

IMMANUEL ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

meeting in Nobleton, ON

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As the elders of the Immanuel O.C.R.C. of Nobleton, we overture the Synod 2005 of the O.C.R.C. federation to declare that,

“We deny and reject any teaching or doctrine being taught under the name “Federal Vision” which contradicts the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession, the Canons of Dordt or Holy Scripture. The following teachings are representative of those we understand to be in error.”

A. TEACHING REGARDING THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION:

1) The works which are excluded from justification are restricted to those “*works of meritorious self-righteousness that only serve to mask gross sin and disobedience.*” Other works are included. Man is justified forensically not only by faith, but he is also justified forensically by all those “*works done in faith, according to the law of God, and for the glory of God*”. In justification, faith is equated with works done in faith.

Grounds for rejecting this teaching:

- a) This teaching strikes at the heart of the gospel and is a rejection of a central tenet of Reformational truth because it undermines justification by faith alone.
- b) This teaching is being taught under the Federal Vision banner (see below):
- c) This teaching is clearly contrary to our confessions (see below).

B. TEACHING REGARDING THE DOCTRINE OF THE IMPUTATION OF CHRIST'S ACTIVE OBEDIENCE:

2) There is no such notion as that of anyone “meriting” or “earning” anything in scripture. Therefore Christ’s perfect moral obedience to the law did not “earn” or “merit” anything for God’s people. Therefore there is no imputation of Christ’s active obedience. Only Christ’s passive obedience, --- namely what He did in going to the cross and suffering the penalty of our guilt and sin --- is imputed to us, rendering us forgiven and guilt-free.

Grounds for Rejecting this Teaching.

- a) It is clearly contrary to our confessions (see below) , the historical Reformed faith, and scripture which speak of the imputation of Christ’s active obedience and of His ‘merits’ on our behalf.
- b) It is being taught under the banner of the “Federal Vision” (see attached).

C. TEACHING REGARDING THE DOCTRINE OF THE SACRAMENTS:

3) Reformed Theology has undermined the importance, place, and efficacy of the sacraments. The sacraments are equal in importance with the Word. Neither are the sacraments are to be considered “means of grace”. They are “saving” grace. A covenant member who is a recipient of such “saving grace” and who is a believer (possessing true faith and it’s fruit) may completely apostatize and be a reprobate.

Grounds for Rejecting this Teaching:

- a) Our Reformed confessions distinguish the sign from the reality that is signified thereby. They also see the sacraments role not in the ‘working’ of faith but in the assurance and strengthening of faith.
- b) A form of sacramentalism is being taught by some under the Federal Vision banner (see attached).
- c) This sacramentalism fails to uphold the importance of the exercise of faith and repentance as essential factors in personally appropriating and receiving forever the reality that is pictured by the sacraments. It is often united to the doctrine of paedocommunion and is hesitant to recognize the scriptural distinctions between ‘saving’ faith and other ‘faith’.
- d) The result is a teaching, which affirms that even a believer who has exercised true faith and born the fruits of sanctification may completely apostatize. This results in a covenantal understanding that undermines the covenantal comfort of Lord’s Day 1 Q&A 1 and 54 of the Heidelberg Catechism and is in opposition to the doctrine of the ‘perseverance of the saints’.

Conclusion:

The aforementioned teachings have resulted in deep concern, in confusion and in division, among faithful Reformed and Presbyterian churches and denominations . While we recognize there is a measure of truth in the teachings of various proponents of a “Federal Vision”, there are very serious errors present among them. These threaten the unity, peace, and welfare of faithful churches of Christ. For this reason as OCRC Synod we must warn our Churches against an undiscerning acceptance of what is taught under the banner of “Federal Vision”, and to reject the serious errors with which it is affected.

For the consistory,

Rev. Maurice Luimes, chairman

Art VanVuuren, clerk