabilities inherent to the label “FV.” At the same time, we shall be arguing that the men who have identified themselves or have come to be identified with this movement have much in common that distinguishes them theologically from many others within the contemporary Reformed and Presbyterian world” (4). Likewise in a book published ten years later, Dewey Roberts does not shy away from defining Federal Vision theology: “The Federal Vision is a scheme of salvation by works, both moral and ceremonial, set within the framework of a conditional covenant that depends on the covenant faithfulness and perseverance of the baptized for its efficacy and for their final justification” (*Historic Christianity and the Federal Vision: A Theological Analysis and Practical Evaluation* [Destin: Sola Fide Publications, 2016], 31).

⁷ I fell into the “FV is indiscernible” camp for several years. After some preliminary online reading and listening to audio lectures, around the time I was studying for pastoral ministry (2009-2013), I was simply confused by it all. So, in the past, if I was asked about my views of the FV, my typical response was that I thought that it was a Reformed dispute on pastor-theologian pedagogy, i.e., the argument was over different ways to discuss doctrine. At some point 2018-2019 my views changed. In the final analysis, I think the FV controversy is not over *how* things are taught, but that it is a disagreement of the very content of *what* is taught.

church.⁸

Defining FV

Contrary to the claim “There simply is no “FV theology” as such,” this paper assumes FV theology can be defined and discussed. Specifically, FV doctrinal errors can be demonstrated, with respect to the 2007 doctrinal statement titled “A Joint Federal Vision

⁸ “The Federal Vision is wrongly viewed by many people within the PCA as an acceptable interpretation of the gospel that represents little cause for concern despite the fact that it is a legalistic system that is contradictory to the Scriptures and the Reformed Standards. Too many ministers and Christians within the PCA or other Reformed denominations are unaware of the deep inroads that have been made by this erroneous system within the body of Christ. Error thrives under the cloak of darkness unless it is vigorously opposed by courageous voices that raise the flag of warning for God’s people” (“Foreword” by Morton H. Smith in Dewey Roberts, *Historic Christianity and the Federal Vision*, 14).

Profession” (JFVP)⁹ This doctrinal statement was a “consensus” document and co-signed by

⁹ The JFVP can be accessed at: https://web.archive.org/web/20110710233937/http://www.federal-vision.com/resources/joint_FV_Statement.pdf. In his multi-installment overview, Steven Wedgworth takes a somewhat similar approach in his criticism of the FV. Wedgworth explains: “To demonstrate my criticism of the FV as a whole, I will work through the Joint FV Statement and make observations as they seem relevant. I will also draw on key FV concepts and arguments that connect with the main points of the Joint FV Statement, even if they are deemed intramural” (“The Federal Vision: A Systematic Critique”). Note: Prior to the release of the 2007 JFVP, FV opponents out of necessity had to interact with FV concepts and arguments *ad hoc* in the lectures and articles by various FV proponents, e.g., the 2006 Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) “Report of the Committee to Study the Doctrine of Justification” (<https://www.opc.org/GA/justification.html>, accessed April 24, 2023); *The Auburn Avenue Theology, Pros and Cons: Debating the Federal Vision: The Knox Theological Seminary Colloquium on the Federal Vision*, edited by E. Calvin Beisner (Fort Lauderdale: Knox Theological Seminary, 2004); John M. Otis, *Danger in the Camp: An Analysis and Refutation of the Heresies of the Federal Vision*; Guy Prentiss Waters, *The Federal Vision and Covenant Theology: A Comparative Analysis*. After 2007, FV opponents could interact with a consensus document produced by FV proponents, e.g., analysis and critique of JFVP can be found in: (1) the multi-installment articles mentioned above by Steven Wedgworth; (2) online multi-installment articles by Lane Keister at *Green Baggins*: “The Preface” – July 31, 2007 (<https://greenbaggins.wordpress.com/2007/07/31/the-preface/>, accessed April 20, 2023); “The Trinity and Postmillennialism [*sic*]” – August 1, 2007 (<https://greenbaggins.wordpress.com/2007/08/01/the-trinity-and-postmillennialism/>, accessed April 20, 2023); “Christians In Society” – August 2, 2007 (<https://greenbaggins.wordpress.com/2007/08/02/christians-in-society/>, accessed April 20, 2023); “On Scripture” – August 3, 2007 (<https://greenbaggins.wordpress.com/2007/08/03/on-scripture/>, accessed April 20, 2023); “Hermeneutics” – August 6, 2007 (<https://greenbaggins.wordpress.com/2007/08/06/hermeneutics/>, accessed April 20, 2023); “Decrees and Covenant” – August 7, 2007 (<https://greenbaggins.wordpress.com/2007/08/07/decrees-and-covenant/>, accessed April 20, 2023); “The Church” – August 8, 2007 (<https://greenbaggins.wordpress.com/2007/08/08/the-church-2/>, accessed April 20, 2023); “Justification and Covenant” – August 9, 2007 (<https://greenbaggins.wordpress.com/2007/08/09/justification-and-covenant/>, accessed April 20, 2023); “Bride’s Baptism Revisited” – August 10, 2007 (<https://greenbaggins.wordpress.com/2007/08/10/brides-baptism-revisited/>, accessed April 20, 2023); “Lord’s Supper and Imputation” – August 13, 2007 (<https://greenbaggins.wordpress.com/2007/08/13/lords-supper-and-imputation/>, accessed April 20, 2023); “Law and Gospel” – August 14, 2007 (<https://greenbaggins.wordpress.com/2007/08/14/law-and-gospel/>, accessed April 20, 2023); “Justification By Faith Alone?” – August 16, 2007 (<https://greenbaggins.wordpress.com/2007/08/16/justification-by-faith-alone/>, accessed April 20, 2023); “Assurance, Apostasy, and Areas of Alternate Assertions” – August 20, 2007 (<https://greenbaggins.wordpress.com/2007/08/20/assurance-apostasy-and-areas-of-alternate-assertions/>, accessed April 20, 2023); “The Preface to the Joint Federal Vision, Revisited” – April 22, 2008 (<https://greenbaggins.wordpress.com/2008/04/22/the-preface-to-the-joint-federal-vision-revisited/>, accessed April 20, 2023); (3) Dewey Roberts cites from and interacts with JFVP in *Historic Christianity and the Federal Vision* (39, 145, 189, 223, 224, 303, 305), but his work interacts with a myriad of other sources, many of which I assume are from his ministerial and personal experiences, e.g., from the “Preface” – “Over a period of six years, I was a juror, a prosecutor, a panel chairman, and the representative of a complainant in some of the most important cases concerning the Federal Vision that have been decided by Reformed churches in the twenty-first century” (17).

eleven FV proponents.¹⁰ On the one hand, in the document the signees explained that “The Federal Vision” is not a monolithic movement,” but, on the other hand, they also wrote “Any doctrine mentioned in the previous sections can be fairly represented as part of the Federal Vision.”¹¹ The “previous sections” refers to the document’s eighteen doctrinal subheadings, each respectively comprised of theological affirmations and denials.¹²

The scope of analysis and criticism in this paper will be constrained to four distinctive FV themes: (1) covenant, (2) election, (3) regeneration, and (4) justification. Subsequent analysis and criticism will utilize and draw from auxiliary theological writings of the JFVP’s signees, insofar as they overlap with the JFVP.

FV and Covenant

In 2004, in the “Introduction” to *The Federal Vision*, Steve Wilkins wrote, “The purpose of this book of essays is to introduce (or, more properly, to re-introduce) the

¹⁰ “I have said that the Federal Vision Statement was a consensus document and was laboring to bridge two positions that I have now decided can’t really be bridged in that way, at least not successfully” (*The Auburn Avenue Chronicles*, 879). The eleven signees of the JFVP “consensus document”: John Barach, Randy Booth, Tim Gallant, Mark Horne, Jim Jordan, Peter Leithart, Rich Lusk, Jeff Meyers, Ralph Smith, Steve Wilkins, and Douglas Wilson. Note: Most of these men are currently ministers in the Communion of Reformed Evangelical Churches (CREC), the denomination in which my credentials are currently held as a minister without a call. Although my theological convictions have shifted and developed in recent years, I have respect for and consider them dear Fathers and Brothers. In God’s providence, I learned about Reformed theology from CREC ministers and within CREC congregations, and without which I would not have segued from the Methodist and Wesleyan-Arminian tradition of my childhood. My honest disagreements occur in a context of gratitude.

¹¹ https://web.archive.org/web/20110710233937/http://www.federal-vision.com/resources/joint_FV_Statement.pdf, accessed April 19, 2023.

¹² There are two sections in JFVP: a latter section with the singular subheading “Some Points of Intramural Disagreement,” and a former section consisting of eighteen doctrinal subheadings. The subheadings are: “Our Triune God,” “As the Waters Cover the Sea,” “The Next Christendom,” “Scripture Cannot Be Broken,” “The Proclamation of the Word,” “Creeds and Confessions,” “The Divine Decrees,” “The Church,” “The Visible and Invisible Church,” “Reformed Catholicity,” “The Covenant of Life,” “The Sacrament of Baptism,” “The Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper,” “Union with Christ and Imputation,” “Law and Gospel,” “Justification by Faith Alone,” “Assurance of Salvation,” and “Apostasy.”

modern church to covenantal reading and thinking.”¹³ From its source and origin, the FV has always been about understanding the covenant. As one author explained, “The whole FV project was intended to be a biblical-theological use of the concept of covenant to redefine the larger Christian worldview.”¹⁴ As commendable as that desire may be, unfortunately FV proponents inaccurately define and overemphasize the covenant concept.¹⁵

The FV definition-and-overemphasis of the covenant concept is contrary to Scripture, e.g., Steve Wilkins claims, “Covenant is the central teaching of the Word of God: it describes a relationship with the Triune God through Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son.”¹⁶ Covenant is an important Scriptural theme, and it is denoted in the historic Reformed Confessions, but it is not the central teaching of Scripture. It is also an oversimplification-to-the-point-of-theological-error to define the covenant concept as a relationship. As Guy Prentiss Waters observed, to equate and/or equivocate covenant and relationship “jeopardizes the integrity of the legal or formal relationships within the covenant of grace that Reformed theologians have understood the Scripture to teach.”¹⁷ In another place, Wilkins writes: “The foundation of all of God’s dealings with man is covenant. It is the basis

¹³ Steve Wilkins, “Introduction” in *The Federal Vision*, xvii.

¹⁴ Steven Wedgworth, “The Federal Vision: A Systematic Critique” (Accessed at: <https://calvinistinternational.com/2020/01/13/the-federal-vision-a-systematic-critique/> on April 22, 2023).

¹⁵ As noted in the RPCNA Synod 2008 “Report of the Study Committee to Read and Evaluate Reports and Responses of Fraternal (and other) Reformed Denominations and Institutions Concerning the ‘Justification Controversy’”: “Of particular concern is a new “covenantal” paradigm which is either out of accord with the covenant theology articulated in our standards, or, has yet to be adequately shown to be in accord with them. From this new paradigm there then comes confusing and/or errant views of faith, justification, the sacraments, election, the church, and the work of Christ” (“Minutes of the One Hundred Seventy Seventh Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America” (<https://drive.google.com/file/d/19h7d6OGIsXQpPGMPg7euLbPaRYw37Ke6/view>, accessed April 24, 2023).

¹⁶ Steve Wilkins, “Introduction” in *The Federal Vision*, xvii.

¹⁷ Guy Prentiss Waters, *The Federal Vision and Covenant Theology*, 12-13.

of all that God has done, is doing, and will do in time and on earth. Nothing can be understood rightly apart from an understanding of covenant.”¹⁸ The covenantal-paradigmatic claim, “The foundation of all God’s dealings with man is covenant,” lacks Scriptural warrant. If covenant was the foundation of God’s dealings with Adam prior to God’s command to not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, then what implications does this have for the bi-covenantal structure of Scripture?¹⁹ Would it imply Adam was in covenant prior to when God made the first covenant with him (Genesis 2:16-17)? The JFVP affirms Adam was “in a covenant of life with the triune God.” However, the JFVP does not describe this covenant as being made with Adam, instead it refers to it as an “arrangement”:

We affirm that Adam was in a covenant of life with the triune God in the Garden of Eden, in which arrangement Adam was required to obey God completely, from the heart. We hold further that all such obedience, had it occurred, would have been rendered from a heart of faith alone, in a spirit of loving trust. Adam was created to progress from immature glory to mature glory, but that glorification too would have been a gift of grace, received by faith alone.

We deny that continuance in this covenant in the Garden was in any way a payment for work rendered. Adam could forfeit or demerit the gift of glorification by disobedience, but the gift or continued possession of that gift was not offered by God to Adam conditioned upon Adam’s moral exertions or achievements. In line with this, we affirm that until the expulsion from the Garden, Adam was free to eat from the tree of life. *We deny* that Adam had to earn or merit righteousness, life, glorification, or anything else.²⁰

According to the JFVP, Adam was in a covenant of life in the Garden, but (hypothetically

¹⁸ “Covenant, Baptism, and Salvation” by Steve Wilkins in *The Federal Vision*, 51.

¹⁹ “The leading ideas of covenant theology predated the Reformation and were in mature development from that period onwards. The Westminster Standards give in creedal form the bi-covenantal structure of Scripture [covenant of works / covenant of grace] that had been believed by all branches of the Reformed church long before 1643” (Dewey Roberts, *Historic Christianity and the Federal Vision*, 83).

²⁰ “The Covenant of Life” (https://web.archive.org/web/20110710233937/http://www.federal-vision.com/resources/joint_FV_Statement.pdf, accessed April 22, 2023).

speaking) his glorification would have been a “gift of grace” and not conditioned upon his obedience, but any obedience, had it occurred, would have been “rendered from a heart of faith alone.” One FV critic accurately describes this section as “partially incoherent.”²¹ Also, this section (perhaps unwittingly because of its incoherence/confusion) presents the Adamic covenant as a covenant of grace, and this is contrary to Scripture and the Westminster Standards.²² The dual-structure and dual-distinction of the covenants of works and grace is an “architectonic principle of the Confession.”²³

Elsewhere the JFVP presents a Trinitarian/Covenantal paradigm:

*We affirm that the triune God is the archetype of all covenantal relations. All faithful theology and life is conducted in union with and imitation of the way God eternally is, and so we seek to understand all that the Bible teaches – on covenant, on law, on gospel, on predestination, on sacraments, on the Church – in light of an explicit Trinitarian understanding.*²⁴

²¹ “This section is actually logically complex and, in my opinion, partially incoherent. It affirms that Adam was in a covenant that required obedience. This obedience is said to have been a product of “faith alone,” but the object of that faith is not stated. Was Adam to have faith in a mediator who obeyed for him? This seems impossible, given the larger argument. But if not, then how is “faith alone” really an appropriate description? Further, the attempted asymmetry of Adam’s ability “to forfeit or demerit the gift of glorification by disobedience” over and against his retention being said to *not* depend upon his moral exertions or achievements makes no sense. It is one thing to say that Adam could not merit his glorification, but to say that his continuation in the garden was “not conditioned upon [his moral] exertions” seems to contradict the earlier affirmation that Adam was required to obey God complete . . . as it stands, this section is confused” (<https://calvinistinternational.com/2020/01/13/the-federal-vision-a-systematic-critique/>, accessed April 24, 2023).

²² See the hypothetical situation raised by Paul in Galatians 3:10-12; Romans 5:12-20; WCF 7; WCF 19.1; WCF 19.2. Lane Keister comments on the JFVP’s denial of the covenant of works: “This statement of the FV is therefore completely contrary: “the gift or continued possession of that gift was not offered by God to Adam conditioned upon Adam’s moral exertions or achievements.” This is an explicit denial of WCF 7.2, which says “life was promised to Adam, and in him to his posterity, upon condition of perfect and personal obedience.” This is a denial of the covenant of works” (<https://greenbaggins.wordpress.com/2007/08/09/justification-and-covenant/>, accessed April 24, 2023).

²³ J. V. Fesko, *The Theology of the Westminster Standards: Historical Context and Theological Insights* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2014), 125. For the dual-structure of the covenants of works and grace, regarding the former, see WCF 7.2, WLC 20, WLC 30, WSC 12, and, regarding the latter, see WCF 7.3, WLC 30-36, and WSC 20.

²⁴ “Our Triune God” (https://web.archive.org/web/20110710233937/http://www.federal-vision.com/resources/joint_FV_Statement.pdf, accessed April 22, 2023).

Here the JFVP is misguided and contrary to the Scriptures and Westminster Standards. Covenants are instruments God uses to express his “voluntary condescension” and accomplish his divine purposes.²⁵ As one Reformed ecclesiastical report pointed out, “A mono-covenantalism that sees one covenant, originating in the intra-trinitarian fellowship, into which man is invited, thus flattening the concept of covenant and denying the distinction between the covenant of works and covenant of grace [is out of accord with Scripture and our doctrinal standards].”²⁶ Regarding this FV Trinitarian/Covenantal paradigm, another FV critic said, “This certainly sounds good . . . But as it turned out, the FV men almost never had a strong grasp of actual Nicene Theology.”²⁷ In its aim to understand everything “in light of an explicit Trinitarian understanding,” the JFVP abandons the Scriptural teaching on covenant by injecting it into the *opera ad intra* of the Trinity. It is a construal of the relations of the three persons of the Trinity in not just covenantal terms but

²⁵ See Scriptural prooftexts for WCF 7.1. in *The Constitution of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America – Being Its Standards Subordinate to the Word of God: The Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, the Testimony, the Directory for Church Government, the Book of Discipline, and the Directory of Public Worship* [Pittsburgh: Crown and Covenant Publications], A-28. See also “Introduction” of *The Testimony of the RPCNA* (A-1).

²⁶ “Report of the Committee to Study the Doctrine of Justification” (<https://www.opc.org/GA/justification.html>, accessed April 24, 2023). Describing the covenant of works as “gracious” does not necessarily deny the distinction of the covenants of works and grace, e.g., as A. A. Hodge explained, “This covenant [the covenant of works] was also in its essence a covenant of grace, in that it graciously promised life in the society of God as the freely-granted reward of an obedience already unconditionally due. Nevertheless it was a covenant of works and of law with respect to its demands and conditions” (A. A. Hodge, *The Confession of Faith* [1869; reprint, Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1998], 122). The covenants of works was “gracious” in the sense that it revealed “God’s willingness to have fellowship with mere creatures,” but that is distinct from what is “gracious” in the covenant grace, i.e., “God’s willingness to forgive and to have fellowship with those who are unworthy” (i.e., not just mere creatures but sinners) (Chad Van Dixhoorn, *Confessing the Faith: A Reader’s Guide to the Westminster Confession of Faith* [Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2014], 100). The works-principle of the covenant of works, to live by *doing* (Romans 10:5; Galatians 3:12), also distinguishes the former covenant from the latter; in the covenant of grace, we live by *faith* (Galatians 3:11), and the object of faith is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, for sinners (the elect), fulfilled the requirements (obedience) of the law and also met the demands (penalty) of its violation.

²⁷ “The Federal Vision: A Systematic Critique” (<https://calvinistinternational.com/2020/01/13/the-federal-vision-a-systematic-critique/>, accessed April 22, 2023).

as a covenantal concept. This unusual interpretation can be found in other FV writings:

“Covenant as it relates to man, simply and perhaps too simplistically stated, is the relationship of love and communion with the living, Triune God. But to understand this, we need to look at God himself.”²⁸

Why must one look at “God himself” (*opera ad intra*) to understand the covenant? Because the covenant concept is equivocated with relations/relationship and therefore is found within God himself. “In fact, the reality that God is not only one but eternally three persons implies the very thing that covenant is about. Indeed, for God to have personality at all implies that He experiences relationships within Himself.”²⁹ This is a departure from the classic Trinitarian orthodoxy of the Westminster Standards. This conception of the Trinity is foreign to what is written in WCF 2 “Of God, and of the Holy Trinity.” The Scriptural teaching on covenant as instruments of God’s redemptive revelation (*opera ad extra*) is abandoned, and in its place a man-made conception of covenant as ontologically-Trinitarian is promoted in its place.³⁰ “The covenant into which we are brought is this very same covenant that has always existed within the Godhead from eternity.”³¹ To describe the

²⁸ “Covenant, Baptism, and Salvation” by Steve Wilkins in *The Federal Vision*, 51.

²⁹ “Covenant, Baptism, and Salvation” by Steve Wilkins in *The Federal Vision*, 52. Wilkins in this section acknowledges his indebtedness to future JFVP signee, Ralph Smith, specifically his book *Eternal Covenant* (Moscow: Canon Press, 2003).

³⁰ “The division of attributes, though listed together in [WCF 2], relies upon a standard way of explaining God’s person and work, namely his *opera ad intra* (internal work) and *opera ad extra* (external work). In other words, God can be considered either absolutely separately from his creation, or relatively, as he is related to his creation” (J. V. Fesko, *The Theology of the Westminster Standards*, 100). Injecting the covenant-concept into the Trinity *opera ad intra* is . . . blasphemous. To posit that mere creatures can be brought into the internal work of Trinity destroys the Creator-creature distinction that is a pillar of historic Christian dogma. Some may push back and say “What about the Reformed doctrine of the *covenant of redemption*?” But that only proves the point; the *covenant of redemption* is *opera ad extra*, i.e., it is a relative doctrine on the Trinity, respect to and related to God’s creation.

³¹ “Covenant, Baptism, and Salvation” by Steve Wilkins in *The Federal Vision*, 55.

eternal relations of the three persons of the Trinity as covenant makes a theological-vague space for theological equivocations to abound. The JFVP claims “God formally unites a person to Christ and to His covenant people through baptism into the triune Name.”³² Does this mean that baptism brings the baptized into the “very same covenant that has always existed within the Godhead from eternity”? At least one FV proponent thinks so: “being in covenant gives all the blessings of being united to Christ.”³³ This errant covenantal-reinterpretation of Theology Proper is contrary to Scripture and the Westminster Standards.

FV and Election

The word “election” is not used in the JFVS, however, “elect” and “non-elect” are mentioned several times. From the section titled “The Divine Decrees”:

We affirm that the triune God is exhaustively sovereign over all things, working out all things according to the counsel of His will. Because this necessarily includes our redemption in Christ, God alone receives all the glory for our salvation. Before all worlds, God the Father chose a great host of those who would be saved, and the number of those so chosen cannot be increased or diminished. In due time, Jesus of Nazareth died on the cross, and in that sacrifice He secured the salvation of all those chosen for salvation by the Father. And at some time in the earthly life of each person so chosen, the Holy Spirit brings that person to life, and enables him to persevere in holiness to the end. Those covenant members who are not elect in the decretal sense enjoy the common operations of the Spirit in varying degrees, but not in the same way that those who are elect do.

We deny that the unchangeable nature of these decrees prevents us from using the same language in covenantal ways as we describe our salvation from within that covenant. We further deny this covenantal usage is “pretend” language, even where the language and terminology sometimes overlap with the language of the decrees. The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children, that we may keep the words of this law. We affirm the reality of the decrees, but deny that the decrees “trump” the covenant. We do not set them

³² “The Sacrament of Baptism” (https://web.archive.org/web/20110710233937/http://www.federal-vision.com/resources/joint_FV_Statement.pdf, accessed April 22, 2023).

³³ “Covenant, Baptism, and Salvation” by Steve Wilkins in *The Federal Vision*, 63.

against each other, but expect them to harmonize perfectly as God works out all things in accordance with His will.³⁴

To understand the implications of the claim “covenant members who are not elect in the decretal sense” it needs to be understood framed by the FV doctrine of covenant election. This FV doctrine is explicit in the JFVP in the section “The Sacrament of Baptism”: “*We affirm* that God formally unites a person to Christ and to His covenant people through baptism into the triune Name, and that this baptism obligates such a one to lifelong covenant loyalty to the triune God, each baptized person repenting of his sins and trusting in Christ alone for his salvation.”³⁵ According to the JFVP, the baptized are formally united to Christ and the church (“covenant people”). This is the doctrine of covenant election. This raises unanswered questions, e.g., What is a formal union? Is it an external union? A legal union? One thing is for certain, “formally united” does not correspond 1 to 1 to being effectually called, i.e., it is not salvific. Although the baptized enjoy covenant election (formally united to Christ and the church), in the final analysis, they may not be “elect in the decretal sense.” In the section on “Apostasy” this clarification is given: “The decretally elect cannot apostatize.” That is good to hear. But in an earlier section they say “All who are baptized into the triune Name are united with Christ in His covenantal life, and so those who fall from that position of grace are indeed falling from grace. The branches that are cut away from Christ are genuinely cut away from someone, cut out of a living covenant body.

³⁴ Steven Wedgworth makes an important observation about this section: “The problem with this statement is that it obscures the position of James Jordan. Though he signed the Joint FV Statement, this affirmation appears to stand in contradiction to what he wrote in his essay, “Thoughts on Sovereign Grace and Regeneration” (<https://calvinistinternational.com/2020/01/13/the-federal-vision-a-systematic-critique/>, accessed 4/25/2023). In that paper James Jordan says “the full and special benefit of atonement” has been applied to all that are in the Church (<https://theopolisinstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/edd/2017/11/32A-Thoughts-on-Sovereign-Grace-and-Regeneration.pdf>, accessed April 25, 2023).

³⁵ https://web.archive.org/web/20110710233937/http://www.federal-vision.com/resources/joint_FV_Statement.pdf, accessed April 24, 2023.

The connection that an apostate had to Christ was not *merely* external.” Those who are baptized “God formally unites . . . to Christ and to His covenant people” but this formal union is “not *merely* external.” Again, this raises many questions. What is a formal union? Is it an external union? A legal union? The problem in this section is that the impression is given that the baptized (covenant election) truly come to Christ. However, not all remain “united with Christ in His covenantal life” because it is possible for them to fall away and be “cut out of a living covenant body.” The contrasting implication is that only those who are baptized (covenant election) *and* persevere in covenant faithfulness will be saved. The FV desire to use, as they insist, “the same language [i.e., language used to describe the unchangeable nature of God’s decree] in covenantal ways as we describe our salvation within that covenant” at best muddles things up and at worst is doublespeak. As Dewey Roberts has explained, the FV doctrine of covenant election “effectively negates God’s eternal decree.”³⁶ Scripturally speaking, temporary partakers of Christ never truly come to Christ, and they never have true saving faith and redemptive grace of saving union with Christ.³⁷ Phrases like “connection that an apostate had to Christ was not *merely* external” contribute to an unqualified and undifferentiated view between those with an external/non-saving connection to Christ and those with an internal/saving connection to Christ. This section of the JFVP errs in diminishing and downplaying the subjective work of God’s grace for those who are unconditionally elected and effectually called.

FV and Regeneration

In the JFVP, there are different uses of the word regeneration. In the section titled

³⁶ Dewey Roberts, *Historic Christianity and the Federal Vision*, 216.

³⁷ WCF 3.6; 10.4; WLC 59, 68; Romans 8:30; John 6:37, 39, 64-66;

“The Sacrament of Baptism,” the stylized “Regeneration” (capital letter R) is used to refer to the time when Jesus Christ sits on his throne (Matthew 19:28). According to the JFVS, baptism “formally engrafts a person into the Church” and “into the Regeneration.” This “Regeneration” is also mentioned in the section titled “The Church”: “In establishing the Church, God has fulfilled His promise to Abraham and established the Regeneration [capital letter R] of all things. God has established this Regeneration [capital letter R] through Christ – in Him we have the renewal of life in the fulness of life in the new age of the kingdom of God.” In the section on “The Sacrament of Baptism,” the JFVP says “*We deny* that baptism automatically guarantees that the baptized will share in the eschatological church. *We deny* the common misunderstanding of baptismal regeneration [small letter r] – i.e. that an “effectual call” or rebirth is automatically wrought in the one baptized. Baptism apart from a growing and living faith is not saving.” Also, in the latter section titled “Some Points of Intramural Disagreement” the JFVP adds this odd postscript: “The “Federal Vision” is not a monolithic movement . . . Some of these areas would include . . . whether or not personal regeneration represents a change of nature in a person so regenerated [small letter r]. Some of us say *yes* while others question whether we actually have such an “essence” that can *be* changed.”³⁸

³⁸ Contrary to the JFVP postscript, WCF 13.1 describes those who are effectually called as “regenerated, having a new heart, and a new spirit created in them.” Regeneration is a saving work of the Spirit. As A. A. Hodge explains, “All of those in whom God has by regeneration created a new spiritual nature continue under his gracious influence” (*Confession of Faith*, 194). A new spiritual nature is a change of nature, period. For an example of a JFVP signee who denies regeneration as a change of nature, see James Jordan, “Thoughts on Sovereign Grace and Regeneration: Some Tentative Explorations” (<https://theopolisinstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/edd/2017/11/32A.-Thoughts-on-Sovereign-Grace-and-Regeneration.pdf>, accessed April 25, 2023). James Jordan does not view John 3 as a passage about the work of the Spirit in the personal regeneration of a sinner. Jordan claims, “Entrance into the New Creation, thus, is what John 3 is about. That entrance is by baptism . . . Spiritual birth is birth into the New Creation. It is not a matter of an internal change in an individual, but the movement of the whole individual (and/or culture) into the new sphere of the Spirit in the new age that dawned on Pentecost in Acts 2” (13).

I assume the shift from capital letter R “Regeneration” to small letter r “regeneration” was intentional. This use of “Regeneration”/“regeneration” is unfortunate and confusing. I don’t believe it was the original intent of the signees to commit a fallacy of equivocation, but I’m concerned that the average layman reading the document would inadvertently commit a fallacy of equivocation, i.e., a reader taking the JFVP at a plain reading of the text will easily be led to believe that regeneration is one of the benefits of baptism, but that folks can also fall away from (forfeit) regeneration. This is obviously a significant pastoral concern.

FV and Justification

There are a several sections of the JFVP that deal with the doctrine of justification. Interestingly, under the section titled “Reformed Catholicity” it says:

We affirm that justification is through faith in Jesus Christ, and not through works of the law, whether those works were revealed to us by God, or manufactured by man. Because we are justified through faith in Jesus alone, we believe that we have an obligation to be in fellowship with everyone that God has received into fellowship with Himself.

We deny that correct formulations of the doctrine of *sola fide* can be substituted for genuine faith in Jesus, or that such correct formulations can be taken as infallible indicators of a true faith in Jesus.

And from the section “Justification by Faith Alone” it says:

We affirm we are saved by grace alone, through faith alone. Faith alone is the hand which is given to us by God so that we may receive the offered grace of God. Justification is God’s forensic declaration that we are counted as righteous, with our sins forgiven, for the sake of Jesus Christ alone.

We deny that the faith which is the sole instrument of justification can be understood as anything other than the only kind of faith which God gives, which is to say, a living, active, and personally loyal faith. Justifying faith encompasses the elements of assent, knowledge, and living trust in accordance with the age and maturity of the believer. *We deny* that faith is ever alone, even at the moment of the effectual call.

Much of what the JFVP says about justification is unobjectionable. The JFVP could be

improved by clarifying that the works of “a living, active, and personally loyal faith” do not belong to faith as an instrument of justification. However, what is certainly objectionable is what some of the signees of the JFVP write about justification elsewhere. What is stated on justification in the JFVP is obscured in their other writings.

For example, Rich Lusk says: “Works of faith filled obedience, in a secondary way, cause our final justification and salvation. Works are the means through which we may come into possession of eternal life. The path of obedience is the way we must trod if we are to be justified at the last day.”³⁹ The JFVP says justification is “God’s forensic declaration” but in the quote above Rich Lusk presents justification as a process. For the former formulation of justification, faith is an instrument and receptive, but, in the latter, faith is a means of process (procedural connotations). In an article from 2004, Rich Lusk clarified: “I insist that justification is fully forensic and is received by faith alone. With the Reformers, and against Trent, I view justification as a law court term, not a process of moral renewal. Justification is the divine verdict, pronounced over us once and for all, when we are united to Christ by faith. This does not preclude a future dimension to our justification, but it does not mean whatever justification is yet to come, when we are “openly acquitted” at the last day, will simply be a renewal and reapplication of the verdict already received at conversion (WSC 38).”⁴⁰ On the one hand, this seemingly sounds good, but, on the other hand, held up under due scrutiny, as Guy Prentiss Waters observed, this isn’t precisely a retraction, i.e., “When we consider that Lusk’s previous statements were attempts to reflect

³⁹ “A Response to ‘The Biblical Plan of Salvation’” by Rich Lusk in *The Auburn Avenue Theology, Pros and Cons: Debating the Federal Vision*, 128.

⁴⁰ Rich Lusk, “Rome Won’t Have Me” (<http://horns.org/theologia/rich-lusk/rome-wont-have-me>, accessed April 25, 2023).

positively and nonpolemically on justification; and that Lusk has, in his response to his critics, not retracted those statements, it becomes difficult to take these recent comments at face value. We may be grateful for Lusk's recent affirmations, but our appreciation must be tempered by his prior and contrary formulations that he has not retracted."⁴¹

Another example of how auxiliary writings by a FV signee relativize the JFVP can be found in Peter Leithart's writings. In his contribution to the 2004 publication, *The Federal Vision*, he says:

[T]he Protestant doctrine [of justification] has been too rigid in separating justification and sanctification, more rigid certainly than Scripture itself . . . justification and definitive sanctification are not merely simultaneous, nor merely twin effects of the single event of union with Christ (though I believe that is the case). Rather, they are the same act. God's declaration that we are justified *takes the form of deliverance* from sin, death, and Satan.⁴²

Several FV opponents have critiqued this.⁴³ Leithart expands the doctrine of justification to include "definitive sanctification," which is contrary to Scripture and the Westminster Standards.⁴⁴ The Westminster Standards do not teach that justification and sanctification

⁴¹ Guy Prentiss Waters, *The Federal Vision and Covenant Theology*, 92.

⁴² "Judge Me, O God" by Peter J. Leithart in *The Federal Vision*, 217. In a later work, Leithart elaborates on this assertion: "The account that follows makes two notable adjustments to the standard view of justification, the first having to do with the *meaning* of the term and the second having to do with the *referent*, the real-life event that Paul describes as justification. I argue below that *justify* is, as Protestant theology has insisted, a juridical/legal term referring to the judgment of God in favor of a sinner. In contrast to some standard Protestant soteriologies, though, Paul treats this judgment not as a *mere* verdict of "righteous" that is the *basis* for liberation, but as *itself* an act of deliverance. The verdict of justification *does* change a person's status . . . Yet as a judicial act justification transforms a person's life-situation as well as their status. A justified person dies and rises in Christ, and so is delivered from sin, death and the dominion of flesh. Justification is, to introduce my neologism, a "deliverdict," a forensic act, a judicial verdict that in its very forensic character is an act of deliverance" (*Delivered From the Elements of the World: Atonement, Justification, Mission* [Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2016], 180-181). Again, these auxiliary writings by Leithart relativize the section on justification in the JFVP.

⁴³ See Guy Prentiss Waters, *The Federal Vision and Covenant Theology*, 82-86; URCNA's "Report of the Synodical Committee on the Federal Vision and Justification," 57-58.

⁴⁴ Romans 4:5-8; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21; Romans 3:22-28; 4:6-8; 5:17-19; Titus 3:5; Galatians 2:16; 3:11; John 1:12; Philippians 3:9; WCF 11.

are the same act. In justification, God pardons our sins and accepts us as righteous for the sake of Christ, which we receive by faith (WSC 33), and this “act of God” is indiscernible to others. Sanctification, however, is a work of God that enables a justified sinner to die unto sin and live unto righteousness (WSC 35), and that work is discernable to others.⁴⁵

Conclusion

This paper only scratched the surface and briefly interacted with the articles, books, and websites of various FV proponents and opponents. I hope this paper has demonstrated some of the particular aspects of my disagreement with FV theology. In Spring 2022, while exploring ministerial opportunities, a PCA pastoral search committee asked me about my views on the FV. Their question was casual and open-ended, but I thought it might be helpful to the MPW C & C Committee to compare what I’ve written here with what I sent to

⁴⁵ When a justified sinner ceases to serve sin (Romans 6:6), that change is discernable to others.

them at that time.⁴⁶

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Auburn Avenue Presbyterian Church Pastors' Conference – Federal Vision. Audio Recordings, January 2002. Accessed at: <https://archive.org/details/2002TheFederalVision> on April 18, 2023.

A Call to Repentance. Resolution Adopted by Reformed Presbyterian Church In The United States (RPCUS), June 22, 2002. Accessed at: <https://web.archive.org/web/20070928130145/http://rpcus.com/content/Resolutions.pdf> on April 18, 2023.

A Joint Federal Vision Profession. FV Statement, 2007. Accessed at: https://web.archive.org/web/20110710233937/http://www.federal-vision.com/resources/joint_FV_Statement.pdf on April 17, 2023.

⁴⁶ “I haven’t listened to or read most of the primary sources of the Federal Vision controversy, e.g., I haven’t listened to the 2002 Auburn Avenue Conference “The Federal Vision: An Examination of Reformed Covenantalism”; I haven’t read *“Reformed” Is Not Enough* by Wilson; I’ve read one or two chapters in *The Federal Vision*, eds. Wilkins and Garner; I haven’t read *The Auburn Avenue Theology – Pros & Cons – Debating the Federal Vision*, ed. Beisner; etc. I’ve read two secondary works/critiques (*The Federal Vision and Covenant Theology* by Waters and *Historic Christianity and the Federal Vision* by Roberts), and I’ve read some of the historic online/blog debates (e.g., Green Baggins & Doug Wilson), but going back and reading some of those online interactions years after the fact hasn’t been very illuminating.

“On the one hand, I want to provide accurate information about my views on the Federal Vision, but, on the other hand, I don’t have much to say since I haven’t meaningfully interacted with the majority of the sources. However, based on what little I have read, I believe many Federal Vision claims are dubious, and warrant/support is highly tentative. I think many Federal Vision claims are vague, come across as an attempt at cleverly talking in circles, and frequently appear to be a confusion of important historic theological distinctions. In the past, I use to say I thought the controversy was a pedagogical dispute, i.e., folks arguing about the best way to talk about and/or teach shared theological principles and convictions, but I no longer think or say that. It seems to me that the disagreement is not just about how things are said but also the very content of what is said.

“I think the most helpful way to summarize my views on the Federal Vision is to identify aspects of the 2007 “Federal Vision Joint Statement” (FVJS) that I disagree with: I disagree that (1) “historical church and eschatological church” are helpful distinctions; (2) I disagree with the FVJS downplaying (denying?) the imputation of the active obedience of Christ; (3) I disagree with the assertion that the fundamental division of Law/Gospel “is not in the text, but rather in the human heart”; (4) I disagree with the FVJS implying that an apostate has something more than an external connection to Christ; (5) I disagree with the FVJS emphasis on baptism “formally” uniting a person to Christ and “formally” engrafting a person into the Church; (5) I disagree with drafting a theological statement to supplement historic Reformed Confessions and only including one scriptural prooftext; (6) I disagree that it is “pastorally best to use biblical language and phrasing in the preaching and teaching of the Bible in the Church”; (7) in summary, I’m concerned with the FV and I think it has been a pastorally unhelpful theological project/theological hobby horse that in effect catechizes folks to be overly man-centric/church-centric rather than Theocentric/Christocentric. In summary, I have not found the standard FV assertions compelling or pastorally helpful” (Private Correspondence: May 6, 2022).

Beisner, E. Calvin, ed. *The Auburn Avenue Theology, Pros and Cons: Debating the Federal Vision: The Knox Theological Seminary Colloquium on the Federal Vision*. Fort Lauderdale: Knox Theological Seminary, 2004.

The Constitution of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America – Being Its Standards Subordinate to the Word of God: The Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, the Testimony, the Directory for Church Government, the Book of Discipline, and the Directory of Public Worship. Pittsburgh: Crown & Covenant Publications, 2017.

The Federal Vision, edited by Steve Wilkins and Duane Garner. 2004; reprint, Monroe: Athanasius Press, 2013.

Fesko, J. V. *The Theology of the Westminster Standards: Historical Context and Theological Insights*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2014.

Hodge, A. A. *The Confession of Faith*. 1869; reprint, Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1998.

Jordan, James. "Thoughts on Sovereign Grace and Regeneration: Some Tentative Explorations." Biblical Horizons Occasional Paper No. 32, January 2003. Accessed at: <https://theopolisinstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/edd/2017/11/32A.-Thoughts-on-Sovereign-Grace-and-Regeneration.pdf> on April 25, 2023.

Keister, Lane. "The Preface." *Green Baggins* – Web Article 1 of 13, July 31, 2007 – Accessed at: <https://greenbaggins.wordpress.com/2007/07/31/the-preface/> on April 20, 2023.

Keister, Lane. "The Trinity and Postmillennialism [sic]." *Green Baggins* – Web article 2 of 13, August 1, 2007 – Accessed at: <https://greenbaggins.wordpress.com/2007/08/01/the-trinity-and-postmillennialism/> on April 20, 2023.

Keister, Lane. "Christians In Society" *Green Baggins* – Web Article 3 of 13, August 2, 2007 – Accessed at: <https://greenbaggins.wordpress.com/2007/08/02/christians-in-society/> on April 20, 2023.

Keister, Lane. "On Scripture." *Green Baggins* – Web Article 4 of 13, August 3, 2007 – Accessed at: <https://greenbaggins.wordpress.com/2007/08/03/on-scripture/> on April 20, 2023.

Keister, Lane. "Hermeneutics." *Green Baggins* – Web Article 5 of 13, August 6, 2007 – Accessed at: <https://greenbaggins.wordpress.com/2007/08/06/hermeneutics/> on April 20, 2023.

Keister, Lane. "Decrees and Covenant." *Green Baggins* – Web Article 6 of 13, August 7, 2007 – Accessed at: <https://greenbaggins.wordpress.com/2007/08/07/decrees-and-covenant/> on April 20, 2023.

- Keister, Lane. "The Church." *Green Baggins* – Web Article 7 of 13, August 8, 2007 – Accessed at: <https://greenbaggins.wordpress.com/2007/08/08/the-church-2/> on April 20, 2023.
- Keister, Lane. "Justification and Covenant." *Green Baggins* – Web article 8 of 13, August 9, 2007 – Accessed at: <https://greenbaggins.wordpress.com/2007/08/09/justification-and-covenant/> on April 20, 2023.
- Keister, Lane. "Bride's Baptism Revisited." *Green Baggins* – Web Article 9 of 13, August 10, 2007 – Accessed at: <https://greenbaggins.wordpress.com/2007/08/10/brides-baptism-revisited/> on April 20, 2023.
- Keister, Lane. "Lord's Supper and Imputation." *Green Baggins* – Web Article 10 of 13, August 13, 2007 – Accessed at: <https://greenbaggins.wordpress.com/2007/08/13/lords-supper-and-imputation/> on April 20, 2023.
- Keister, Lane. "Law and Gospel." *Green Baggins* – Web Article 11 of 13, August 14, 2007 – Accessed at: <https://greenbaggins.wordpress.com/2007/08/14/law-and-gospel/> on April 20, 2023.
- Keister, Lane. "Justification By Faith Alone?." *Green Baggins* – Web Article 12 of 13, August 16, 2007 – Accessed at: <https://greenbaggins.wordpress.com/2007/08/16/justification-by-faith-alone/> on April 20, 2023.
- Keister, Lane. "Assurance, Apostasy, and Areas of Alternate Assertions." *Green Baggins* – Web Article 13 of 13, August 20, 2007 – Accessed at: <https://greenbaggins.wordpress.com/2007/08/20/assurance-apostasy-and-areas-of-alternate-assertions/> on April 20, 2023.
- Keister, Lane. "The Preface to the Joint Federal Vision, Revisited." *Green Baggins* – Web Article, April 22, 2008 – Accessed at: <https://greenbaggins.wordpress.com/2008/04/22/the-preface-to-the-joint-federal-vision-revisited/> on April 20, 2023.
- Leithart, Peter J. *Delivered From the Elements of the World: Atonement, Justification, Mission*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2016.
- Lusk, Rich. "Rome Won't Have Me." Accessed at: <http://hornes.org/theologia/rich-lusk/rome-wont-have-me> on April 25, 2023.
- Otis, John M. *Danger in the Camp: An Analysis and Refutation of the Heresies of the Federal Vision*. Corpus Christi: Triumphant Publications, 2005.
- "Report of the Committee to Study the Doctrine of Justification." Presented to the Seventy-third (2006) General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Accessed at: <https://www.opc.org/GA/justification.html> on April 24, 2023.
- "Report of the Study Committee to Read and Evaluate Reports and Response of Fraternal (and other) Reformed Denominations and Institutions Concerning the 'Justification

Controversy.” Minutes of the One Hundred Seventy Seventh Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America: Geneva College, Beaver Falls, Pa. – June 23-26, 2008. Accessed at: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/19h7d6OGIsXQpPGMPg7euLbPaRYw37Ke6/view> on April 24, 2023.

“Report of the Special Committee to Study Justification in Light of the Current Justification Controversy.” Presented to 258th Synod of the Reformed Church of the United States, May 10-13, 2004. Accessed at: <https://rcus.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/RCUS-Position-Justification-Shepherd-2004.pdf> on April 22, 2023.

“Report of the Synodical Study Committee on the Federal Vision and Justification.” Adopted July 2010 by Synod London of the United Reformed Churches in North America (URCNA). Accessed at: https://www.urchna.org/urchna/StudyCommittees/FederalVision/Federal_Vision_Study_Committee_Report.pdf on April 22, 2023.

Van Dixhoorn, Chad. *Confessing the Faith: A Reader’s Guide to the Westminster Confession of Faith*. Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2014.

Waters, Guy Prentiss. *The Federal Vision and Covenant Theology: A Comparative Analysis*. Phillipsburg: P & R Publishing, 2006.

Wedgworth, Steven. “Giving Up the Ghost: What To Think of the Federal Vision After All These Years.” *The Calvinist International* – Web Article 1 of 6, November 8, 2019 – Accessed at: <https://calvinistinternational.com/2019/11/08/giving-up-the-ghost-what-to-think-of-the-federal-vision-after-all-these-years/> on April 20, 2023.

Wedgworth, Steven. “A Federal Vision History.” *The Calvinist International* – Web Article 2 of 6, November 18, 2019 – Accessed at: <https://calvinistinternational.com/2019/11/18/a-federal-vision-history/> on April 20, 2023.

Wedgworth, Steven. “Beginning to Explain The Theology of Federal Vision.” *The Calvinist International* – Web Article 3 of 6, December 19, 2019 – Accessed at: <https://calvinistinternational.com/2019/12/19/beginning-to-explain-theology-federal-vision/> on April 20, 2023.

Wedgworth, Steven. “Douglas Wilson and Justification.” *The Calvinist International* – Web Article 4 of 6, January 3, 2020 – Accessed at: <https://calvinistinternational.com/2020/01/03/douglas-wilson-and-justification/> on April 20, 2023.

Wedgworth, Steven. “The Federal Vision: Two Understandings of Salvation Held Together By One Name.” *The Calvinist International* – Web Article 5 of 6, January 8, 2020 – Accessed at: <https://calvinistinternational.com/2020/01/08/the-federal-vision-two-understandings-of-salvation-held-together-by-one-name/> on April 20, 2023.

Wedgworth, Steven. “The Federal Vision: A Systematic Critique.” *The Calvinist International* – Web Article 6 of 6, January 13, 2020 – Accessed at: <https://calvinistinternational.com/2020/01/13/the-federal-vision-a-systematic-critique/>

on April 20, 2023.