

1 **Report of the Complaint Review Committee**
2 **Appointed to Respond to the Complaint Filed Against the Action**
3 **Of Missouri Presbytery on January 8, 2011**
4 **In Finding No Strong Presumption of Guilt**
5 **in the Views of TE Jeffrey Meyers**

6
7
8 **Submitted on April 13, 2011**
9

10
11 **Introduction**
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13

14
15 **I. Background**
16

17 Upon the request of 29 signers of a letter of concern (LOC) sent to our Presbytery in March of
18 2010, a BCO 31-2 investigation was set up to investigate the views of TE Meyers, as the LOC
19 had alleged that he was guilty of opposing the Westminster Standards in his teaching. The
20 Meyers Investigation Committee (MIC) conducted the investigation and at a called meeting of
21 Presbytery on Saturday, January 8, 2011, the MIC presented its report (MICR) with its
22 recommendations that the Presbytery find no strong presumption of guilt in TE Meyers in any
23 of the doctrinal areas specified in the LOC. Missouri Presbytery (MOP) concurred with the
24 judgment of the MIC and voted to find no strong presumption of guilt in TE Meyers and to
25 clear his name of all accusations against him.
26

27 On January 16, 2011, TEs Jay Bennett and Joe Rolison filed with the Stated Clerk and the
28 Moderator a complaint (see BCO 43) against MOP for its finding no strong presumption of
29 guilt on the part of TE Meyers regarding his views and teaching. At its stated meeting on
30 Tuesday, January 18, 2011, a motion was adopted by MOP to authorize the Moderator to
31 appoint a committee to examine the complaint and return with a recommendation to the whole
32 Presbytery at the April 2011 stated meeting. Said complaint was submitted under the names
33 of TE Jay Bennett and TE Joe Rolison, and subsequently, TE Sean Sawyers and TE Charles
34 Kuykendall added their names to it. Moderator Lowell Pitzer appointed the following men to
35 serve on the Complaint Review Committee (CRC): REs George Poland and Charles Waldron,
36 and TEs Stephen Estock, Solomon Kendagor, Ron Lutjens (chair), Chris Polski and Mark
37 Ryan.
38

39 The Complaint Review Committee Report (CRCR) follows here. Complainants presented
40 four specifications of error in their complaint. The full and original body of the complaint is
41 included in this report as Appendix A. Then, sometime within the 30-day period allowed by
42 the BCO for the filing of a written complaint, complainants also submitted an “appendix,”
43 which, after consultation, the Stated Clerk, Moderator, and CRC agreed should be included as
44 part of the formal complaint. To avoid confusion in this report we have called this the
45 “Complaint Addendum.” There is however an unavoidable separate pagination for the
46 complaint addendum due to the format that it came in. This pagination issue forced us to
47 separate it from the complaint and include it here as Appendix C. The Complaint Addendum
48 consists entirely of an email list conversation (the email list was called “Wrightsaid”) between
49 2002-2004 in which TE Meyers took part.

1 **II. Layout of CRC Report**
2

3 A few comments on the layout of the report; in order to make it easier for readers to follow the
4 committee's response to the four specifications of error and the various arguments and pieces
5 of evidence presented to prove them, *the complaint is divided up into outline form and the*
6 *committee's response to each point in the complaint follows immediately after it is stated.* (To
7 get the flow of the whole complaint as it was written, please see Appendix A.)
8

9 Second, the responsibility of the Complaint Review Committee was to judge the credibility of
10 the complaint by a careful evaluation of the evidence it was presenting. Especially since
11 complainants introduced some material that the original MIC did not explicitly interact with in
12 its report, the Complaint Review Committee, after consultation with RE and SJC member,
13 Terry Jones, decided it was within the purview of its work to look, in particular, for any places
14 where this material from Internet blogs/websites/ and email list conversations might appear to
15 contradict TE Meyers' answers to the many MIC questions put to him and which were
16 presented to Presbytery at its January 8 meeting. In a few places where the claim of such a
17 contradiction seemed like it could, on the face of it, have some credibility, the CRC submitted
18 questions to TE Meyers asking him for clarification. **Those questions and answers are all in**
19 **one place at the end of this report as Appendix B, but segments of them are also cited in**
20 **the body of the report in the appropriate sections.** We ask the Presbytery to keep in mind
21 that the purpose of the Complaint Review Committee was not to conduct a comprehensive
22 investigation of TE Meyers' views and writings a second time but rather to take a fresh look,
23 in the light of our confessional standards, at what TE Meyers had written in his answers to the
24 MIC *and* to address specific allegations that material cited in the complaint and addendum and
25 not expressly dealt with in the MIC Report does, in fact, confirm complainants' judgment that
26 Missouri Presbytery erred in finding no presumption of guilt in TE Meyers at its January 8,
27 2011, meeting.
28

29 The Table of Contents you will find on the next page.
30

31
32 Respectfully submitted,
33

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35 REs George Poland and Charles Waldron, and TEs Stephen Estock, Solomon Kendagor, Ron
36 Lutjens (chair), Chris Polski and Mark Ryan
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43 **Appendix E (2010 MICR, including original MIC Q&A to TE Meyers).....Attached PDF**
44

Guidelines for reading this report

The committee has re-presented the whole complaint below, dividing it up into its constituent parts and responding to each, from beginning to end. But for easier reference, the committee structured the complaint in outline form and bolded all the numbers and letters. In the major headings the numbers/letters match those in the complaint, though we use Roman numerals I, II, III, IV, the standard format for an outline, while they used the Arabic 1, 2, 3, 4 to number the four allegations of error. In most places, after using the Roman numerals of the outline to identify which specification of error we are dealing with, we put in parentheses the Arabic number (and letter) corresponding to that specification of error as it is listed in the complaint itself; so for example one heading looks like this: **IV.D (4.d)**. The actual wording of the complaint remains as complainants wrote it, though to avoid confusion for readers, the committee corrected several typos—with one exception it was in places where a quotation mark had been mistakenly typed for an apostrophe. *We recommend printing out the whole complaint, Appendix A (part 1), and laying it next to you as you read through our section-by-section response to it in the following pages.*

We used different fonts/accents to represent the various “speakers” throughout the report, as they frequently change. For easy reference we include the key here:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1) Paragraphs in bold= | Complaint Review Committee’s Words |
| 2) <i>Paragraphs in italics=</i> | <i>Complainants’ Words</i> |
| 3) Indented paragraphs in regular font
with quotation marks= | TE Meyer’s Responses, other parties,
reports, and authors cited |

Do note, however, that throughout the report occasional words, phrases and sentences are bold or put in italics for emphasis.

Please excuse the inadvertent coincidence that the question and answer exchange between the Complaint Review Committee(CRC) and TE Meyers got labeled “Appendix B” in this report—the same designation that was given to the question and answer exchange between the Meyers Investigation Committee(MIC) and TE Meyers in the original BCO 31-2 investigation report. So do note that “CRC, Appendix B” is a different document than “MIC, Appendix B.”

This is a long report, and much of it is a re-presentation of the sound arguments already made in the Meyers Investigation Committee Report. *But we strongly recommend that presbyters read carefully through both Appendix A, the complaint, and Appendix B here in this report, new and detailed questions put to TE Meyers to clarify his answers already given to the MIC and recorded in their report.*

1 **Complaint Proper**

2
3 *And now this day, Sunday, January 16, 2011, TE M. Jay Bennett and TE Joseph E. Rolison*
4 *come and complain against the action of Missouri Presbytery on January 8, 2011, in*
5 *determining that there was insufficient evidence to raise a strong presumption of guilt in the*
6 *teachings of TE Jeffrey Meyers in the areas of covenant theology, the imputation of Christ's*
7 *merits, baptism, perseverance, and justification. We offer the following reasons:*
8
9

10 **Complaint With Embedded Response of the Complaint Review Committee**

11
12 **Specification of Error I (#1 in complaint)**

13 **I. Missouri Presbytery erred because it was biased against the signers of the letter of concern,**
14 **which led to the investigation.**

15
16 **Complainants seem to reason as follows:**

17 **An unjust and improper bias or prejudice from the outset against the 29 signers of the**
18 **LOC who were asking for a BCO 31-2 investigation prevented Missouri Presbytery from**
19 **having the objectivity it needed to assess fairly the allegations of heterodoxy in the beliefs**
20 **and teaching of TE Jeffrey Meyers.**

21
22 **The Question before the Complaint Review Committee (CRC):**

23 **Was MOP guilty of an improper and unjust bias against the 29 signers of the LOC from**
24 **the outset?**

25
26 **Complaint argument in I.A (#1):**

27 **A. The investigation began in the context of accusing the signers of the Letter of Concern with**
28 **violating the Ninth Commandment and stating, "The good name of TE Jeffrey Meyers has**
29 **already been dishonored." This statement indicates that these men thought that the**
30 **allegations were false before they conducted an investigation.**

31
32 **Committee Response to I.A (#1):**

33 **MOP did insist, in its April 27 letter to the 29 signers, that the way the LOC had been**
34 **formed, brought and published, "dishonor[ed]" "the good name of TE Meyers." And**
35 **your committee believes that this insistence was, in fact, evidence of an initial bias**
36 **against the allegations that TE Jeff Meyers was "opposing" our confessional standards;**
37 **we are not afraid of the term "bias." But it was not a bias that would rob the Presbytery**
38 **of all objectivity. Rather, it was a proper and required bias, an *initial prejudice* if you**
39 **will, constrained by both *justice* and firsthand *knowledge*, inclining us to believe the best**
40 **about TE Meyers until we had credible evidence to the contrary.**

41
42 **The *prejudice of justice* is simply the principle, embedded in the whole western legal**
43 **tradition, including ecclesiastical law, that a person is to be reckoned innocent until**
44 **proven guilty. If we are being faulted for that, we own the fault, gladly and with honor.**
45 **But there is also a proper *prejudice of knowledge*, an *initial prejudice* by which we had a**
46 **right to reckon TE Meyers innocent until an investigation should prove him guilty,**
47 **because we had gained firsthand knowledge of his doctrinal views through the many**
48 **conversations with him in the process of formulating the MOP 2006 statement. TE**
49 **Meyers was on that Presbytery committee, was intimately involved in the debates and**

1 **discussions surrounding the study and signed onto its affirmations and denials in the**
2 **end. That statement on FV issues was laid before the wider church, and no formal voice**
3 **was ever raised against it or action taken against it. We carefully underscored all this**
4 **for the signers of the LOC in our April 27 letter when we said to them:**

5
6 “We have already been in conversation with TE Meyers on all the doctrinal
7 matters you raise in your letter. We were, with due diligence, carrying out our
8 oversight responsibilities when we wrote, discussed, and debated a statement
9 on “Federal Vision” issues back in 2005-2006. It was adopted by Missouri
10 Presbytery in the winter of 2006. This statement was made available to the
11 wider public throughout the PCA and was included in our minutes that were
12 approved by the General Assembly. You even refer to our FV statement
13 approvingly in your letter to us. All members of our presbytery, including TE
14 Myers, have indicated that they are in accord with the fundamentals of the
15 system of doctrine set out in the confessional standards of the PCA and with
16 the doctrinal clarifications we articulated in our FV statement.”

17 (April 27, 2010 MOP letter, p.2)

18
19 **This firsthand knowledge of a man’s views that a Session or a Presbytery is likely to**
20 **have is precisely why BCO 39-3.2 cautions a higher court when it is reviewing a case**
21 **from a lower court. While we do not claim the situation envisioned below as an exact**
22 **parallel to the LOC and the MOP, the underlying principle is relevant: the most**
23 **accurate knowledge of a man’s views is most likely to belong to those in closest proximity**
24 **to him:**

25
26 “A higher court should ordinarily exhibit great deference to a lower court
27 regarding those factual matters which the lower court is more competent to
28 determine, because of its proximity to the events in question, **and because of**
29 **its personal knowledge and observations of the parties and witnesses**
30 **involved.** Therefore, a higher court should not reverse a factual finding of a
31 lower court, unless there is clear error on the part of the lower court.”
32 [emphasis added] (BCO 39-3.2)

33
34 **Now it is important to note that the prejudice toward innocence, rooted in justice and in**
35 **firsthand knowledge of a man and his views, is proper only as an *initial* prejudice and**
36 **cannot justifiably be maintained *as an investigation proceeds* if there is concrete and**
37 **credible evidence which contradicts it and points to the man’s guilt rather than his**
38 **innocence. But your committee believes that we can, without embarrassment, own the**
39 ***initial* prejudice we carried toward our brother, TE Meyers—the very bias complainants**
40 **fault the Presbytery for—the honorable prejudice constrained by justice that teaches us**
41 **to reckon a person innocent until proven guilty; and by knowledge, as numerous men in**
42 **our Presbytery had firsthand information regarding TE Meyers’ views through the long**
43 **deliberations of the 2006 FV study and the many private and public conversations about**
44 **it before, during and after its adoption.**

45
46 **Complaint argument in I.B (#1):**

47 **B. The investigation began in the context of accusing the signers of the Letter of Concern with**
48 **violating the Ninth Commandment....**

1 **Committee Response to I.B (#1):**

2 **Complainants seem to be reasoning not simply that MOP was presuming that TE**
3 **Meyers was faithful to our Standards and therefore had a “good name,” but also that its**
4 **criticism, in the April 27 letter, of the way the 29 signers had brought their allegations**
5 **revealed such an improper and profound bias in our Presbytery *against the signers* that**
6 **there was no way we could have the objectivity we needed in evaluating the allegations**
7 **the signers were bringing; and thus, from the outset, there was little possibility of a fair**
8 **and just investigation of TE Meyers.**

9
10 **While it is true that Missouri Presbytery criticized the way the 29 signers of the LOC**
11 **formed, brought and published allegations against TE Meyers at two crucial points, it is**
12 **not the case that criticizing a party’s *process* by which it brings allegations against**
13 **someone necessarily implies a prejudice that will make objectivity impossible in a**
14 **detailed and careful evaluation of the *content* of those allegations. To use a mundane and**
15 **non-ecclesiastical analogy that, nevertheless, illuminates the point: A son runs to his**
16 **mother with the claim that his younger brother has stolen something from a neighbor’s**
17 **house. But he blurts out this allegation against his younger brother in the middle of the**
18 **latter’s birthday party in front of all his friends. If, before investigating the allegation,**
19 **the mother takes the accusing son aside and chides him for making the accusation in**
20 **public rather than bringing it to her in private, does that count as evidence that she is**
21 **prejudiced or biased against his claim that his younger brother has stolen something?**
22 **No; that accusation would be a *non sequitur*—it simply does not follow.**

23
24 **MOP did allege, in its April 27 letter, that there were deep flaws in *the way* the 29**
25 **signatories brought allegations against TE Meyers, namely, that 1) before accusing him**
26 **of “opposing the Westminster Standards” they (at least someone representing them) had**
27 **a duty before the Lord to talk to TE Meyers in order to be sure they were not**
28 **misconstruing words and intentions of his that they cited as evidence against him, and 2)**
29 **that either by their carelessness or their initiative (at least some of them), they were at**
30 **fault for making public on the Internet from the outset their allegations against TE**
31 **Meyers when, in fact, for the sake of his honor, those allegations should have been**
32 **passed on to MOP and no one else.**

33
34 **We regarded both of these flaws as profound and egregious, especially the latter. The**
35 **LOC was published on the Internet right away, well before Missouri Presbytery was**
36 **able to respond carefully to it. Many in our Presbytery interpreted that Internet**
37 **“broadcast” as virtually making public accusations against a man who had not even**
38 **been properly investigated, a clear violation of due process, and something the vast**
39 **majority of our presbyters found appalling.**

40
41 **Complainants’ argument is that we could not take *the content* of the signers’ allegations**
42 **seriously *because* we found deep flaws in *the process* by which they brought them. But**
43 **we deny the inference; it simply does not follow. From the outset we regarded this whole**
44 **controversy as being comprised of two related but distinguishable issues: 1) the question**
45 **as to whether the content of one of our pastor’s theology was orthodox or not, and 2) the**
46 **question as to whether those who want to allege heterodoxy in a fellow elder are bound**
47 **by canons of integrity and charity in the way they arrive at and communicate those**
48 **convictions, and if so, what are those canons, those standards.**

1 **From the outset we saw *two* issues before us. This double focus was clearly expressed in**
2 **our April 27 letter to the 29 signers, because we felt so strongly that *both* issues needed to**
3 **be faced. MOP wrote:**

4
5 “Please know that we are investigating these allegations, and that in fact, Jeff
6 Meyers has himself asked for this investigation because he has felt aggrieved
7 by your report, finding it to be most injurious to him and his good name and
8 ministry. We have no intention of refusing to act in this doctrinal matter—and
9 indeed, we are acting, as these are very serious issues for us. You are right to
10 remind us of our duty to exercise care over those who are subject to our
11 authority, our brothers in the Lord and fellow presbyters. But it is precisely this
12 care of our brothers to which we have pledged ourselves to that constrains us to
13 raise questions with you now about the way in which you went about making
14 these allegations. We have erected a committee to investigate these allegations
15 against TE Meyers. But we feel conscience-bound, as we signal them to begin
16 their work, to ask you to consider humbly before the Lord whether you have
17 acted in love toward your brother, Jeff Meyers, and in faithfulness to your
18 ordination vows when you pledged yourselves to be “zealous and faithful in
19 maintaining the truths of the gospel and the purity and **peace and unity** of the
20 church.”

21
22 **There is no credibility in the charge that Presbytery’s allegations of wrongdoing**
23 **with regard to *how* the 29 signers brought their accusations of doctrinal infidelity**
24 **against TE Meyers prove that its presbyters were incapable of an objective**
25 **assessment, upon investigation, of the *content* of those accusations.**

26
27 **Complaint argument in I.C (#1):**

28 **C. In addition, they [MOP] demonstrated that they thought the signers had sinned in sending**
29 **the letter to them:**

30 “We also consider your actions to be out of accord with the clear biblical injunction to
31 put the cause of another’s honor even before our own.” This was contrary to the
32 letter’s insistence that we should contact someone directly before we make such
33 allegations. Thus, the Presbytery clearly erred from the outset by applying a standard
34 to the signers that they did not even apply to themselves.

35
36 **Committee Response to I.C (#1):**

37 **The claim here is that MOP was operating with a double standard with regard to 9th**
38 **commandment requirements and that this counts as evidence of *bias against* the 29**
39 **signers of the LOC. In other words, they are inferring bias from inconsistency.**
40 **But we deny that, in fact, MOP did operate with a double standard. On June 23,**
41 **moderator Lutjens sent the following email to Wes White, originator of the LOC:**

42
43 “After thinking about your contention that, by our own principles vis-à-vis
44 WLC on the 9th commandment, we should have contacted the signers and
45 made inquiries before we made accusations re their going public with the
46 allegations against Jeff Meyers, there are two things I want to say:

47 1. Before we ever sent the [April 27] letter we had seen your website,
48 where you had posted Aquila Report links and were publicly referring to the
49 letter of allegations against TE Meyers there [on his website], and that was

1 within a couple of days of our receiving it. So we knew one signer at least was
2 involved in publishing the documents [e.g., the two documents in the LOC].
3 (As an aside here: Your insistence that you were only ‘indirectly’ involved in
4 their publication seems, frankly, to be taking refuge in a technicality. You sent
5 them to Don Clements--who works for a news organization—with no
6 instructions not to publish them?! That involves you in their publication as the
7 instigating person. It doesn’t really matter that you didn't post them on your
8 own website. Is it really possible that none of the other signers were concerned
9 that the letter and supporting document not be made public because it really
10 was a matter for our court alone?)

11 2. Your previous response to me completely ignores the qualifications
12 in our letter that I pointed out to you. Here are the exact words from our letter:
13 ‘Despite the Catechism’s warning that we sin when we "prejudice...the
14 good name of our neighbors,” **some of you**, apparently, either passed
15 on these allegations against TE Meyers to others who then broadcast
16 them across cyber space by putting them online within a couple days of
17 our receiving them, or you broadcast them on the internet yourselves.
18 And this was well before our Presbytery had an opportunity even to
19 consider them. We should note here that on April 8 we received with
20 gratitude the apology of eight of your signers who took offense at the
21 way these allegations were made public so quickly. **We want to be**
22 **careful, because we do not know how many of you knew and**
23 **approved of these documents being made public; some of you**
24 **clearly did not.** But what has happened is a very serious thing.
25 Whereas the 9th commandment enjoins upon you as Christians the duty
26 of “discouraging slanderers,” you have—**at least some of you**—by
27 broadcasting these unexamined allegations of wrongdoing across the
28 world, actually encouraged and abetted slander against Jeff
29 Meyers...’.[emphasis added] (MOP April 27 letter, pp.4-5)

30 Three times in the above paragraph we qualify our accusation against the 29
31 signers: it is not an across-the-board allegation; it is conditional upon the
32 signers' own involvement in publicizing the documents. That's why we say
33 ‘some of you’ twice and why we say ‘we want to be careful.’ The essence of
34 what we said, by clear implication, is, ‘If you were involved in publicizing
35 those documents, we believe you did wrong and here's why.’ It is important to
36 read carefully so as not to misunderstand what is being said and especially
37 what isn't being said. I'm asking you, Wes, to take our qualifications in the
38 letter seriously, because we meant them.”

39
40 **And the CRC denies as well that MOP used a double standard in its April 27 letter when**
41 **it alleged that the 29 signers had violated the 9th commandment by not contacting TE**
42 **Meyers personally to clarify his intentions and words before they leveled allegations**
43 **against him. Complainants imply that we should not have, without verifying it with the**
44 **29 signers, assumed the truth of Jeff Meyers’ insistence that none of them had**
45 **communicated with him personally since 2006 (when he signed onto the MOP FV**
46 **statement). The fact is, MOP did *not* assume the truth of TE Meyers’ insistence. Again,**
47 **here is exactly what we said to the signers in the letter:**
48

1 “You have sent us various statements pulled from Jeff Meyers’ writings,
2 isolated from their context. It is incumbent on our investigative committee to
3 go back and carefully examine these statements—in their original context, and
4 you may be sure they will. But we would ask, **Have all of you who signed the**
5 **letter felt yourselves obligated too, to read TE Meyers’ statements in their**
6 **original context? We hope so; but we are hard pressed to presume it.**
7 Because **if**, as TE Meyers maintains, none of you have spoken to him
8 personally about his views in the last few years, then clearly you are putting on
9 his words your construction rather than his, **apparently** with little regard to the
10 danger—warned against in our confessional standards—of misconstruing TE
11 Meyers’ words and intentions, and therefore, with little regard to the danger of
12 distorting his teaching, of creating a caricature of it which could cast a shadow
13 over his good name and ministry.”[emphasis added] (MOP April 27 letter, p. 3)
14

15 **That qualification, “IF...none of you have spoken to him personally about his views in**
16 **the last few years...” is hugely important, since it exonerates from the allegation about**
17 **breaking the 9th commandment anyone and everyone who, in fact, *did* communicate**
18 **personally with TE Meyers sometime over the past few years. Complainants now, as**
19 **some of the signatories did earlier on, ignore the careful qualifications in our April 27**
20 **letter. We find that distressing because a careful reading of the April 27 letter—as well**
21 **as our desire to keep it private between us and the 29 signers—shows that MOP was**
22 **interested in having a conversation about how we process theological disagreements as a**
23 **church; we were not simply out to bash—with the cudgel of a counter-charge—those**
24 **making allegations against one of our own.**
25

26 **And finally, the CRC would call attention to the fact that upon learning, through the**
27 **months following our April 27 letter, that we do not seem to have a common standard in**
28 **the PCA for applying the 9th commandment to theological controversies, MOP did**
29 **formally withdraw the allegations against the signers at its January 8, 2011 called**
30 **meeting. And in withdrawing them, the Presbytery did, once more, invite the signers—**
31 **and anyone else in the church interested in these things—into a civil conversation about**
32 **the application of the 9th commandment to doctrinal disputes. We believe those two**
33 **actions imply something positive about the motives of MOP in its initial protest to the**
34 **signers over their methods.**
35

36 CONCLUSION

37 The question before the Complaint Review Committee (CRC):

38 **Was MOP guilty of an improper and unjust bias against the 29 signers of the LOC from**
39 **the outset?**
40

41 Finding of the CRC on complaint specification of Error I (#1 in complaint):

42 **The committee determines that MOP was not improperly and unjustly biased toward**
43 **the signers such that it lacked the objectivity necessary to conduct a fair BCO 31-2**
44 **investigation. The *initial* bias toward the innocence of TE Meyers was, in fact, just and**
45 **proper; and it is our judgment that, as the investigation began, Presbytery was**
46 **committed, and capable of being open to, the possibility that TE Meyers might prove to**
47 **be guilty of the allegations against him.**
48
49

1 **Recommendation:**

2 **That the complaint regarding specification of error I (#1) be denied, namely, that MOP**
3 **erred by being unjustly and improperly biased against the signers and in favor of TE**
4 **Meyers when it received the allegations against him.**

5
6
7 *****

8
9
10 **Specification of Error II (#2 in the complaint)**

11 **II. Missouri Presbytery erred because it did not properly weigh the evidence.**

12 *According to the Missouri Presbytery Investigative Committee Report (MICR),*

13 *“Context, emphasis, purpose, and **considering the full corpus of a [sic] what a person***
14 ***has written and taught** are all crucial factors in accurately interpreting the meaning*
15 *of his individual statements” [MICR, 24, emphasis original].*

16 *However on several points the committee did not demonstrate that they properly considered*
17 *the full corpus and context of Meyers’ writings.*

18
19 **Complainants seem to reason as follows:**

20 **TE Meyers’ answers to the MIC are not a true and full statement of his convictions and**
21 **had the MOP done a more thorough investigation it would have concluded that a strong**
22 **enough presumption of guilt existed in order to bring him to trial for opposing the**
23 **Westminster Standards.**

24
25 **The question then before the Complaint Review Committee (CRC):**

26 **Did the MOP properly weigh the evidence in its BCO 31-2 investigation of TE Meyers?**

27
28 **Complaint argument in II.A (#2.a):**

29 **A. TE Meyers signed the Joint Federal Vision Profession (JFVP) in 2007 as a representation**
30 **of his “honest convictions” (p. 1). In addition, the MICR page 108 states that TE Meyers**
31 **helped compose the JFVP.**

32 **1. But the committee [MIC] said:**

33 *“We believe TE Meyers” own words should be given precedence over*
34 *the conjectures that can be drawn from broad statements contained in*
35 *the JFVP.”*

36 **2. The committee wrongly downplayed the words in the JFVP contrary to their**
37 **own document and the rules of evidence.**

38
39 **Committee’s Response to II.A (#2.a):**

40 **The complainants’ argument—that the MIC did not properly consider the “context of**
41 **Meyers’ writings”—follows from their interpretation of the following statement in the**
42 **MICR,**

43
44 *“We believe that TE Meyers’ own words should be given precedence over the*
45 *conjectures that can be drawn from broad statements contained in the JFVP” (MICR*
46 *p.6).*

47
48 **Complainants take this statement to mean that the MIC did not really consider TE**
49 **Meyers’ signing of the JFVP to be a profession of his own faith, i.e., that his answers to**

1 the MIC questions were really more his “own words” than the JFVP affirmations and
2 denials were. Hence, so complainant’s reason, the MIC was able to play up the
3 significance of Meyers’ answers to its own questions and play down the significance of
4 TE Meyers’ having signed on to the JFVP.
5

6 But complainants misunderstand what the MIC was asserting in that statement. When
7 it said “We believe that TE Meyers’ own words should be given precedence over the
8 conjectures that can be drawn from broad statements contained in the JFVP,” it was not
9 contrasting Meyers’ answers to the MIC questions with his JFVP affirmations and
10 denials *in a general way*, investing one with credal significance while denying that
11 significance to the other. The contrast intended is between, on the one hand, guesses and
12 conjectures of others as to what a broadly stated proposition in a document like the
13 JFVP might mean and imply, and, on the other hand, the explanation in his own words
14 of what that broad statement means and implies *given by one who himself signed on to*
15 *that document* as a profession of his faith. In fact, the MIC put specific questions to TE
16 Meyers as to what he understood himself to be affirming in some of the statements in the
17 JFVP and he answered them.
18

19 We believe the MIC was right to give priority to TE Meyers’ interpretation of those
20 JFVP statements he signed (e.g., his “own words” of explanation and elucidation spelled
21 out in his answers to the MIC) rather than to the interpretation some others might put
22 on those words. It is a violation of the judgment of charity for others to tell a man what
23 he must have meant by affirming or denying a certain statement.
24

25 In addition to this the CRC suspects another underlying assumption of the complainants
26 in this first section (II.A), namely, that any man who identifies with FV in some way and
27 has put his name to documents authored by other men who claim the same (i.e. the
28 JFVP), must, de facto, be guilty of doctrinal infidelity and placed on trial for it on the
29 grounds of the GA’s adoption of the declarations in the 2007 Ad-Interim Report on the
30 Federal Vision. But there is a problem with this logic: The FV movement is not
31 monolithic, and on p. 2, line 1 of the 2007 General Assembly Ad Interim Report on the
32 Federal Vision the GA committee states exactly that when they say,
33

34 “We further recognize that there are a variety of viewpoints among FV teachers and
35 writers.”
36

37 Wholesale, blanket condemnations of movements are usually very inaccurate and
38 therefore unjust. No church court of the PCA has condemned *everything* that every
39 person associated the FV believes and teaches. That is why the measure of a man’s
40 fidelity to the Westminster Standards cannot be the views of men identified with FV but
41 rather the judgment of the appropriate church court *as it is makes its own judgments and*
42 *by doctrinal guidelines laid down by higher courts*. And here we would simply mention
43 that the MIC duly pressed TE Meyers on the point as to whether he could affirm all the
44 declarations of the 2007 Ad-Interim Report on the Federal Vision and while he does
45 disagree with much of *the reasoning in that report*, he answered that indeed, he is able to
46 affirm its formal *declarations*, with a few qualifications he laid out for the MIC (see
47 MICR, Appendix B, JJM Q and A, p. 3)
48

1 **That awareness left MOP no other choice but to focus its 31-2 investigative efforts not on**
2 **trying to discern whether the views of other men associated with FV are faithful to the**
3 **Standards, and then measuring TE Meyers by that, but rather on the individual and**
4 **particular views of TE Meyers who is accused of opposing the Westminster Standards.**
5

6 **Those who have been outspoken in their opposition to FV teaching have been highly**
7 **critical of TE Meyers for signing on to the 2007 JFVP. They may wonder why a man**
8 **who claims his views are in accord with the Confession of Faith would have anything to**
9 **do with the FV movement, a movement they see as being deeply hostile to our**
10 **Westminster Standards. When questioned about this precise issue by the CRC, TE**
11 **Meyers made clear why he was a signatory to the JFVP when he answered:**
12

13 “I didn’t write the JFVP. I signed that document because of all sorts of false
14 accusations that were floating around about myself and my friends. The document
15 was written to answer outrageous criticisms of “our” theological positions. It was not
16 written in response to the 2007 GA report, at least not in response to the declarations.
17 There were, however, many misleading things said in the body of that 2007 report and
18 I believe some of the JFVP was written to clarify and correct those mistakes. Just look
19 at my lengthy critique of the 2007 GA report to see how often the theological positions
20 of the men being reviewed were distorted or misrepresented. The JFVP was designed
21 to clear the air of popular caricatures and to restore “our” Reformed *bona fides*, if you
22 will. I don’t believe there is anything in the JFVP that was meant to be an explicit
23 denial of the declarations adopted at the conclusion of the report”(CRCR Appendix
24 **B, p. 100 in this report).**
25

26 **Nevertheless, out of respect for the concerns expressed in the original LOC and out of a**
27 **sense of duty to determine whether the honest convictions of TE Meyers were in accord**
28 **with our system of doctrine, the MIC took TE Meyers’ signature on the JFVP quite**
29 **seriously. This is evidenced by the inclusion of numerous questions about the JFVP that**
30 **the MIC put to TE Meyers in the course of the investigation. (Note the following sections**
31 **in the MICR for evidence of its reference to the JFVP: *MICR, Appendix B, p. 24, lines 8-***
32 ***13; p. 56, lines 13-17, to cite just two examples.*)**
33

34 **Further, the MIC also made use of two important reports that helped to illuminate the**
35 **issues it was dealing with. The first of these was the 2007 General Assembly Ad Interim**
36 **Report on the Federal Vision. The second was the 2006 Missouri Presbytery Report on**
37 **the Federal Vision which can be found in full in Appendix D at the end of this report.**
38 **(*MICR, Appendix B, Meyers Q and A, p. 3 lines 6-10; p. 13 lines 20-26 are just two***
39 ***examples of many instances that can be found of the usage of these reports in the MICR).***
40

41 **For several reasons we believe the 2006 MOP Report on the Federal Vision figured**
42 **prominently in the MIC’s investigation of the allegations against TE Meyers.**
43

44 **First, the committee that produced the 2006 Missouri Presbytery Report on the Federal**
45 **Vision included members of the 2010 MIC, TE Meyers, and a number of other TEs and**
46 **REs from the MOP. Their work was extensive and detailed, covering a period of over a**
47 **year.**
48

1 **Secondly, during this period of time members of the MOP became very familiar with the**
2 **views of TE Meyers. His “signing off on” the affirmations and denials that made up that**
3 **report were (and still are, according to him) TE Meyers’ honest convictions.**

4
5 **Third, the 2006 FV report was *formally adopted* by the Missouri Presbytery, meaning**
6 **that its contents became Presbytery’s official interpretation of contested questions**
7 **arising from the FV controversy.**

8
9 **Fourth, MOP’s 2006 FV report passed through review and control at General Assembly**
10 ***without objection.***

11
12 **In our view, these factors are critically important because the work done on that 2006**
13 **report, along with the extensive Q and A exchange between the MIC and TE Meyers in**
14 **the fall of 2010 during the BCO 31-2 investigation, constitute the clearest possible**
15 **framing of TE Meyers’ convictions in his “own words” because they were given under**
16 **the direct supervision of a PCA Court, they are the most recent statements of TE**
17 **Meyers, and they were debated, articulated and understood within the context of real**
18 **relationships with brother elders in the MOP over a period of years.**

19
20 **We note these factors because none of the signatories to the current complaint were**
21 **members of the MOP in 2006 and perhaps they were unaware of the extensive give and**
22 **take on issues related to FV that took place in the MOP between 2004-2006. In any case,**
23 **their absence from that collegial and cordial, if sometimes-disputatious conversation**
24 **does put them, we believe, at a distinct disadvantage when it comes to the question of**
25 **what TE Meyers believes. We cannot help wonder if any of the complainants took**
26 **initiative during the past several years to overcome that disadvantage by sitting down**
27 **with TE Meyers, their brother in Christ, and talking with him personally about his views**
28 **if they were troubled by them. We hope they did, but we have no assurances to that**
29 **effect. There is no substitute for humble, face-to-face, iron-sharpening-iron conversation**
30 **when there is tension and disagreement. God himself—amazingly—invited his people to**
31 **"sit with him" in conversation, as it were, when through Isaiah he pleaded, "Come now,**
32 **let us reason together, says the Lord" (Isaiah 1:18).**

33
34 **Even so, to be certain that the core concerns of the signatories to the LOC were being**
35 **addressed, the MIC gave them (and any members of the MOP who had similar**
36 **concerns) ample opportunity to advise the MIC of their concerns and aid them in**
37 **developing lines of questioning that would be most pertinent to the issues at hand,**
38 **including anything in the JFVP or on Internet blogs, websites and conversations.¹**

39
40 **In sum, it is our judgment that the MOP did carefully weigh in its investigation the**
41 **JFVP along with a number of related documents and gave those who were concerned**
42 **with TE Meyers’ views ample time to produce further evidence for review while the**
43 **original investigation was still underway.**

44
45 **Complainant arguments in II.B (#2.b)**

¹ TE Vandermas, a member of the MICR, took time to solicit the signers of the original LOC on September 2, 2010, seeking further input into the process in order that the MICR could be as thorough as possible in their questioning. The text of his email and official letter of solicitation as well as representative responses from signers of the LOC are available for review for any interested.

1 **B. The MICR demonstrates a failure to take into account the work and writings of Federal**
2 **Vision proponent James Jordan.**

3 1. In the “Introduction and Acknowledgements” of Meyers’ book *The Lord’s*
4 *Service*, he writes:

5 “But Jim Jordan does not really need to be singled out. One does not need to
6 read between the lines in this book to see his influence on every page. My book
7 is largely a popularization of his profound biblical, theological, and liturgical
8 insights. So deeply has James Jordan’s work affected my thought and life that I
9 suspect many parts come perilously close to plagiarism.” (*Jeffrey Meyers, The*
10 *Lord’s Service: The Grace of Covenant Renewal Worship [Moscow, ID:*
11 *Canon Press, 2003] 11)*

12 2. *Meyers’ dependence on Jordan should have been given at least as much*
13 *weight as Meyers’ citations of Calvin, O. Palmer Robertson, and others.*
14

15 **Committee’s Response to II.B (#2.b):**

16 **Complainants argue that the MIC should have investigated James Jordan’s positive**
17 **influence on TE Meyers, an influence Meyers openly acknowledges, and that this should**
18 **have been given as much weight as Meyers’ citations of men like John Calvin, O. Palmer**
19 **Robertson, and others (including Wilson Benton Jr., John Murray).**
20

21 **The CRC points out that complainants’ logic here seems to presuppose that James**
22 **Jordan is as heterodox in his *un-Reformed* theological commitments as, say, O. Palmer**
23 **Robertson is orthodox in his Reformed theological commitments. And therefore for TE**
24 **Meyers to acknowledge Jordan’s influence on him is to make Meyers suspect. What else**
25 **could be at work here since the MOP through the MIC was, after all, engaged in a**
26 ***judicially defined investigation*? What else could association with James Jordan imply if**
27 **complainants were asking that association *to be investigated*?**
28

29 **But should James Jordan’s positive influence on TE Meyers have been given as much**
30 **weight as Meyers’ citation of men like O. Palmer Robertson, John Murray and Wilson**
31 **Benton Jr.? We think not. The committee would point out to the Presbytery that TE**
32 **Meyers cited these men for one reason: some of the very views he holds (or similar ones),**
33 **and for which he is being accused of opposing the Westminster Standards, were, in fact,**
34 **held by these men of stature in our tradition whose Reformed orthodoxy has been, by**
35 **common consent, accepted and widely respected. The burden of proof was on the**
36 **complainants to demonstrate that James Jordan’s theology is so profoundly opposed to**
37 **the Westminster Standards that merely claiming his influence should stimulate deep**
38 **concern and investigation. In fact, complainants have demonstrated virtually nothing in**
39 **regard to James Jordan. For those who have mistrusted TE Meyers’ commitment to the**
40 **Westminster Standards and counted him suspect because of the influence of James**
41 **Jordan, the onus was on them to bring to the MIC and the CRC telling and detailed**
42 **evidence of Jordan’s alleged heterodox views as well as clear evidence of Meyers’**
43 **affirmation of them. The closest we get to that is a general reference in the complaint to**
44 **an article by Jordan on the covenants and a footnote in Meyers’ book, *The Lord’s***
45 ***Service*. And complainants simply state that there is an “echo” of the former in the**
46 **latter, without any arguments offered to the effect that Jordan’s views are demonstrably**
47 **opposed to the Westminster Standards.**
48

1 **The task of the MIC was not to investigate all the traces of influence in the formation of**
2 **TE Meyers' theology, but to examine his stated views and teaching to determine whether**
3 **any of them are out of accord with *the fundamentals of the system of doctrine* taught in**
4 **the Westminster Standards, a system we take to be a faithful exposition of Holy**
5 **Scripture.²**
6

7 **In the second place, as a matter of polity, the MOP has no jurisdiction over James**
8 **Jordan or over any other individuals named in the LOC besides TE Meyers. The MIC**
9 **was to investigate his views, not the views of James Jordan or John Murray or O.**
10 **Palmer Robertson. But if TE Meyers is being accused of doctrinal infidelity for views he**
11 **shares in common with men of stature and trusted orthodoxy like John Murray and O.**
12 **Palmer Robertson, TE Meyers as well as the MIC had every right to point that out as**
13 **evidence against his detractors' allegations that he is not fit to serve as a minister in the**
14 **PCA.**
15

16 **For these reasons we believe the MIC rightly concluded that the proper course of action**
17 **was to focus its investigation on the individual views of TE Meyers and not the views of**
18 **other men associated with FV teaching and accused by some of opposing the Standards.**
19 **In doing so, however, the MIC also demonstrated an acquaintance with the views held**
20 **by proponents of the FV as well as with the views that others attribute to these men. In**
21 **our view then, it rightly judged that it had no duty other than to examine TE Meyers'**
22 **own views and writings in order to determine whether there was a strong presumption**
23 **of guilt that he was opposing the Westminster Standards.**
24

25 **Finally, the Complaint Review Committee (CRC) took time to consider the additional**
26 **evidence presented in the complaint (See this report, Appendix C) that was not directly**
27 **cited in the MICR and approached TE Meyers with a number of clarifying questions**
28 **(presented as Appendix B and cited in other sections of this report). After investigating**
29 **this additional evidence and asking TE Meyers to clarify some of it, the CRC concluded**
30 **that there were not serious inconsistencies between it and Meyers' answers in the MICR,**
31 **and nothing in it that could credibly overturn the conclusions of the MIC.**
32

33 **In sum, we believe MOP judged rightly that what was of central importance was TE**
34 **Meyers' own beliefs, not the beliefs of others associated with him. With this in view, the**
35 **CRC believes that the original investigating committee demonstrated that TE Meyers'**
36 **views can reasonably be interpreted as orthodox, and therefore, by the judgment of**
37 **charity, should be so interpreted.**
38
39
40

41 **Complaint arguments in II.C (#2.c):**

42 **C. Similarly, Meyers claims that his views on the covenant are derived from such men as John**
43 **Murray and O. Palmer Robertson.**

- 44 **1. However, if we take Meyers' full corpus into account, we should note that on page**
45 **40 of his book *The Lord's Service*, in the chapter titled "Covenant and**

² **For example:** Ulrich Zwingli held to the traditional Protestant view of justification by faith alone, but he also held that some who never had opportunity to hear the Gospel will be saved. Just because one agreed with Zwingli on justification does not mean that one agreed with Zwingli on the destiny of the heathen. Similarly, C.S. Lewis is often quoted in PCA pulpits and held up as a brilliant apologist for the Christian faith, but at the same time, he believed in purgatory. Just because one highlights the virtues of C.S. Lewis' apologetic insights does not mean that he agrees with Lewis' views on purgatory.

1 Worship,” Meyers cites Murray and Robertson, but he also cites James Jordan,
2 Norman Shepherd, and Cornelis van der Waal as examples of “recent
3 advances in biblical theology.”

4 **2. The committee’s investigation does not demonstrate giving any weight to these**
5 **“crucial factors.”**

6
7 **Committee’s Response to II.C (#2.c):**

8 **One should review the arguments presented in the previous responses of the CRC**
9 **(above) since the allegations in points II.A, B and C overlap significantly.**

10
11 **In the judgment of the CRC the original MICR takes up the argument against “guilt by**
12 **association” admirably (See Appendix E, pp.6-7, this report). We might only add the**
13 **following reflections to what the MIC already said there.**

14
15 **First, when complainants imply that it was the responsibility of the MOP to review**
16 **Meyers’ “full corpus”, we believe that they erect too high a standard for a 31-2**
17 **investigation. Complainants cannot charge us with failure to abide by our own**
18 **standards simply by producing something written by TE Meyers that the MIC did not**
19 **interact with directly. We believe that when the MIC stressed the importance of looking**
20 **at the “full corpus” of a man’s writing it was speaking *relatively*, and speaking in**
21 **criticism of the method of lifting out individual sentences here and there and thereby**
22 **failing to take into account many other things that man might have written that would**
23 **“fill out” what he truly believed. The CRC does not believe it was the duty of the MIC to**
24 **seek out evidence of TE Meyers’ views in every nook and cranny of his voluminous**
25 **writings (we are thinking especially of his Internet correspondence here) but rather to**
26 **determine whether the evidence presented was adequate enough to raise a strong**
27 **presumption of guilt against him. And the fact that MOP responded to the original**
28 **Letter of Concern by demonstrating a willingness to set up an investigation committee is**
29 **evidence itself that TE Meyers’ association with FV teaching was being taken seriously.**

30
31 **Second, all presbyteries conducting BCO 31-2 investigations are charged with giving**
32 **“due and serious consideration” (BCO 14-7) to the rulings of the SJC in closely related**
33 **cases. In our committee’s judgment there is a closely related SJC case that needs to be**
34 **taken into account in regards to the current complaint. The case is that of TE Art**
35 **Sartorius, et al vs. Presbytery of the Siouxlans (2010-04), a case in which arguments of**
36 **“guilt by association” are rejected on several fronts. For instance:**

37
38 **1. In the Meyers case, complainants suggest that TE Meyers’ views should be suspected**
39 **of heterodoxy because he is associated, to varying degrees, with men that they deem to be**
40 **heterodox. Setting aside the question of whether the individuals in question are indeed**
41 **heterodox, we agree with the SJC that a declaration of heterodoxy by association is a**
42 ***non sequitur*. The case record states,**

43
44 “Complainants hold that TE Moon’s defense of certain views of TE Lawrence, as
45 views within the permissible latitude afforded by the PCA’s standard for subscription,
46 implies that TE Moon shares in the alleged errors of TE Lawrence. But this is a non
47 sequitur. It may be illustrated as follows: it is widely held that paedocommunion is a
48 permissible minority view within the PCA, but it does not follow that all who consider
49 it permissible, hold to the position of paedocommunion.” (SJC 2010-04, 4.8-13)

1
2 **2. Also, in the Meyers case, complainants allege that TE Meyers’ views on various**
3 **disputed questions must *imply* heterodox conclusions because of his association with**
4 **certain men identified with FV, men whose conclusions on certain things complainants**
5 **judge to be heterodox. But the MIC accepted TE Meyers’ denial that some of his**
6 **statements implied what the LOC said they implied, and the MIC was right to respect**
7 **those denials, a principle supported by the SJC judgment in the Sartorius case. There**
8 **the SJC states,**

9
10 “Complainants hold that certain of TE Moon’s views imply heterodox doctrines, and
11 therefore impute those doctrines to TE Moon. But this is a non sequitur as well. One
12 cannot properly impute implications that are drawn from a position to a person who
13 expressly denies the implication.” (SJC 2010-04, 4.20-23)

14
15 **3. Finally, on a related issue, complainants seem to be working with this prejudice: that**
16 **even if TE Meyers’ views *could be* interpreted as orthodox, MOP should have judged**
17 **that there was enough evidence to construe them as heterodox.³ We think, as the MIC**
18 **thought in regard to the 29 signers of the LOC, that complainants have their bias just**
19 **backwards, and we find support for that in the SJC decision in the Sartorius case. There**
20 **they invoke the judgment of charity and make this rather stunning pronouncement:**

21
22 “Complainants hold that certain views expressed by TE [“X”], capable of a heterodox
23 interpretation, must be so interpreted. But this violates the judgment of charity, that if a
24 view can be interpreted in an orthodox fashion, it ought to be so interpreted until one is
25 forced to do otherwise.” (SJC 2010-04, 4.15-18)

26
27 **To sum up, the committee remains convinced that Missouri Presbytery properly**
28 **weighed the evidence presented to it and had no duty to comb for evidence beyond**
29 **giving due and serious consideration to previous judgments of the SJC (BCO 14-7)**
30 **(which are not binding in any other cases but may be appealed to in subsequent similar**
31 **cases as to any principles involved) and to previous doctrinal guidelines adopted by**
32 **General Assembly, such as the Declarations of the 2007 Ad-Interim Report on the**
33 **Federal Vision.**

34
35 **CONCLUSION**

36
37 **The Question before the CRC:**

38 **Did the MOP properly weigh the evidence in its 31-2 investigation of TE Meyers?**

39
40 **Committee’s Finding on Specification of Error II (#2 in the complaint):**

41 **Therefore, the CRC’s judgment is that the MOP did “properly weigh the evidence” in its**
42 **31-2 investigation of the views of TE Meyers on the grounds given above.**

43
44 **Recommendation:**

45 **That the complaint regarding specification of error II (#2) be denied, namely, that**
46 **Missouri Presbytery “did not properly weigh the evidence.”**

47

³ “**All of Meyers affirmations of justification by faith alone are negated by his affirmation that “personal loyalty” describes the fiduciary aspect of faith.**” Complaint against the Actions of the Missouri Presbytery under heading IV.E.1 (emphasis that of the CRC)

1
2
3
4 **Specification of Error III (#3 in the complaint)**

5 **III. Missouri Presbytery erred because it failed to address the specific doctrinal allegations**
6 **precisely.**

7
8 **Complainants seem to reason as follows:**

9 **Because MOP failed to address the doctrinal allegations with the necessary precision and**
10 **carefulness, MOP erroneously determined there was insufficient evidence to raise a**
11 **strong presumption of guilt in the teachings of TE Meyers. In fact, there was such**
12 **evidence, but the Presbytery missed it.**

13
14 **The Question before the CRC:**

15 **Did MOP err by failing to address the specific doctrinal allegations precisely?**

16
17 **Complaint argument in III.A.1-2 (#3):**

18 **A. In the section on perseverance, the Presbytery erred because they exonerated him of**
19 **something that was not alleged.**

- 20 **1. They said that there was insufficient evidence for a strong presumption of guilt in the**
21 **doctrine of the “perseverance of the elect.”**
22 **2. However, the allegation was**
23 **a) that baptism effects a saving, covenantal union with all the baptized, and**
24 **b) that some who are united to Christ in this way do fall away.**
25 **This is different from saying that the elect persevere.**

26 **The question was whether there were those who are reprobate who are saved out of a**
27 **state of sin and misery and into a position of grace but fall away.**

28
29 **Committee Response to III.A.1&2 (#3):**

30 **The complaint ignores the precise distinctions TE Meyers makes in his teaching on the**
31 **efficacy of baptism and the perseverance of those who are united to Christ—distinctions**
32 **that the MIC brought to light and already addressed in its investigation.**

33
34 **In investigating the allegations of the LOC, the MIC explored TE Meyers’ views on 1)**
35 **the efficacy of baptism (i.e., does the act of baptism effect a saving union between Christ**
36 **and the one baptized?) and 2) his views on the final perseverance of those who are**
37 **savingly united to Christ (i.e., can someone who is savingly united to Christ fall away?).**
38

39 **The MICR (p. 16) emphasized the following regarding TE Meyers’ views: 1) he believes**
40 **that baptism does not guarantee a saving relationship with Christ, 2) he denies that all**
41 **those who are baptized are inseparably united to Christ, and 3) he affirms that only the**
42 **elect, those who have saving faith, are inseparably united to Christ. Hence, the allegation**
43 **that “TE Meyers believes that baptism effects a saving, covenantal union with all the**
44 **baptized” is false based on the written testimony provided by TE Meyers and referenced**
45 **in the MICR.**

1 **The key to understanding the difficulty here lies in the use of the word “saving.” The**
2 **complainants seem to interpret TE Meyers’ use of the word “union,” and particularly**
3 **the phrase “formal union,” to mean “saving union.” TE Meyers notes a difference**
4 **between the idea of a “formal union,” which occurs in every baptism (i.e., “the solemn**
5 **admission of the party into the visible church” [WCF 28.1]), and a “saving union,”**
6 **which is reserved for the elect only (see MICR, p. 20). The MIC noted the potential for**
7 **confusion as the Standards use the phrase “union with Christ” in the sense of a “saving**
8 **union with Christ” (i.e., the union accomplished in effectual calling [WSC 30]). The MIC**
9 **exhorted TE Meyers to maintain caution so as to clarify carefully the specific sense of the**
10 **terms he uses (MICR, p. 20, lines 17-27); yet, the MIC determined that his views did not**
11 **violate the Standards. And—crucially important for the consideration of the complaint**
12 **that has been brought—the MIC also exhorted “those who read his [Meyers] work to be**
13 **aware of this distinction” (MICR, p. 20, line 26). There is a *mutual* responsibility of**
14 **carefulness incumbent upon us all here.**

15
16 **Note that in defining the question, complainants make a subtle change from the wording**
17 **in the Letter of Concern (LOC) that precipitated the BCO 31-2 investigation. In the**
18 **LOC, the “*state of sin and death*” is juxtaposed with “a *state of grace.*” The LOC also**
19 **quotes the Joint Federal Vision Profession (JFVP), which mentions a “*position of grace*”**
20 **(see the LOC in Attachment A of the MICR, page 50, lines 27-37). In defining the**
21 **question, however, the complaint juxtaposes “*state of sin and misery*” and “*position of***
22 ***grace.*” This is a very subtle difference from the LOC terminology, but the change is**
23 **significant given the precise differences discovered as the MIC addressed in exact terms**
24 **the doctrinal issues in the investigation. The differences and their significance,**
25 **particularly with respect to the Standards, are explained on p. 20 of the MICR. TE**
26 **Meyers explained that his desire to properly interpret difficult biblical passages lies**
27 **behind his willingness to use the phrase, “*position of grace,*” found in the JFVP, as**
28 **distinguished from the “*state of grace*” terminology common in Reformed systematics—**
29 **for instance, Paul’s dramatic declaration to the Galatian Christians (Gal. 5:4), “You are**
30 **severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen from**
31 ***grace!*” The MIC determined:**

32
33 “The JFVP employs the language ‘*position of grace*’ to apply also to those who are not
34 chosen by God for final salvation and thus do not possess a saving union with Christ
35 (and thus ‘fall from that position of grace’ [cf. ‘have fallen away from grace’ in Gal.
36 5:4]). This phrase ‘*position of grace*’ is near to the confessional language of those
37 possessing a ‘*state of grace*’—language which the Westminster Standards reserve for
38 the elect (WLC 79). A clear distinction then must be maintained between ‘*state of*
39 *grace*’ as found in the Standards, and the discussion of ‘*position of grace*’ in the JFVP.
40 TE Meyers is aware of this, and clearly aligns himself with the Standards when he
41 says, ‘I understand “*state of grace*” to be equivalent to “*eternal salvation,*” that which
42 only the elect enjoy. True believers who are in a “*state of grace*” cannot fall from that
43 because that grace is “*irresistible grace.*”’” (MICR, p. 20, lines 28-37)

1 **In sum, TE Meyers draws a distinction between a “*position of grace*” from which a non-**
2 **elect, baptized person may fall, and a “*state of grace*,” a category he reserves for the**
3 **elect, who can never fall from that state. In noting this distinction, the MIC also warned:**

4
5 “... the similarity of the term ‘position of grace’ to the term ‘state of grace’ does
6 invite confusion much like that mentioned above concerning “union with Christ.”
7The committee would thus again exhort TE Meyers to maintain caution in
8 carefully clarifying the specific sense of these terms. *And we would exhort those*
9 *who read his work to be aware of this distinction, and to read his work with the*
10 *charity appropriate to fellow presbyters” [emphasis added] (MICR, p. 20, lines*
11 *38-40, 42-43; p. 21, lines 1-2).*

12
13 **Complaint argument in III.B.1-3 (#3):**

14 **B. The same [i.e., the allegation that MOP failed to address the specific doctrinal allegations**
15 **precisely] can be said of the section on covenant theology.**

- 16 1. *The fact that TE Meyers says “I do not believe that the prelapsarian covenant is the*
17 *same as the postlapsarian covenants” (MICR 54 [i.e., MICR, A B, p. 3, lines 13-14])*
18 *does not address the question of whether TE Meyers affirms the bi-covenantal*
19 *structure of the Standards. If it did, then it would mean that Meyers believed in more*
20 *than two covenants because he listed more than two here.*
- 21 2. *However, the committee did not give any indication that it dealt with his affirmation*
22 *that the covenants before and after the fall were the same covenant as the one into*
23 *which man was created and into which he was saved:*
24 *The covenant is, therefore, not simply an external means, not merely a remedial*
25 *arrangement by which God accomplishes salvation for fallen men, rather it is also*
26 *the goal of creation. He created us for and now saves us to participate in his*
27 *covenantal life. The Persons of the Trinity possess the fullness of life and*
28 *blessedness as they love and serve one another sacrificially” (“Trinity &*
29 *Covenant, Part VI,” Corrigenda Denuo, 8/31/2007, for the same terminology see*
30 *“Trinity & Covenant, Part IV,” Corrigenda Denuo, 8/22/2007).*
- 31 3. *This should have led to a much more careful explanation of the senses in which*
32 *Meyers believe there is one covenant and the senses in which he believes there is more*
33 *than one. (Note: James Jordan gives an explanation of this in his article*
34 *“Monocovenantalism” on Biblical Horizons*
35 *[<http://biblicalhorizons.wordpress.com/2010/06/05/monocovenantalism/>], and echoes*
36 *of Jordan’s view are found in fn. 7 on p. 46 of The Lord’s Service).*

37
38 **Complainants seem to reason as follows:**

39 **TE Meyers’ written statements in posts to *Corrigenda Denuo* in August 2007 indicate**
40 **that he views the covenant as the goal of creation. Complainants reason that these**
41 **statements reveal that TE Meyers actually rejects the bi-covenantal structure of our**
42 **confessional standards and believes instead that the covenant “into which” man was**
43 **created (prelapsarian) was the same one in which he is, after the Fall (postlapsarian),**
44 **saved from sin. Complainants further maintain that a footnote reference on p. 46 of TE**
45 **Meyers’ 2003 book, *The Lord’s Service*—in which they see an “echo” of the view James**
46 **Jordan presented in an article entitled “Mono-covenantalism”—called for a more**

1 **careful explanation regarding “the senses in which Meyers believes there is one covenant**
2 **and the senses in which he believes there is more than one.”**

3
4 **Committee Response to III.B.1-3 (#3):**

5 **Although the phrase “bi-covenantal structure” is not found in the Standards, the phrase**
6 **was used in the report of the 2007 Ad Interim Committee on the Federal Vision, New**
7 **Perspective, and Auburn Avenue Theologies (particularly Declaration 1). The**
8 **declaration was adopted by the 35th Assembly “as a faithful exposition of the**
9 **Westminster Standards.”**

10
11 **It is surprising to the committee that after reading carefully the MICR, the complainants**
12 **continue to question whether TE Meyers affirmed a “bi-covenantal structure” of the**
13 **Standards. In Appendix B of the MICR, p. 3, lines 6-11 (immediately preceding the**
14 **sentence containing the statement that was quoted in the complaint), TE Meyers**
15 **answered a question posed to him by the MIC regarding the “bi-covenantal structure” of**
16 **the Standards:**

- 17
18 1. “Can you/do you affirm the following statement from the Report of Ad Interim
19 Study Committee on Federal Vision, New Perspective, and Auburn Avenue
20 Theology (M35GA)? ‘The Westminster Standards set forth a bi-covenantal
21 structure of federal theology, with a covenant of works before the Fall and a
22 covenant of grace after the Fall providing the outline to the biblical story of
23 creation, fall and redemption.’
24 a. Yes. I agree with this statement, as long as the two covenants are explained
25 carefully.
26
27 b. But simply stating that there is a bi-covenantal structure of Federal Theology does
28 not answer the question of which interpretation of bi-covenant theology is being
29 advanced. I affirm what our Missouri Presbytery Federal Vision Study Committee
30 wrote in 2005:

31 ‘We affirm as well the variety of interpretation of the Westminster
32 Standards when it comes to the nature of the covenant. On the issue of the
33 “covenant of works,” for example, we believe that those who read the
34 Standards as emphasizing an Adamic meritocracy and those who read them
35 as emphasizing the gracious foundation of all God's covenant dealings with
36 humanity can both claim confessional integrity and historical precedent in
37 the Westminster tradition. Neither of these views does violence to the
38 Standards given their lack of precision regarding Adam’s covenant
39 relationship to God. This variety of interpretation of both Scripture and the
40 Standards make offering any definition of “covenant” hazardous’ (Report
41 of the Missouri Presbytery ad hoc Committee on Federal Vision Theology,
42 page 3).

43
44 **CRC continues:**

45 **What TE Meyers means by “as long as the two covenants are explained carefully” is best**
46 **understood by going back to a statement adopted by the MOP in it 2006 FV report**

1 (which TE Meyers affirmed) that provided an acceptable range of views regarding the
2 “covenant of works.” Moreover, throughout Appendix B of the MICR, TE Meyers
3 assumes the “bi-covenantal structure” of the Standards. His use of the plural
4 “covenants,” mentioned by the complainants, refers to the various covenants God made
5 with man after the Fall (e.g., Noah, Abraham, David), all of which had a special gracious
6 character made necessary by the Fall (i.e., Adam’s failure to keep the first covenant). TE
7 Meyers’ affirmation of the declarations in the 2007 GA committee report is also
8 mentioned in the body of the MICR (p.13, lines 1-7):
9

10 “In considering the report of the General Assembly’s study committee on Federal
11 Vision theology (M35GA, p. 68ff), the committee asked TE Meyers to review and
12 comment on the declarations that were presented to and the recommendations that
13 were adopted by the General Assembly. TE Meyers responded, ‘I believe I’ve
14 affirmed all of them, with some quibbles and qualifications about the meaning of terms
15 used in the various declarations. I can even affirm #4 re: the merits of Christ, as long
16 as you don’t insist on some link with a meritorious covenant of works that Jesus
17 supposedly fulfilled for us.’ [The quote is from an email correspondence between TE
18 Meyers and the MIC in December 2010.]
19

20 Hence, MOP did precisely address the question of whether TE Meyers affirms the bi-
21 covenantal structure of the Standards, by asking him whether he could affirm the 2007
22 GA committee declaration that contained the phrase “bi-covenantal structure,” and his
23 answer was yes.
24

25 Sometimes TE Meyers uses the phrase “the covenant” in the singular. Complainants
26 seem to interpret the use of that phrase in the first two words in the passage from his
27 *Corrigenda Denuo* (8/31/07) cited above as meaning “The one covenant” since
28 “covenant” is singular. So the CRC put several questions to Meyers to clarify his
29 meaning when he sometimes refers to “the covenant,” in the singular:
30

31 CRC Questions 1&2 (Covenant Theology)

32 Background to Question 1: You have been charged by the original LOC and by
33 complainants as well of denying the "bi-covenantal" structure of God's relationship with
34 Adam. On p. 13 of your answers to the MIC you said the following:
35

36 “h. Another point of continuity between the two covenantal arrangements has to do
37 with the ultimate goal of the covenant—to know and enjoy God himself or as chapter 7
38 of the Westminster Confession puts it: man was promised 'the fruition of him [the
39 Creator] as their blessedness and reward' (WCF 7:1).”
40

41 1) When you use the singular here and refer to "the ultimate goal of the covenant," it
42 sounds like you are affirming that while there may be two or even more "covenantal
43 arrangements," there is really only *one covenant* between God and man. Is that what you
44 mean by the phrase "the ultimate goal of the covenant?" Or are you using the term, "the
45 covenant" here generically so that the whole phrase means, in essence, "the ultimate goal
46 of all God's covenantal relationships with man?"

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TE Meyers' Answer:

“Yes, this [latter] accurately expresses what I intended in this passage. I should have been more careful with my language. I have this way of speaking of “the goal of the covenant” burned into my memory by my former professor O. Palmer Robertson who would regularly use this phrase. By that language he meant the “end” of all the successive covenants. But he was stressing the unity of the divine covenants. I just checked his book *Christ of the Covenants* and found that he used the singular “the covenant” when speaking of the goal of the covenants:

‘The divine covenants of Scripture are bound together not only by a structural unity. They manifest also a thematic unity. This unity of theme is the heart of the covenant as it relates God to his people. Throughout the biblical record of God’s administration of the covenant, a single phrase recurs as the summation of the covenant relationship: ‘I shall be your God, and you shall be my people.’ The constant repetition of this phrase or its equivalent indicates the unity of God’s covenant. This phrase may be designated as the ‘Immanuel principle’ of the covenant. The heart of the covenant is the declaration ‘God is with us.’” (*Christ of the Covenants*, p. 45, 46).

‘The covenants of God are one. The recurring summation of the essence of the covenant testifies to this fact.’ (*Christ of the Covenants*, p. 52).

For further clarification, the Complaint Review Committee asked TE Meyers about his reasons for signing the JFVP and what he was trying to communicate by signing the document. Specifically the committee asked him, Was [the 2007 JFVP] written to deny the declarations in the 2007 GA Report on Federal Vision and offer declarations that were essentially alternatives?

TE Meyers' Answer (in part):

“...I don’t believe there is anything in the JFVP that was meant to be an explicit denial of the declarations adopted at the conclusion of the [GA committee] report. (see the appendix, Questions of Clarification for TE Jeff Meyers in View of Complaint: The Status of Various Statements, question 2).

This clarification confirms a statement he made in the MICR, Appendix B, p. 2, lines 8-13:

“Why then did I sign the Joint Federal Vision Profession (JFVP) in 2007? I did not see this as a deliberately provocative act. I signed this document to join with many of my friends who were being falsely accused of gross theological error. That statement was an attempt to clear the air of misunderstandings and caricatures. I believe a fair reading of both the JFVP and my answers in this document [i.e.,

1 Appendix B of the MICR] will reveal nothing that contradicts or overturns
2 Reformed theology as taught in the Westminster Standards.”
3

4 **The complaint is not precise in defining exactly how the similarity between a footnote in**
5 **TE Meyers’ book and an article by James Jordan negates TE Meyers’ clear affirmations**
6 **of a “bi-covenantal structure.” In reading and analyzing the article by James Jordan**
7 **entitled “Mono-covenantalism,” the committee did identify a section that resembles a**
8 **portion of the footnote reference in TE Meyers’ book. The committee noted that one of**
9 **Jordan’s main points in the article is to deny that he is mono-covenantal in his views.**
10 **Since it is not in the purview of this committee to make determinations on the work of**
11 **James Jordan and assess his alleged errors, we remained focused on the footnote**
12 **reference that touched on the same theme. The footnote mentions the covenantal**
13 **relationship that exists in the Trinity and how God created man to share in the joy**
14 **within the intra-Trinitarian relationships. The committee did not believe that the content**
15 **of the footnote undermined TE Meyers’ direct statements regarding his view on the “bi-**
16 **covenantal structure.”**
17

18 **To the CRC it seemed that when the complainants called for “a much more careful**
19 **explanation of the senses in which Meyers believe [sic] there is one covenant and ... more**
20 **than one,” they are asking for precise explanations on TE Meyers’ views on the**
21 **continuity and discontinuity between the prelapsarian covenant and the postlapsarian**
22 **covenant which TE Meyers had already given the MIC.**
23

24 **The MIC determined that this issue regarding the distinction between the covenants**
25 **before and after the Fall was of special importance and to be addressed precisely; hence**
26 **it put numerous questions to TE Meyers in an attempt come at this doctrinal issue from**
27 **different angles (see MICR, p. 9, lines 15-24). The MICR clearly attests to the fact that**
28 **TE Meyers draws a distinction between the covenant before the fall and the covenant**
29 **that comes after it, sometimes called the covenant of grace and expressed in various**
30 **historically-conditioned covenantal arrangements (MICR, p. 9, lines 26-28). In**
31 **responding to one question from the MIC, TE Meyers wrote:**
32

33 “If this question is intended to determine whether I am ‘mono-covenantal’ or not,
34 then I wish to be clear that I do not believe that the prelapsarian covenant is the
35 same as the postlapsarian covenants (all of which have a special gracious character
36 given man’s guilt after the fall). God’s covenantal relations with man change after
37 the fall.” [MICR, Appendix B, p. 3, lines 11-15]
38

39 **In order to address precisely the issue of the distinction between the covenants before**
40 **and after the fall, the MIC also asked TE Meyers, “What major differences exist**
41 **between the ways in which God dealt with Adam pre-Fall and post-Fall? In what ways**
42 **are these covenants distinct? What are the points of continuity between the pre-Fall and**
43 **post-Fall covenants?” (MICR, Appendix B, p. 11, lines 13-15). TE Meyers responses are**
44 **recorded in MICR, Appendix B, pp. 11-13. In part, TE Meyers wrote:**
45

1 a. “The major differences between the pre-fall and post-fall dealings with Adam
2 have to do with the heightened grace shown to Adam after he incurred guilt by his
3 disobedience and therefore deserved the just punishment of eternal death. The
4 covenant of grace was a redemptive covenant. All the covenants after the fall,
5 from Noah to Jesus, are all grounded in God’s unconditional grace and mercy in
6 the face of humanity’s deserving of the just punishment of eternal death.
7

8 b. “Upon his creation Adam was graciously gifted with communion with God. The
9 WCF says that Adam and Eve were ‘happy in their communion with God’ (WCF
10 4. 2). They possessed ‘original righteousness’ (WCF 6.2; WLC Q. 20;) from
11 which estate they fell when they broke covenant with God and followed the lead of
12 the Devil (WSC Q. 13, 18, 19; WLC Q. 27). Adam was not called to work his way
13 up to communion with God. Adam did not need to achieve righteousness.
14 Communion with God and righteousness were God’s gifts to Adam at creation.
15 Adam was called to continue in these, to be faithful and obedient to his gracious
16 Heavenly Father....
17

18 e. “Adam as God’s son was called to mature in his faith and obedience over time.
19 This would involve learning through service and obedience. Adam failed to obey
20 and to serve God and even his wife in Genesis 3. And the record of the people of
21 God throughout the Old Testament testifies to their failure to serve and obey God.
22 Jesus, however, was faithful in this. As ‘a son he learned obedience through what
23 he suffered, and being made mature (*teleios*), he became the source of eternal
24 salvation for all who obey him’ (Heb. 5:8-9). What God intended for Adam, what
25 Adam failed to reach, God graciously accomplished in his Son Jesus Christ, the
26 new Adam. Jesus’ covenantal faithfulness and maturity fulfills what Adam was
27 called to do. This is another point of continuity between the pre-and post-fall
28 covenants.....
29

30 g. “After the fall, God continued to deal with Adam as a Father, but now his
31 heavenly Father had to deal justly with his rebellious son. Adam lost communion
32 with God, his original righteousness, his happiness, and his ability not to sin. But
33 God in his mercy did not abandon his created son. God’s covenant with Adam
34 after the fall was gracious in a heightened sense. Now God’s grace was a gift of
35 love in the face of demerit. Adam deserved the punishment of death. The covenant
36 of grace with Adam after the fall promised him life through a Redeemer, the seed
37 of the woman who would one day crush the serpent’s head.
38

39 h. “Another point of continuity between the two covenantal arrangements has to do
40 with the ultimate goal of the covenant—to know and enjoy God himself or as
41 chapter 7 of the Westminster Confession puts it: man was promised ‘the fruition of
42 him [the Creator] as their blessedness and reward’ (WCF 7:1).
43

44 i. “I don’t expect everyone to agree with all the particulars of the way I have
45 described the differences between God’s covenant with Adam before the fall and
46 the covenant of grace inaugurated after the fall. But I believe my way of describing

1 the continuities and discontinuities does not constitute a break with accepted
2 interpretations of bi-covenantal Federal Theology. As I said in a previous answer, I
3 learned much of this at Covenant Seminary in the mid-1980s.”
4

5 **In addition, in order to clarify his views, the CRC put the following question to TE**
6 **Meyers on the charge that he is not bi-covenantal (for the full text see this report,**
7 **Appendix B, pp. 91ff):**
8

9 **CRC Question 3 (On Covenant Theology)**

10 **Background to Question 3: In your answers to the MIC questions regarding the**
11 **Covenant you cited O. Palmer Robertson and his reservations about applying that term,**
12 **“covenant of works” to God’s relationship with Adam. On p. 5, line 24, of your answers**
13 **you say, “I agree with Robertson’s critique and suggestions in the paragraph I quoted**
14 **above.”**
15

16 **3) But do you also agree with Robertson’s very strong affirmation in the material you**
17 **cited from his book, *The Christ of the Covenants*, that,**
18

19 “Two basic epochs of God’s dealing with man must be recognized: pre-fall
20 and post-fall. All the dealings of God with man since the fall must be seen as
21 possessing a basic unity.” (MICR Appendix B. pp. 4-5)
22

23 **TE Meyers’ Answer:**
24

25 “Yes. As I wrote near the end of my MIC answers (p. 109): “In the interest of clarity
26 let me state emphatically that I deny that God’s pre-fall covenant with Adam was the
27 same as God’s post-fall gracious covenantal arrangement with sinful man in Christ. I
28 have never taught they were the same.”
29

30 **CRC Question 4 (On Covenant Theology)**

31 **We also put this question on the covenants to TE Meyers:**

32 **4) Can you affirm the statement below by Meredith Kline, which appears to be an**
33 **attempt to state the essence of the difference between the prelapsarian and postlapsarian**
34 **covenants?**
35

36 “As covenant theology recognizes, there is a big difference (not a continuum)
37 between the pre-Fall covenant and the subsequent covenant of grace. In the
38 former, Adam does not receive the kingdom blessings (but rather a curse) if he
39 forfeits God’s favor by disobedience. Under the gospel, on the contrary, we do
40 receive those blessings in spite of our having forfeited them by sin.”
41 (Meredith Kline in *Covenant Theology Under Attack*, New Horizons
42 Magazine, February 19, 1994)
43

44 **TE Meyers’ Answer:**
45

1 “As far as it goes, in regards to what he is talking about (kingdom blessings), this
2 summary is true. But note he says that there is "a" big difference and it pertains to this
3 issue. He does not say there is no continuity. Only that with regard to the reception of
4 kingdom blessings there is a big difference not a continuum. I agree.”
5

6 **Committee Response to III.B.1-3 (continued):**

7 **Complainants continue to insist, as the original signers of the LOC contended, that TE**
8 **Meyers actually embraces a mono-covenantal view of Scripture, despite his explicit**
9 **statements to the contrary. But neither the original MIC nor Complaint Review**
10 **Committee has been persuaded of their allegation by the evidence they offer. The MIC**
11 **investigation confirmed that TE Meyers does not believe in only one covenant; rather, he**
12 **notes that there is continuity and discontinuity between God’s covenant relationship**
13 **with man before and after the fall. The questions posed to TE Meyers by the MIC and**
14 **the careful analysis of his answers reveal that its investigation strived to address the**
15 **specific doctrinal allegations precisely.**
16
17

18 **CONCLUSION**

19
20 **The Question before the CRC:**

21 **Did MOP err by failing to address the specific doctrinal allegations concerning the**
22 **covenants with precision?**
23

24 **Finding of the CRC on complaint specification of error III (#3):**

25 **The committee determines that MOP, through the Meyers Investigative Committee**
26 **(MIC) and its work reported in the MICR, did address specific doctrinal allegations**
27 **touching baptism and the covenants, precisely.**
28

29 **Recommendation:**

30 **That the complaint regarding specification of error III (#3) be denied, namely, that MOP**
31 **erred because it failed to address the specific doctrinal allegations precisely.**
32
33

34 *****
35

36 **Specification of Error IV.A (#4a in the complaint)**

37 ***IV. Missouri Presbytery erred because it failed to find a strong presumption of guilt in views***
38 ***that are contrary to the Standards and consequently failed in its duty to condemn erroneous***
39 ***doctrines and practices that injure the peace, purity, and unity of the Church.***

40 [And specifically:]
41

42 ***A. Missouri Presbytery erred in determining that there was insufficient evidence to raise a***
43 ***strong presumption of guilt in TE Meyers’ views on covenant theology.***

44 **Complainants seem to reason as follows:**

45 **The committee’s findings are in error because it failed to see that, in fact, there is**
46 **sufficient evidence to raise a strong presumption of guilt that TE Meyers is teaching**
47 **contrary to the Westminster Standards in regard to his views on covenant theology**

1 (MICR, III.A.1. p.8f. line 29f) because he has been highly critical of the Westminster
2 Assembly on its doctrine of the covenants, rejecting the bi-covenantal structure of the
3 Confession and collapsing the all-important distinction between the pre-and
4 postlapsarian covenants. TE Meyers holds that Adam was saved in the same covenant in
5 which he was created. This is a serious error and MOP should have discerned it but did
6 not. That was not only an error in judgment on Presbytery's part, but a dereliction of its
7 spiritual duty to condemn erroneous opinions in the church for the wellbeing of God's
8 people.

9
10 **The Question before the CRC:**

11 **Did Missouri Presbytery err in determining that there was insufficient evidence to raise**
12 **a strong presumption of guilt in TE Meyers' views on covenant theology?**

13
14 **Complainants' arguments IV.A (4a):**

15 **1. TE Meyers stated:**

16 *"I do think the latest scholarly work in biblical theology demands that we go back*
17 *and redo a great deal of the Westminster standards. They were written when*
18 *people still thought of the covenant as a contract and believed that 'merit' had*
19 *some role to play in our covenantal relations with God. The whole bi-polar*
20 *covenant of works/grace schema has got to go. And if that goes, the whole 'system'*
21 *must be reworked. (MICR, 67)"*

22
23 *TE Meyers confesses this as a "sin of overstatement" (66), but he did not retract his statement*
24 *that the "bi-polar covenant of works/grace schema has to go." On the contrary, he states in*
25 *The Lord's Service, "The covenant has not been adequately appreciated or understood until*
26 *recently" (52).*

27
28 **2. He also stated on October 7, 2007:**

29 *"I do not believe that I am required to believe and confess all the details in the*
30 *confessions and catechism. Nor am I bound to their form. The chapter on the*
31 *covenant, for example, is filled with problems. So much progress has been made in the*
32 *last century on the biblical theology of the covenants" (Corrigenda Denuo,*
33 *[[http://jeffreyjmeyers.blogspot.com/2007/10/are-westminster-standards-](http://jeffreyjmeyers.blogspot.com/2007/10/are-westminster-standards-sufficient.html)*
34 *sufficient.html]).*

35
36 **Committee response to IV.A (4a):**

37 **The evidence above, adduced in support of this negative assessment of the MIC**
38 **conclusion, consists of several quotations from TE Meyers that seem to cast doubt upon**
39 **his actual commitments to our standards and a questioning of his apology/confession of**
40 **overstatement as it appeared in the MICR [cf. V., p.39f. line 41f; & Appendix B., p.1.**
41 **line 29f).⁴**
42

⁴ The complainants supplied additional evidence that they wanted the CRC to consider, consisting of a series of email extracts from TE Meyers circa 2002-2004. Relevant to TE Meyers' views of covenant theology and the standards were six email extracts, one of which contains the "the whole bipolar covenant of works/grace schema has got to go" quotation cited in the text of complaint.

1 **Beginning broadly (and so also considering remarks contained in email extracts⁵), it**
2 **seems to the members of the CRC that TE Meyers is being read, once again, in a manner**
3 **that violates the judgment of charity and the full measure of forbearance that has**
4 **already been given expression in MICR II. Sections A & B, addressing Governing**
5 **Principles. That the statements of TE Meyers cited above, ought not be accepted as**
6 **demonstrating the complainants' negative assessment is advanced on the following**
7 **grounds:**

8
9 **First, TE Meyers' statement cited in IV.A.1 above, namely, that we must "go back and**
10 **redo a great deal of the Westminster standards," has already been thoroughly reviewed**
11 **with TE Meyers by the MIC. This statement's reappearance in the text of complaint is**
12 **not new evidence and neither is it positive evidence of TE Meyers' teaching contrary to**
13 **our denominational standards. Indeed, TE Meyers has already offered an explanation of**
14 **this statement, making clear what he did and did not intend at the time he published his**
15 **remarks.**

16
17 **The CRC put this question to TE Meyers:**

18 **As someone who subscribes to the Westminster Standards and has promised**
19 **submission to his brothers in the Lord, explain what you mean by the statement, "The**
20 **whole bi-polar covenant of works/grace schema has got to go. And if that goes,**
21 **the whole 'system' must be reworked" (The Wrightsaid Group, November 1 or**
22 **December, 2003). In particular, does the "reworking" that you suggested in 2003**
23 **entail denying any teachings in the Westminster Standards? Please explain why**
24 **or why not.**

25
26 **TE Meyers answered:**

27 "I wrote this statement on an Internet discussion list more than 7 years ago (in
28 2003). It was a quick response to a long series of conversations on that particular
29 Internet discussion list. It was not a carefully composed, stand alone, public confession
30 of faith on my part. I can see how my comment "the whole 'system' must be
31 reworked" might be taken as a reference to "the system of doctrine taught in the
32 Westminster Standards." That was not what I intended. I was referring to the
33 systematic implications of construing the covenant of creation as a legalistic,
34 meritorious arrangement and how such a construction has implications for how the rest
35 of the Scriptures are read (e.g., the Mosaic Covenant, the work of Christ, etc.). I meant
36 something along the lines of the critiques of Federalism by John Murray, O. Palmer
37 Robertson, and Wilson Benton that I have quoted in an earlier answer.

38 "Just so the committee can see the full context of my remarks, I went back and
39 found that statement of mine in the Wrightsaid list archives. I'm appending it to the
40 end of this question.

41 "There are no doubt many statements I've made in haste on many different
42 discussion lists that might be isolated and brought forward as "evidence" against me. I
43 am not always careful about how I compose responses in the heat of an argument. I
44 confess my sin of overstatement in this case and hope to guard against this problem in

⁵ In particular, the six email extracts in view are from: Mon. Aug. 12, 2002; Tue. Aug.13, 2002; Mon. Nov. 25, 2002; Thur. Dec. 4, 2003; Wed. Jan. 7, 2004; and Wed. Aug 11, 2004.

1 the future. What I mean by that statement is summarized in my registered “exceptions”
2 to the Standards that I have provided above in answers to questions #1-8.” (MICR,
3 Appendix B., Q&A 9., p.14ff)
4

5 **Second, and out of desire for due diligence, the Complaint Review Committee pressed**
6 **TE Meyers with respect to the complainants’ concern. After putting to TE Meyers that**
7 **his statements about covenant theology and the Westminster Standards are viewed as**
8 **evidence of an aberrant position, we asked him the following questions relevant to the**
9 **statement highlighted in A.1:**

10 **5) To clarify, You never really made clear which parts of this paragraph you**
11 **came to regard as overstatement; can you do that now, and can you clarify for us**
12 **how you overstated your concerns? How would you rewrite that paragraph now**
13 **in such a way that it expressed your concerns but did not *overstate* them? For**
14 **instance, would you still say, “*the whole bi-polar covenant of works/grace schema***
15 ***has got to go?*”**
16

17 **TE Meyers Answered:**

18 “I overstated my concerns with inflammatory language. That’s what I would
19 change. The works/grace comment must be interpreted. I did not adequately
20 explain to what I was referring. If you go back to my answers to the MICR on
21 covenant and merit, I think you will see what I meant by this statement. It’s the
22 overly “economic” view of the covenant of works that I have problems with.
23 Obviously, there is a place for the biblical language of “works” verses “grace.”
24 (CRCR Appendix B., p.92, lines 31-36).
25

26 **Third, when the complainants fault TE Meyers for not retracting his statement that the**
27 **“bi-polar covenant of works/grace scheme has to go” and suggest “*on the contrary*” that**
28 **he still holds a controversial view of covenant (and by implication a tenuous grasp upon**
29 **the Confession’s teaching), and this as supposedly evidenced in the citations they**
30 **provide, we feel this to be an inaccurate portrayal of the facts for at least two reasons.**
31

32 **On the one hand, TE Meyers’ remarks ought not be juxtaposed in the manner they**
33 **appear in the complaint. This is to say, TE Meyer’s confession of overstatement ought**
34 **not be second-guessed by the positing of other statements that *originated years***
35 ***beforehand*. Is it fair to inquire what the relation between these statements may be? Yes,**
36 **we think so. Is it fair to actually supply that relationship by interposing “on the**
37 **contrary,” as if what was said in the MICR just a matter of months ago was in fact**
38 **contrary to or is negated by what TE Meyers wrote in his book in 2003 (or in other pre-**
39 **MICR statements?) We think it is not fair. For surely this is to warp TE Meyers’**
40 **position and misconstrue the historical record of events, namely, that it was as part of**
41 **the MIC’s process of investigation, that TE Meyers came to recognize, as he said in his**
42 **own words,**
43

44 “There have, no doubt, been times in the past when my rhetoric has gotten away
45 from me and I have overstated points in debate, or I have been overly provocative in
46 arguing for certain theological positions. I hope this document [TE Meyers’ response

1 to the CRC's questions] will clarify any mistakes and put to rest any
2 misunderstandings that my past indiscretions may have precipitated." (MICR,
3 **Appendix B., p.1f. lines 28ff**)
4

5 **That TE Meyers' more recent comments, issued as the result of a Presbytery**
6 **investigation, ought to take precedence over past comments in Internet conversations**
7 **(and not the other way around) is the most charitable way of understanding his views.**
8 **That is how the MIC approached the issue and it is how the CRC has proceeded as well.**
9 **Moreover, this is clearly how TE Meyers has asked us to approach the many, many**
10 **things he has written in Internet conversation over the years, as is attested by this**
11 **explicit statement given by him to the CRC:**
12

13 "The answers I gave in the MIC are the result of careful thought and consideration.
14 They should be given much more weight than throwaway comments made on the
15 Internet. I would request that my carefully-worded answers to questions put to me
16 by the committee, and my vow of subscription to the Westminster standards not be
17 overridden by my more informal comments on discussion lists and blogs." (CRCR,
18 **Appendix B., p.99. lines 20-26**).
19

20 **Taking this further, the CRC specifically asked TE Meyers:**

21 **Should there be any contradiction (apparent or real) between anything you had**
22 **written before the BCO 31-2 investigation of your views began in the spring of**
23 **2010, and your answers to the MO Presbytery Meyers Investigation Committee**
24 **(written in the fall of 2010 and included in the January 2011 MIC Report), would**
25 **you affirm that your answers to the MIC supersede, sharpen and potentially**
26 **correct what you have written in the past?**
27

28 **To this TE Meyers' answered:**
29

30 "Yes." (CRCR, **Appendix B., p.100. lines 26-33**).
31

32 **Fourth, and now concerning Complaint specification of error IV.A.2, TE Meyers'**
33 **statement, "I do not believe that I am required to believe and confess all the details in the**
34 **confessions and catechism."**
35

36 **This statement, too, has been examined by the CRC and openly clarified by TE Meyers.**
37 **As with the preceding statement, this statement reveals not a rejection of our standards,**
38 **but recognition of their limitations (as historical documents), and of research in the**
39 **area of covenant that has occurred since the framing of the Westminster Standards in**
40 **the seventeenth century. And so too, with respect to the statement that complainants**
41 **bring forward from Meyers' book, *The Lord's Service*, namely, "The covenant has not**
42 **been adequately appreciated or understood until recently," TE Meyers explains:**
43

44 "All I meant is that the 20th century made enormous advances in biblical
45 studies on the covenant. No one who has studied the development of biblical theology
46 in the 20th century could deny this. Read almost any modern Reformed work on the

1 covenant and compare it to the Westminster standards and you will see the
2 difference. I think of John Murray's opening comments in his little essay on the *The*
3 *Covenant of Grace* (Tyndale, 1953):

4 "Theology must always be undergoing reformation. The human understanding
5 is imperfect. However architectonic may be the systematic constructions of any one
6 generation or group of generations, there always remains the need for correction and
7 reconstruction so that the structure may be brought into close approximation to the
8 Scripture and the reproduction be a more faithful transcript or reflection of the
9 heavenly exemplar." (CRCR, Appendix B., p. 94. line 35-p. 95. line 4)

10
11 **As an aside, it may be helpful to note that TE Meyers is not alone in recognizing and**
12 **wanting to incorporate research that was unknown to the Westminster divines and to**
13 **those who continued to develop covenant theology immediately after them. As one**
14 **example, we might consider the work of Meredith Kline. It seems irrefutable that**
15 **Kline's (and more recently, Michael Horton's) version of covenant theology is shaped**
16 **and governed by an interpretation/application of extra-biblical Ancient Near Eastern**
17 **(ANE) treaty forms. In particular, Kline's theology of the biblical covenants was**
18 **organized around the discovery of two distinct types of covenants, namely, promise**
19 **covenants and law covenants. While not all ANE scholars, much less all biblical**
20 **scholars, are convinced of the validity of it, Kline adopted this dual distinction, applied**
21 **it to the biblical materials, and interpreted the biblical covenants in light of the ANE**
22 **treaties he studied. To be clear, this aside is not offered to impute wrongdoing to Kline⁶**
23 **(or Horton), but rather to illustrate that what TE Meyers intends by his statements is in**
24 **fact the developed practice of others within our theological tradition.⁷ And here it is**
25 **worth pointing out that the Kline-Horton approach to covenant theology and its**
26 **antipathy to the Murray/Robertson approach to covenant theology seems to be one of**
27 **the fault lines that characterizes much of the current controversy over covenant**
28 **theology within our denomination. Many proponents of the dual covenantal**
29 **arrangement (law covenants vs. promise covenants) seem to think that that leads**
30 **inexorably and by short steps to a rigid works-grace scheme which, in turn, is seen as**
31 **providing the whole foundation of the law-gospel paradigm. Then suspicion is**
32 **engendered against anyone who does not distinguish conditional and non-conditional**
33 **covenants and who wants to stress that all the biblical covenants are entirely of grace**
34 **and may be seen as different expressions of one overarching covenant idea.⁸**

⁶ Although we will, for the record, note Robert Letham's assessment of Kline's perspective in relation to Westminster. On this, see: Robert Letham, *The Westminster Assembly: Reading its Theology in Historical Context* (P&R, 2009): 231f.

⁷ To substantiate this reading of Kline and of Horton, see: Meredith Kline, *By Oath Consigned: A Reinterpretation of the Covenant Signs of Circumcision and Baptism* (Eerdmans, 1968); Michael Horton, *God of Promise: Introducing Covenant Theology* (Baker, 2006); then, representing both a sympathetic and a critical perspective of this approach, Gregory Edward Reynolds, "Review of God of Promise: Introducing Covenant Theology" in *Ordained Servant Online* (OPC, 2011) and hosted online at: http://www.opc.org/os.html?article_id=20; Jeremiah Montgomery, Jonathon Shishko, and Breno Macedo, "Kline, Horton, and the Mosaic Covenant" in *Katekomen: The Online Journal of Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary* (Jan 28, 2011) and hosted online at: <http://katekomen.gpts.edu/2011/01/khortonian-theology-and-mosaic.html>.

We might also add, if it be objected that Kline nowhere sounds as critical of the standards as TE Meyers, that in another arena of theological debate, we do have Kline prepared to speak of "error" in the Westminster Confession and prepared to advocate for "reconsidering" the Confession's position. See: Meredith G.Kline, "Comments on an Old-New Error: A Review Article" in: *Westminster Theological Journal* 41:1 (Fall, 1978) and discussion on this by Kenneth L.Gentry Jr., "Theonomy and Confession" in: *The Standard Bearer: A Festschrift for Greg L.Bahnsen* (CMF, 2002): 167-169.

⁸ We are here thinking of T.M.Moore's statement in his, *I Will Be Your God: How God's Covenant Enriches Our Lives* (P&R, 2002): 67. Moore dedicates this work to O.Palmer Robertson and argues throughout for the graciousness of God's covenants. This theme is not hard to find in Robertson himself as, for example, in his *The Christ of the Covenants* (P&R, 1980): 53, 54, and 56.

1 **Fifth, and continuing with IV.A.2: The same 2007 quotation supplied by the**
2 **complainants continued with these words of TE Meyers: "I do not believe that I am**
3 **required to believe and confess all the details in the confessions and catechisms. Nor am I**
4 **bound to their form. The chapter on the covenant, for example, is filled with problems."**
5 **The CRC sought further clarification from TE Meyers by asking him two additional**
6 **questions.**

7
8 **We asked:**

9 **To clarify, concerning what you are required confessionally to affirm, did**
10 **you mean this statement simply as recognition of our policy of system**
11 **subscription? If not, explain what you did mean at that time. And then we**
12 **asked: Concerning the chapter being "filled with problems," do you see**
13 **problems beyond what you have already articulated in your responses to**
14 **questions posed by the Meyers Investigation Committee or in the exceptions**
15 **and scruples you registered with the various presbyteries you have been in?**
16 **If so, what are these "problems"?**

17
18 **TE Meyers' answered both questions, respectively:**

19
20 "Yes, I was referring to "system subscription." I have interacted with Westminster on
21 the covenant extensively in my answers in the MICR. As an example of a "detail," I
22 would cite the Confession's use of "testament" as a way of explaining the relationship
23 between the death of Jesus and the covenant of grace (WCF 7.4). I don't believe
24 Hebrews 9:15 is talking about the covenant as a "last will and testament."

25
26 **And:** "I've outlined my concerns on this topic already in the MICR answers. The only
27 thing I would suggest is that so much more might be *added* to this chapter on the
28 covenant. Much more could be said about the progression of covenants in the Bible,
29 for example." (CRCR, Appendix B., p. 95-96).

30
31 **At this point, we recognize that many who read TE Meyers will continue to disagree with**
32 **him, but mere disagreement is not sufficient evidence to raise a strong presumption of**
33 **guilt in TE Meyers' views on covenant theology. On the contrary, having extensively**
34 **investigated his views in this area, including reviewing various documents published**
35 **by/connected to him, interviewing him, and then setting before him specific questions on**
36 **the topic of covenant to be answered in writing, we find TE Meyers to be in conformity**
37 **to the system of doctrine set forth in our Westminster Standards on the points that**
38 **complainants have raised; to be engaged in theological reflection consistent with the**
39 **constitution of the PCA (which is subject to and subordinate to the Scriptures of the Old**
40 **and New Testaments) and with the approach of other leading pastor-scholars.⁹**

41
42
43 **CONCLUSION**

44
45

⁹ cf. BCO, Preface III.

1 **The Question before the CRC:**

2 **Did Missouri Presbytery err in determining that there was insufficient evidence to raise**
3 **a strong presumption of guilt in TE Meyers for his views on covenant theology?**

4
5 **Finding of the CRC on complaint specification of error IV.A (#4a):**

6 **The committee determines that MOP, through the Meyers Investigative Committee**
7 **(MIC) and its work reported in the MICR, judged rightly that there was insufficient**
8 **evidence to raise a strong presumption of guilt in TE Meyers for his views on covenant**
9 **theology.**

10
11 **Recommendation:**

12 **4. That the complaint regarding specification of error IV.A (#4.a) be denied, namely,**
13 **that MOP erred in determining that there was insufficient evidence to raise a strong**
14 **presumption of guilt in TE Meyers for his views on covenant theology, which resulted in**
15 **Missouri Presbytery’s further error of failing in its duty to condemn erroneous doctrines**
16 **and practices that injure the peace, purity, and unity of the Church.**

17
18 *****

19
20
21 **Specification of Error IV.B (#4.b)**

22 ***B. Missouri Presbytery erred because it failed to find a strong presumption of guilt in views***
23 ***that are contrary to the Standards and consequently failed in its duty to condemn erroneous***
24 ***doctrines and practices that injure the peace, purity, and unity of the Church.***

25 [And specifically:]

26
27 ***Missouri Presbytery erred when it determined that there was not sufficient evidence to raise a***
28 ***strong presumption of guilt in the teaching of TE Meyers on the imputation of Christ’s merit.***

29
30 **Complainants seem to reason as follows:**

31 **It is insufficient merely to claim, as TE Meyers does, that Christ’s obedience to the**
32 **Father during his life was crucial as a *premise* for his saving work on the cross. Meyers**
33 **shrinks back from a full-throated, unqualified endorsement of the idea that Christ’s**
34 **keeping of the law perfectly merited God’s favor and that now his obedience to the**
35 **commandments of God is reckoned as the obedience of all true believers to the same.**
36 **MOP failed to see that the Westminster Standards require this to be understood as a**
37 **“legal transfer” of merit from Christ to us.**

38
39 **The question then before the CRC:**

40 **Did MOP err when it determined that there was not sufficient evidence to raise a strong**
41 **presumption of guilt in the teaching of TE Meyers on the imputation of Christ’s merit?**

42
43 **Complainant argument in IV.B (#4.b):**

44 ***I. The committee also exonerated him [TE Meyers] of something here of which he was never***
45 ***accused, namely, “the necessity of Christ’s perfect obedience.” The question was whether***
46 ***Christ’s righteousness includes His meriting of God’s favor and eternal life for us through***
47 ***His perfect obedience. The question also involves whether Christ’s merits are legally***
48 ***transferred to our account. Meyers clearly denies that this is the case. Meyers stated:***

1 “What I do have a problem with is speaking of the works of Christ during
2 his life in such a way that he is thought to have racked up points to earn
3 God’s favor according to some fictional, still-in-force-after-the-fall, strict-
4 justice covenant of works, and that these merits are then transferred to
5 Christians” (*De Regno Christi*, 9/28/2008).

6 Meyers confirms this view on pp. 81, 92, 105 of the MICR [i.e., MICR, Attachment B,
7 pp. 30, 41, and 54].
8

9 **Committee Response to IV.B (#4.b):**

10 **In the MIC investigation, TE Meyers reaffirmed his agreement with the 2006 MOP FV**
11 **Report. The committee determined that TE Meyers’ 2008 comments in *De Regno Christi***
12 **are not a denial of the statements he affirmed in 2006 and reaffirmed in 2010. Rather,**
13 **the view presented in the 2008 comments on an informal blog should be interpreted by**
14 **the earlier and later explication of his views presented as part of a formal action of**
15 **Presbytery. In his response to questions from the MIC, TE Meyers writes (MICR,**
16 **Appendix B, p. 40, lines 15-32):**
17

18 b. “I affirm this statement from the Report of the Missouri Presbytery ad hoc
19 Committee on Federal Vision Theology with no reservations:”

20 Scripture not only affirms the imputation of Adam’s sin to all
21 humankind, but also affirms the imputation of Christ’s righteousness to
22 his people, wherein his righteousness is credited forensically to their
23 account (Romans 5:12-21; 2 Corinthians 5:21). Although in previous
24 periods it was incumbent to distinguish such imputation from an
25 infusion of righteousness, today’s exegetical discussions have also
26 made it necessary to reaffirm imputation as the basis for God’s just
27 declaration of righteousness. God’s declaration of righteousness, even a
28 corporate declaration, cannot rightly occur without a basis in God’s
29 reckoning of Christ’s righteousness to the account of individual sinners
30 **(2006 MOP Report on the Federal Vision, p. 6).**
31

32 c. “I also wholeheartedly agree with these two affirmations from the Missouri
33 Presbytery Report (p. 7):”

34
35 7. We affirm that in justification, God the Father imputes the
36 righteousness of Christ to believing sinners, a righteousness that is
37 premised upon Christ’s lifelong obedience and his obedience unto
38 death; we deny that anyone is justified by God apart from this
39 imputation.
40

41 8. We affirm that God justifies sinners by imputing Christ’s
42 righteousness to them rather than counting their sins against them; we
43 deny that justification is grounded in any infusion of grace or that faith
44 itself, as an act of obedience, is imputed as the ground of justification.
45

46 **A careful examination reveals that TE Meyers’ opposition to statements concerning**
47 **Christ earning God’s favor (e.g., the 2008 comments on *De Regno Christi*) are in the**
48 **context of his critique of a meritorious Adamic covenant. In other words, these**

1 **statements are part of his critique of a particular understanding of the imputation of the**
2 **merit of Christ. TE Meyers writes in MICR, Appendix B, p. 50, lines 2-11 and 23-26:**
3

4 “Let me say again that the problems I have expressed are not so much with the
5 Westminster Standards, but with the way they have been interpreted by
6 particular authors. There is a strand of Federal theology in the Reformed
7 tradition that privileges a legal covenantal arrangement between God and
8 Adam based on merit and then makes it foundational for the entire sweep of
9 God’s covenants with humanity. So much so that even Jesus had to merit or
10 earn God’s favor; that his righteousness was merited during his pre-cross life in
11 order to pass it on to his people. I reject the foundational importance of “merit”
12 in some traditional interpretations of the bi-covenantal Federal Theology. My
13 problems are not with Westminster so much as they are with that particular
14 interpretation of Westminster.”
15

16 “I do, however, vigorously affirm that Christ's infinite "worthiness" covers our
17 unworthiness. I believe that Jesus merited our salvation in the sense that his
18 perfect life, suffering, and sacrificial death on the cross as the Incarnate Son
19 was infinitely worthy to secure our redemption.”
20

21 **Meyers’ concern about a preoccupation with the concept of merit in Eden appear to us**
22 **to be similar to the one expressed by John Murray in his reflections on what he called**
23 **“the Adamic Administration:”**
24

25 “In connection with the promise of life [which God made to Adam] it does not appear
26 justifiable to appeal, as frequently has been done, to the principle enunciated
27 in certain texts (cf. Lev. 18:5; Rom. 10:5; Gal. 3:12), ‘This do and thou shalt live.’
28 The principle asserted in these texts is the principle of equity, that righteousness
29 is always followed by the corresponding award. **From the promise of the Adamic**
30 **Adminstration we must dissociate all notions of meritorious reward.** The
31 promise of confirmed integrity and blessedness was one annexed to an obedience
32 that Adam owed and, therefore, was a promise of grace” [emphasis added] (John
33 Murray, *Collected Works*, [vol. 2], pp. 55-56).
34

35 **In reviewing the concerns of the complainants and the response of TE Meyers in the**
36 **MICR, the committee thought it would be helpful to ask TE Meyers some questions of**
37 **clarification on what Christ obtained (i.e., merited) by his perfect obedience for the sake**
38 **of the elect. In the section “Christ’s Obedience,” the committee asked the following:**
39

40 **Do you believe that Christ’s obedience to the positive demands of the law and**
41 **will of God at every point in his life as the faithful New Adam—from the law**
42 **prohibiting theft, for instance, to the command of the Father that he suffer and**
43 **die to save us—is counted as ours, that is, imputed to us, if our trust is in Christ,**
44 **just as his death-to-sin is counted as our death-to-sin, and his resurrection-to-**
45 **life is counted as our resurrection-to-life if we trust him to save us (see Romans**
46 **6:5-11)?**
47

48 **TE Meyers answered:**
49

1 “Yes. I affirm the imputation of Christ’s righteousness to believers (WSC). I have
2 always affirmed this Reformation truth. Apart from the judicial imputation of
3 Christ’s work to us there is no hope of salvation for sinful humans. We are justified
4 by God’s “imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ” (WCF XI.1) to us
5 when we believe the Gospel. I have explained my objections to conceptions of
6 imputation based on the “merit system” of some Reformed theologians, but I have
7 tried to be crystal clear that this does not mean I reject the truth of the imputation of
8 the alien righteousness of Christ, to use Luther’s language. I affirm the imputation
9 of the perfectly obedient, vindicated, risen, glorified righteousness of Christ to
10 believers.”

11
12 **The committee also asked TE Meyers if he agreed with the following statement by**
13 **Francis Turretin on the idea of merit:**

14
15 “Third, we remark that the obedience of Christ has a twofold efficacy, satisfactory
16 and meritorious; the former by which we are freed from the punishments incurred by
17 sin; the latter by which (through the remission of sin) a right to eternal life and
18 salvation is acquired for us....”

19 *(Institutes of Elenctic Theology, Topic 14. Q13. [vol. 2, pp. 447-48])*

20
21 **TE Meyers stated:**

22
23 “Yes, I believe I can affirm what Turretin says here—that is, if I can fully
24 understand it. The statement is not entirely transparent. How can I affirm
25 Turretin’s use of the word merit? Because not every use of the word “merit” is
26 linked with the system of thought I’ve critiqued in my answers in MICR. I
27 understand Jesus’ merit to be about the infinite value of his obedience and
28 satisfaction that is grounded in his divine Person. It wasn’t just a sinless human
29 who obeyed, even to the point of death on the cross. It was God the Son who
30 satisfied our debt in union with our human nature.”

31
32 **Continuing on to the second sub-point under IV.B.2 (#4.b):**

33 *2. Further, it should be noted that Chad Van Dixhoorn, who is cited as an authority by the*
34 *committee, has stated in his article on the Larger Catechism,*

35 *“Christ’s life has everything to do with our salvation: he spent his life fulfilling all*
36 *righteousness; he kept the law that Adam broke. It is because of Jesus’ active, lifelong*
37 *obedience that God the Father sees us as righteous in Christ”(New Horizons,*
38 *http://www.opc.org/new_horizons/NH00/0010b.html).*

39
40 **Complainants seem to reason as follows:**

41 **The MIC and TE Meyers cited Chad Van Dixhoorn as an authority in the MICR. In an**
42 **article on the Larger Catechism, Chad Van Dixhoorn made a statement on the**
43 **importance of the life of Christ for the salvation of the elect. The complainants maintain**
44 **this quote reveals that Chad Van Dixhoorn’s view of the value of the life of Christ differs**
45 **from TE Meyers’ view. Since Chad Van Dixhoorn, an authority recognized by the MIC,**
46 **has a view that differs from TE Meyers, then TE Meyers and the MIC is in error.**

47
48 **Committee Response to IV.B.2 (#4.b):**

1 **Though the above quote from the article by Chad Van Dixhoorn is accurately presented,**
2 **it ultimately is not relevant in the examination of the orthodoxy of TE Meyers' views. In**
3 **the MICR, the MIC and TE Meyers referred to the scholarly work of Chad Van**
4 **Dixhoorn who has argued that there were varying views at the Westminster Assembly on**
5 **the question of precisely how Christ's obedience to the law is to be understood as part of**
6 **the righteousness Christ won for his people.**

7
8 **The CRC notes that the Van Dixhoorn article cited does not address specifically the issue**
9 **of the imputation of Christ's merit. Rather, the author is emphasizing the great value of**
10 **the Larger Catechism in the life of the Church. The quote appears in a section entitled**
11 **"The Life of Christ." In this section, Van Dixhoorn mentions how creeds and catechisms**
12 **before Westminster were inadequate in that they seemed to downplay the importance of**
13 **doctrinal statements regarding the life of Christ, a problem Van Dixhoorn even sees in**
14 **Calvin. In defending the importance of creedal statements touching on the life of Christ**
15 **like those found in the WLC, Van Dixhoorn makes the statement quoted in the**
16 **complaint. Neither the quote, nor the article, addresses (in any way) the issue of the**
17 **imputation of the merit of Christ, though the word "imputation" appears in a reference**
18 **to the value of how WLC 22 addresses the imputation of Adam's sin.**

19 **The quote simply does not prove what complainants want it to. TE Meyers'**
20 **acknowledges that his views differ from those of Van Dixhoorn. In a lengthy section**
21 **(MICR, Attachment B, p. 44, line 29 through p. 48, line 20), TE Meyers praises Van**
22 **Dixhoorn's scholarship on the variety of views present among the divines of the**
23 **Westminster Assembly on the issue of the imputation of the active obedience of Christ.**
24 **TE Meyers' writes:**

25
26 "In other words, Van Dixhoorn makes it clear that the Westminster divines
27 intentionally framed and approved a confession that did not include the imputation of
28 the active obedience of Christ [IAOC] as a part of the doctrine of justification.

29 "This is a remarkably honest assessment, given the fact that Van Dixhoorn
30 confesses in the interview that he himself holds to the doctrine of the imputation of
31 the active obedience of Christ. The Westminster documents do not, but he does. He
32 says that the divines produced, at best, an ambiguous document on this question, but
33 that he himself is not ambiguous about it. I have no trouble with Van Dixhoorn's
34 personal convictions about the IAOC. For him to accept and teach the IAOC is
35 within the bounds of Reformed orthodoxy. I have no issue with our church's
36 acceptance of ministers who hold to this particular view. I believe that diversity on
37 this opinion is perfectly acceptable, especially since it was acceptable to the
38 Westminster Assembly." (MICR, Appendix B, p. 46, lines 4-15).

39
40 **Though they have different understandings as to *how* Christ's faithfulness to the law**
41 **belongs to believers as their own, both Meyers and Van Dixhoorn emphasize the**
42 **importance of the faithful life of Christ for the justification of the elect. After stating his**
43 **affirmation of the content of WCF 11.3, TE Meyers writes**

44
45 "Both Jesus' obedience and his death were necessary for our salvation, for our
46 justification. I affirm this. But I don't believe that one should read into this phrase
47 the entire works/merit scheme that is found in some versions of Reformed theology.
48 Every one of the passages cited in the proof texts [for WCF 11.3] has to do with the
49 death of Jesus, his life of obedience having qualified him to make atonement for his

1 people. I believe and confess that Jesus was perfectly righteous in his earthly life (all
2 aspects of his life) and that his flawless obedience culminated in his self-giving death
3 on the cross for his people.” (MICR, Appendix B, p. 43, lines 7-13).
4

5 **To sum up, in this specification of error, complainants appear to impose as the only**
6 **confessionally acceptable view a particular understanding of the imputation of Christ’s**
7 **merit to the exclusion of other valid interpretations within the historic tradition of those**
8 **committed to the Westminster Standards. Such an imposition would not be in keeping**
9 **with the position adopted by MOP in the 2006 MOP FV Study Committee Report, a**
10 **report that went through the process of General Assembly review and control (BCO 40)**
11 **with no objection and was spread upon the minutes of the General Assembly (M34GA,**
12 **pp. 211-227). With apparent disregard for the previous actions of MOP, complainants**
13 **persist in turning into a litmus test for orthodoxy one interpretation of the merit of**
14 **Christ imputed to the elect, the one that was presented in the LOC. This narrowing of**
15 **what is confessionally acceptable was refuted in the MICR, p. 11, line 38 through p. 12,**
16 **line 2. For the peace and purity of our church, the MOP has upheld and should continue**
17 **to uphold the judgment that TE Meyers’ views on this question are within the bounds it**
18 **adopted as a Presbytery in its 2006 report.**
19
20

21 CONCLUSION

22 Question before the CRC:

23 **Did MOP err when it determined that there was not sufficient evidence to raise a strong**
24 **presumption of guilt in the teaching of TE Meyers on the imputation of Christ’s merit?**
25
26

27 Finding of the CRC on specification of error IV.B (#4.b):

28 **Although he does not embrace the precise interpretation of the imputation of Christ’s**
29 **merit held by the complainants, TE Meyers believes that the benefits of justification**
30 **given to the elect (which include the favor of God and eternal life) are based solely on the**
31 **righteousness of Christ, which is premised on the perfect obedience of Christ. In God’s**
32 **forensic act of justification, the righteousness of Christ is imputed to the believing sinner.**
33

34 Recommendation:

35 **That the complaint regarding specification of error IV.B. (#4.b) be denied, namely that**
36 **MOP erred when it determined that there was insufficient evidence to raise a strong**
37 **presumption of guilt in the teaching of TE Meyers on the imputation of Christ’s merit,**
38 **which resulted in Missouri Presbytery’s further error of failing in its duty to condemn**
39 **erroneous doctrines and practices that injure the peace, purity, and unity of the Church.**
40

41 *****

42 Specification of Error IV.C (#4.c in the complaint)

43 IV. Missouri Presbytery erred because it failed to find a strong presumption of guilt in views
44 that are contrary to the Standards and consequently failed in its duty to condemn erroneous
45 doctrines and practices that injure the peace, purity, and unity of the Church.

46 [and specifically:]

47
48 C. Missouri Presbytery erred when it determined that there was insufficient evidence to raise
49 a strong presumption of guilt in TE Meyers’ teachings on baptism.

1 **Complainants seem to reason as follows:**

2 **In the January 2008 blog post, TE Meyers teaches that the ritual act of baptism effects a**
3 **recipient's union with Christ.**

4
5 **The question before the CRC:**

6 **Did MOP err when it determined that there was not sufficient evidence to raise a strong**
7 **presumption of guilt in the teaching of TE Meyers on baptism?**

8
9 **Complaint argument in IV.C.1 (#4.c):**

10 ***I. On January 28, 2008, TE Meyers stated,***

11 *“Baptism unites us to Christ and therefore makes us participate in the*
12 *circumcision of Christ,” and, “Baptism unites us to Christ so that we can be said*
13 *to have died and to have risen with him” (Biblical Horizons*
14 *[<http://biblicalhorizons.wordpress.com/2008/01/28/the-circumcision-of-christ/>]).*

15
16 **Committee Response:**

17 **In the blog post, TE Meyers is addressing the difference between the meaning of OT**
18 **circumcision and Christian baptism. Although complainants present the quotes**
19 **accurately and seem to provide prima facie evidence of heterodoxy, the statements were**
20 **not written in the context of instruction on the efficacy of baptism. Moreover,**
21 **complainants apparently disregarded an explanatory comment that TE Meyers posted**
22 **on the same blog on January 29, 2008 at 4:08 p.m.:**

23
24 *“My post and point is not about the efficacy of baptism and it's relationship to faith.*
25 *I was only echoing Paul's language in Col. 2:12; I was not suggesting that baptism*
26 *and not faith unite us to Christ. Paul actually uses both in that passage.”*

27
28 **In the 2010 investigation, the MIC examined, in an intentional and specific way, TE**
29 **Meyers' views on the efficacy of baptism to determine if his views violated the teaching**
30 **of the Westminster Standards. In particular, the relationship between baptism and an**
31 **individual's union with Christ. The MIC concluded:**

32
33 *“In his response to the committee's questions, TE Meyers seeks to clarify what he*
34 *admits is sometimes awkward language (e.g., the phrase “covenantal life” [JJM*
35 *Response, p. 69, lines 14ff]). Given the awkward language and the real danger of*
36 *confusion that could result from this language, TE Meyers should take great care*
37 *when speaking or writing on these topics. Yet as his explanation makes clear, TE*
38 *Meyers appears to be wrestling appropriately with the profound theological and*
39 *pastoral implications of the language of the WCF (see JJM Response, p. 61, line 19*
40 *through p. 64, line 26).” (MICR, p. 15, line 36 through p. 16, line 2)*

41
42 **The MICR (p. 16) emphasized the following regarding TE Meyers' views on baptism: 1)**
43 **he believes that baptism does not guarantee a saving relationship with Christ, 2) he**
44 **denies that all those who are baptized are inseparably united to Christ, and 3) he affirms**
45 **that only the elect, those who have saving faith, are inseparably united to Christ.**

46
47 **In considering TE Meyers' views on the benefits received by those who are baptized, the**
48 **MIC asked him the following questions (MICR, Appendix B, p. 68, lines 10-27).**

1 “In particular, do you believe the following benefits are given to all recipients of
2 baptism (elect or non-elect, infant or adult), never to be lost or forfeited?
3 a. Forgiveness of their sins?
4 b. Justification in God’s sight (i.e., justification as defined by WSC 33: “an act of
5 God’s free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous
6 us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us,
7 and received by faith alone.”)?
8 c. Resurrection glory with Christ, as explained in the WSC: “at the resurrection,
9 believers, being raised up in glory, shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted
10 in the day of judgment, and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to
11 all eternity” (WSC 38)?”
12

13 **TE Meyers answered:**

14
15 “My answer to all three questions is an emphatic *no*. The decretal status of the one
16 being baptized is not one of the things that baptism signifies, and whether or not the
17 baptized individual is truly justified and saved is dependent upon the presence or
18 absence of *saving faith* somewhere in the course of his life. No Reformed
19 theologian, to my knowledge, has taught that baptism guarantees salvation apart
20 from faith, and I certainly do not.”
21

22 **Second sub-point of complaint’s argument under IV.C (#4.c):**

23 *2. The committee sites [sic] the language of WCF 28.1 that baptism is a seal of our union with*
24 *Christ as evidence that this is legitimate. But that which seals or confirms something is not*
25 *that which effects it (cf. WCF 14.1). On the contrary, the WCF teaches that the Spirit*
26 *unites us to Christ in our effectual calling which happens through the instrumentality of*
27 *the Word (WCF 10.1, cf. WCF 14.1). Meyers’ error is confirmed in the MICR 113-115*
28 *and JFVP 5, 7.*
29

30 **Complainants seem to reason as follows:**

31 **The MIC erroneously referred to WCF 28.1 to justify TE Meyers’ heterodox view that**
32 **baptism effects an individual’s union with Christ. In doing so, the MIC disregarded the**
33 **doctrine affirming that the Spirit unites us to Christ in our effectual calling through the**
34 **instrumentality of the Word. Hence, TE Meyers must believe that an individual is united**
35 **to Christ by baptism rather than in effectual calling, and apart from the instrumentality**
36 **of the Word.**
37

38 **Committee Response:**

39 **Again, the MIC investigation revealed that TE Meyers does not hold the view that**
40 **baptism guarantees a saving relationship (i.e., inseparable, saving union) with Christ. TE**
41 **Meyers reaffirmed his commitment to a statement in the 2006 MOP FV Report:**

42 “I agree with the MO Presbytery denial: “we deny that all those baptized are
43 inseparably united to Christ.” Only the elect, those that have saving faith, are
44 inseparably united to Christ.” (MICR, Appendix B, p. 69, lines 1-2).
45

46 **Complainants misconstrue how the MIC used the reference to WCF 28.1 (cf. MICR, p.**
47 **16, line 2ff). A careful reading of the MICR reveals that the MIC used the reference as**
48 **an example of statements in the Confession containing “profound theological and**

1 **pastoral implications” that TE Meyers is wrestling to work out faithfully, rather than as**
2 **evidence to legitimate TE Meyers’ theological view on baptism.**

3
4 **Though the reference is indirect, TE Meyers quotes WCF 10.4 in an affirmation of the**
5 **connection between the ministry of the Word and effectual calling (MICR, Appendix B,**
6 **p. 66, lines 29-32).**

7
8 **Without denying or diminishing the doctrine presented in WCF 10.1 and 14.1, the MIC**
9 **focused on WCF 27.3 when examining TE Meyers’ views because WCF 27.3 speaks**
10 **directly to the issue of the efficacy of the sacraments. Particularly, the MIC wanted to**
11 **assure itself that TE Meyers believed that the efficacy of baptism depended not on the**
12 **ritual act itself, but on the work of the Spirit, who conferred the grace to “worthy**
13 **receivers,” “who worketh when, and where, and how he pleaseth.” (WCF 10.2). The**
14 **MIC was convinced that he did so believe.**

15
16 **Further evidence presented by complainants:**

17 **Subsequent to submitting the initial complaint document, complainants submitted a**
18 **multi-page list of early blog quotes and comments from TE Meyers. The second**
19 **document was intended to provide further proof of the errors specified in the complaint.**
20 **Of particular concern were some comments TE Meyers wrote on a blog in 2002**
21 **regarding the conversion of the Apostle Paul and his baptism by Ananias. The comments**
22 **seem to advocate the view that God remits sin not in the moment a person trusts in**
23 **Christ but in the moment that person is baptized, a view that the MIC, upon its**
24 **investigation, did not believe TE Meyers holds. In order to consider this evidence**
25 **properly and fully, the Complaint Review Committee asked TE Meyers some clarifying**
26 **questions on his views of baptism. (We strongly urge presbyters to read the full exchange**
27 **on the questions and answers touching Paul’s baptism in Appendix B in this report.)**

28
29 **The CRC asked: 1) Are you saying here that Paul’s conversion, i.e., his putting his trust**
30 **in Christ, took place on the road to Damascus but his sins were not forgiven until he was**
31 **baptized by Ananias in Damascus?**

32
33 **TE Meyers answered:**

34
35 **“No, I do not believe that. But I can see how my statement could lead one to**
36 **conclude that I was separating conversion, forgiveness, and baptism. That was not**
37 **my intention. The series of questions I ask in that Wrightsaid discussion are ill**
38 **phrased, to say the least. Once again, my overly provocative way of highlighting the**
39 **importance of baptism has led to unintended consequences. I regret that.**

40 **“Paul’s “conversion” is the entire complex of events in Acts 9 (retold as his**
41 **“testimony” in Acts 22). I don’t know exactly when Paul exercised saving faith in**
42 **that narrative. I don’t think anyone does. Locating the precise moment of his**
43 **conversion doesn’t seem to be Luke’s concern in Acts 9 or even Paul’s interest in is**
44 **recounting his encounter with Jesus and Ananias in Acts 22. Perhaps Paul trusted**
45 **Christ precisely when Ananias said to him, “Arise and be baptized and wash away**
46 **your sins, calling on his name” (Acts 22:16). In that case Paul may have “called on**
47 **the name of Jesus” for the first time right then and there, his sins being washed away,**
48 **when he placed his faith in Christ alone.**

49 **“Even so, it is certainly possible that Saul exercised saving faith either in the**

1 encounter with Jesus on the road or sometime during the three days following that
2 event. If that was the case, then he was justified and forgiven at that point.
3 "... I do not believe that the forgiveness of sins is always only given at the time
4 of baptism."
5

6 **The CRC asked further:**

7
8 **3) Do you believe that the remission of Paul's sins was "attached to the action" of**
9 **baptism a) as a sign, seal, and application of a forgiveness that had been granted**
10 **"as soon as he believed in Christ," to use your terminology in the MIC answers,**
11 **or b) was forgiveness "attached to the action" of baptism in the sense that God**
12 **normally forgives sins in the moment of and by that sacramental action?**
13

14 **TE Meyers answered:**

15
16 "My answer to 3a: yes, as soon as he believed in Christ. Taking Ananias's
17 charge to Paul at face value, I believe Paul "called on the name of the Lord"
18 subsequent to Ananias's exhortation. Paul expressed his trust in Jesus by submitting
19 to baptism by means of which his virgin faith received the sign and seal of the
20 forgiveness of his sins.

21 "My answer to 3b is: No, I think that way of putting it is too categorical and
22 therefore misleading."
23

24 **The CRC also asked:**

25
26 **8) Are you willing to accept our judgment that your statement, "Normally God**
27 **forgive sins...in baptism" is too one-sided? If not, defend it; and if you are**
28 **willing, how would you restate it?**
29

30 **TE Meyers answered:**

31
32 "Yes, it is too categorical and needs qualification. But I'm not willing to restate it
33 because, as I said in my answer to the last question, I'm not confident I can formulate a
34 slogan that will express in the abstract, apart from concrete circumstances, exactly how
35 God uses baptism in every situation."
36

37 **The CRC asked as well:**

38
39 **9) The MIC exhorted you to be careful in the way you express yourself, especially**
40 **when using terms that others might easily misunderstand. Are you willing, under**
41 **that general exhortation, to accept a very specific one, namely, that in the future,**
42 **not only for the sake of those you teach and for your colleagues in ministry in the**
43 **PCA but also for your own greater understanding of God's truth, you need to**
44 **guard yourself against overstatement in either direction on some of these sensitive**
45 **"both/and" issues—as Calvin does so admirably, even trying to pay attention to**
46 **this when you are arguing things out informally?**
47

48 **TE Meyers answered:**

1
2 “Yes, I accept the rebuke and will work on formulating theological propositions with
3 more care in the future. I hope my answers to these questions from the committee give
4 some evidence of my progress on this front.”
5
6

7 **CONCLUSION**
8

9 **Question before the CRC:**

10 **Did MOP err when it determined that there was not sufficient evidence to raise a strong**
11 **presumption of guilt in the teaching of TE Meyers on baptism?**
12

13 **Finding of the CRC on specification of error IV.C (#4.c):**

14 **In reviewing the work of the MIC and weighing the evidence presented with the**
15 **complaint, the committee did not discover any contradiction with the MIC’s**
16 **investigation of TE Meyers’ views. A careful examination of the content of the MICR**
17 **and the views of TE Meyers reveals he is not teaching a view of baptism that opposes the**
18 **doctrine of baptism in the Westminster Standards.**
19

20 **Recommendation:**

21 **That the complaint regarding specification of error IV.C (#4.c) be denied, namely, that**
22 **MOP erred when it determined that there was insufficient evidence to raise a strong**
23 **presumption of guilt in the teaching of TE Meyers on baptism, which resulted in**
24 **Missouri Presbytery’s further error of failing in its duty to condemn erroneous doctrines**
25 **and practices that injure the peace, purity, and unity of the Church.**
26
27

28 *****
29
30

31 **Specification of Error IV.D (#4.d in the complaint)**

32 ***IV. Missouri Presbytery erred because it failed to find a strong presumption of guilt in views***
33 ***that are contrary to the Standards and consequently failed in its duty to condemn erroneous***
34 ***doctrines and practices that injure the peace, purity, and unity of the Church.***

35 [And specifically:]
36

37 ***D. Missouri Presbytery erred when it determined that there was insufficient evidence to raise***
38 ***a strong presumption of guilt in TE Meyers in the doctrine of perseverance.***
39

40 **Complainants seem to reason as follows:**

41 **The Presbytery’s findings, following the lead of the Meyers Investigation Committee, are**
42 **in error because it failed to see that, in fact, there is sufficient evidence to raise a strong**
43 **presumption of guilt that TE Meyers is teaching contrary to the Westminster Standards**
44 **in the doctrine of perseverance. The MIC’s investigation of TE Meyers’ views on**
45 **perseverance failed to focus on the central issue: Does he teach, contrary to the**
46 **Standards, that there is some kind of salvation that is parallel to the salvation of the elect**
47 **but ultimately is less than an eternally saving relationship with God through Christ?**
48 **Suspicion that this is what TE Meyers believes are not relieved by his attempts to qualify**

1 the spiritual benefits the reprobate might have now by assuring us that they do *not* end
2 up with those benefits in eternity; and this is because he cannot clearly enumerate and
3 describe those spiritual benefits that the reprobate might have in time. And in fact, these
4 kinds of benefits are simply not a part of the doctrine of the Westminster Standards—
5 the implication being that anyone maintaining that such benefits exist is opposing the
6 Westminster Standards by believing things that “cannot fit into our theological system.”
7 Further, what TE Meyers really believes about there being some kind of parallel
8 salvation that the reprobate might enjoy for a time and then lose should have been clear
9 to the MIC through what he teaches about baptism as that which brings a person into
10 the intimacy of the intra-Trinitarian relationships, into the very covenantal life of God.
11 All this has not only been an error in judgment on Presbytery’s part, but a dereliction of
12 its spiritual duty to condemn erroneous opinions in the church for the wellbeing of God’s
13 people.

14
15 **Question before the CRC:**

16 **Did MOP err when it determined that there was not sufficient evidence to raise a strong**
17 **presumption of guilt in the teaching of TE Meyers in the doctrine of perseverance, and**
18 **this fail to condemn erroneous doctrines that injure the church of God?**
19

20 **Complainants’ arguments in IV.D. (4.d):**

21 **1. The JFVP states:** “All who are baptized into the triune Name are united with Christ in His
22 covenantal life” (*JFVP*, 7). *According to Meyers, this covenantal life is,*

23 “From eternity the Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit share a fullness of
24 covenantal life, love, glory in their personal relations with one another; and it is this
25 covenantal personal fellowship of the Trinity that is the life of the covenant into which
26 we are graciously admitted” (Trinity & Covenant IV, Corrigenda Denuo, 8/22/2007).

27 *Thus someone who falls away falls from a position of grace in the covenant. This is exactly*
28 *what the JFVP goes on to affirm.*

29 “All who are baptized into the triune Name are united with Christ in His covenantal
30 life, and so those who fall from that position of grace are indeed falling from
31 grace”(JFVP, 7, cf. CD, 12/15/2007).
32

33 **Committee Response to IV.D.1:**

34 **(For the CRC’s evaluation of what the complaint alleges concerning TE Meyers’**
35 **teaching on baptism, see this report p. 39. What the committee says there applies to this**
36 **part of the complaint as well.)**
37

38 **The Complaint Review Committee points the Presbytery back to the MICR and its**
39 **investigation of what Meyers means by the phrase, “covenantal life” when applied to**
40 **God or Christ, since the allegation of complainants above has been dealt with clearly and**
41 **decisively there. The MICR stated:**

42
43 “TE Meyers makes a distinction between those who are united to Christ through
44 participation in the covenant community of the church (i.e., the “covenantal union” with
45 Christ”), and those who are elect and thus possess a saving union with Christ ((JJM
46 Response, p. 75, lines 14-22; cf. pp. 75-78). It is through the lens of this distinction that
47 TE Meyers’ individual statements must be understood **if we are charitably to seek to**

1 **understand his views.** The former “covenantal union with Christ” is to be understood
2 when TE Meyers says: “The reprobate apostate does not lose eternal salvation,
3 regeneration, justification, and a vital union with Christ by saving faith; rather, he loses
4 many gracious gifts as well as a covenanted connection with Christ and his people in the
5 church. I believe what I have written here is consistent with both the JFVP and the
6 Westminster Standards.” (JJM Response, p. 80, lines 3-6). A similar distinction is
7 evident when TE Meyers states: “Let me emphasize again that those who are elect in
8 Christ can never fall away. But those who are not elect often partake of gracious benefits
9 and gifts from God, including a covenantal union with Christ, all of which gracious gifts
10 they eventually reject. They fall from grace—not the same grace that the elect receive,
11 but grace nonetheless.” (JJM Response, p. 80, lines 7-10).” [Emphasis added]

12 (MICR, pp. 19-20)

13
14 **When TE Meyers insists, as he did with the MIC, that he does *not* believe that people**
15 **move in and out of a *saving* relationship with God, that only the elect enjoy the intimacy**
16 **of a genuinely forgiven child with his or her Father; when he insists that he does not**
17 **believe in or teach some kind of “parallel soteriology” that the reprobate might enjoy**
18 **alongside the elect for a time, but then lose—the only charitable way of taking Meyers’**
19 **language that God draws sinners up into the “covenantal life” of Christ, is to put an**
20 **orthodox interpretation on it, to wit, that any real spiritual benefit the reprobate might**
21 **enjoy by being “in” the covenant community of the church is rooted in the very presence**
22 **there of the triune God and his divine life that imbues, fills, and empowers Christ’s**
23 **people for loving and for living lives of righteousness. There is nothing heretical about**
24 **that at all.**

25
26 **Consider this strong statement made by a PCA teaching elder and scholar deeply**
27 **committed to our Westminster system of doctrine, as he summarizes John Calvin’s high**
28 **view what it means to be in covenant relationship to Jesus Christ:**

29
30 “The covenant is not the same as secret election that infallibly secures salvation.
31 Rather, the covenant is a general election that offers the promise of the benefits of the
32 covenant. Only secret election ratifies the covenant in the case of any individual.
33 Such is the covenant as viewed from the decree of God. Nevertheless, the covenant
34 has duties for men to execute. Thus man may not look to the decree for his salvation,
35 but to the promises he finds in the covenant that he embraces by faith. **Hence, the**
36 **covenant creates an intermediate category of persons between those who are the**
37 **ones rejected by God, and those who are the elect.** It is from this intermediate
38 category that hypocrites arise, who later break the covenant by unbelief and
39 disobedience....**Nevertheless, those who enter the covenant sphere by baptism,**
40 **even if not secretly elected, are really in the covenant.** For Calvin, the covenant is
41 the place of salvation, but not all who are in the covenant will receive that salvation
42 because of the mystery of divine election. [emphasis added] (Peter Lillback in *The*
43 *Binding of God: Calvin’s Role in the Development of Covenant Theology*, p. 309)

44
45 **Complainants argument in IV.D.1 continues:**

46 *Meyers’ states,*

1 “They may receive certain benefits temporarily, but the saving benefits (in the
2 fullest sense of that phrase) are reserved for the elect who are gifted with true,
3 saving faith” (MICR 65).

4 *But this was never the question. The question is whether there is a salvation less than the*
5 *fullest, eternal sense, such as a position of grace that the baptized reprobate participate in but*
6 *later lose.*

7
8 **Committee Response:**

9 **Again, we point presbyters to the MIC report where it is clear that TE Meyers reserves**
10 **the term “saving” and its derivatives, for the gift which Christ won for the elect. The**
11 **LOC puts words into TE Meyers’ mouth he refuses to own, insisting that he “teaches**
12 **that there are some who are united to Christ and experience *saving* benefits in Him but**
13 **yet ultimately fall away....” [emphasis added]. TE Meyers has consistently denied that**
14 **the reprobate receive any *saving* benefits. But the MIC reported that he did quote,**
15 **rightly, John Murray who went far in stressing how positive are the benefits and**
16 **blessings of grace some reprobate souls do, in fact, receive. Murray said:**

17
18 “Unregenerate men receive operations and influences of the Spirit in connection with
19 the administration of the gospel, influences that result in experience of the power and
20 glory of the gospel, yet influences which do not issue in genuine and lasting
21 conversion and are finally withdrawn. It is here that we find non-saving grace at its
22 very apex. We cannot conceive of anything, that falls short of salvation, more exalted
23 in its character. And we must not make void the reality of the blessing enjoyed and of
24 the grace bestowed out of consideration for the awful doom resultant upon
25 renunciation and apostasy” (John Murray, “Common Grace” in *Collected Writings of*
26 *John Murray*, Volume 2: Systematic Theology (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust,
27 1977), pp. 109-111.

28
29 **Complaint argument in IV.D.2-3 (4.d):**

30 **2. All his qualifications of saving benefits never going to the reprobate are negated because it**
31 **is not clear in what sense he is speaking.**

32 **3. On the contrary, it is clear that TE Meyers believes that the reprobate receive benefits that**
33 **cannot fit into our theological system, and we agree that what he says does not fit in our**
34 **theological system (cf. “Temporary Faith & Forgiveness,” Corrigenda Denuo, December 15,**
35 **2007, MICR 112).**

36
37 **Committee response to IV.D.2-3 (4.d):**

38 **The MICR did include in its report TE Meyers’ own words concerning what benefits the**
39 **reprobate might receive by virtue of being in the covenant and then distinguishing those**
40 **benefits (temporarily possessed) from the benefits enjoyed by true believers. According**
41 **to the MICR, TE Meyers says:**

42
43 “The reprobate apostate does not lose eternal salvation, regeneration, justification,
44 and a vital union with Christ by saving faith; rather, he loses many gracious gifts as
45 well as a covenanted connection with Christ and his people in the church.”
46 (MICR, III. D. 2. p.19., lines 34ff; cf MICR Appendix B. IV. 1. p.80., lines 1ff).

1
2 **In appendix B and in response to questions put to him by the MIC, TE Meyers also says:**
3 “I deny that the benefits enjoyed by non-elect apostates up until the time that they
4 apostatize are identical to the benefits received by elect members of the covenant who
5 possess true faith and who will persevere until the end. The elect and the non-elect do
6 not enjoy the same benefits in the church. The non-elect do not lose the saving benefits
7 of union with Christ when they apostatize. They never possessed them” (MICR,
8 **Appendix B, IV, p. 77., lines 3ff; also noting lines 17ff).**
9

10 **Second, and concerning D.2., why must TE Meyers qualifications of saving benefits**
11 **going to the reprobate be negated because it is not clear in what sense he is speaking?**
12 **The CRC is not even certain what complainants mean by “it is not clear in what sense he**
13 **is speaking.” It is arguable that if TE Meyers’ position on this is truly not clear to the**
14 **LOC signatories and/or complainants, then they had every opportunity to confer with**
15 **him about it. His general position on this matter, however, is clear to the committee: TE**
16 **Meyers is standing in that long line of orthodox and faithful biblical expositors who have**
17 **tried to do justice to the Scriptural testimony that even those who are unregenerate often**
18 **enjoy great blessing by virtue of being within the covenant. (See Especially Meyers’**
19 **citation of Louis Berkhof on this subject [MICR, Appendix B, III, 5, p.70].)**
20

21 **While some vagueness and indeterminacy attaches itself to this area of theological**
22 **inquiry generally (because Scripture does not supply answers to all our questions about**
23 **the baptized reprobate and those who apostatize from their apparent walking with God**
24 **and lose attending benefits), at least this much is clear from TE Meyers: the sense in**
25 **which TE Meyers does speak about spiritual benefits in relation to the reprobate is**
26 **motivated by and in accord with the pastoral sense that Scripture speaks of when**
27 **referring to those who spurn the kindness and gifts of God and are unfaithful to God’s**
28 **gracious covenant with them (cf. MICR, Appendix B, IV. 1.c., p.78ff., line 14ff).**
29

30 **When complainants contend that they do not know what Meyers means here, they may**
31 **well be referring to the fact that he cannot enumerate and explain *precisely* all the**
32 **benefits he believes the reprobate might receive and then lose. But that inability can also**
33 **be viewed as a wise reticence because the Scriptures themselves do not give us a detailed**
34 **catalogue, as it were, of such things. The WCF itself (chapter 10.4) goes so far as to say**
35 **that non-elect people in the church might even be “called by the ministry of the Word,”**
36 **i.e, be acted on in some real way by the preaching of the Word, and yet never *truly* come**
37 **to Christ in saving faith—a very large claim indeed. Such people might even “have some**
38 **common operations of the Spirit,” as the WCF puts it. And what are those “common**
39 **operations” the non-elect might actually possess? The Confession leaves it all very**
40 **undefined and indeterminate. And for good reason—it is impossible to be precise on**
41 **this matter, as Old School Presbyterian theologian, Charles Hodge eloquently explains**
42 **it:**
43

44 “No strictness of inward scrutiny, no microscopic examination or delicacy of analysis,
45 can enable an observer, and rarely the man himself, to distinguish these religious
46 exercises [of the] from those of the truly regenerated. The words by which they are

1 described both in the Scriptures and in ordinary Christian discourse, are the same.
2 Unrenewed men in the Bible are said to repent, to believe, to be partakers of the Holy
3 Ghost, and to taste the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come.
4 Human language is not adequate to express all the soul's experiences. The same word
5 must always represent in one case, or in one man's experience, what it does not in the
6 experience of another. That there is a specific difference between the exercises due to
7 common grace, and those experienced by the true children of God, is certain. **But that**
8 **difference does not reveal itself to the consciousness, or at least, certainly not to**
9 **the eye of an observer.** "By their fruits ye shall know them." This is the test given by
10 our Lord. It is only when these experiences issue in a holy life, that their distinctive
11 character is known" [emphasis added] Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* [vol. 2],
12 p.673).

13
14 **And finally, the committee addresses complainants' contention that the benefits which**
15 **the reprobate receive, in Meyers' view, are never spelled out and affirmed in that way by**
16 **the Westminster Standards. The implication of this line of reasoning seems to be that**
17 **anyone affirming something which the Standards do not explicitly teach is *opposing* the**
18 **Standards by believing things that "cannot fit into our theological system." If that is the**
19 **argument of the complaint in IV.D.3 (4d), then all the committee can say is that this is a**
20 **novel and truly revisionist view of confessional subscription. It is utterly foreign to**
21 **Presbyterian confessional history to prevent men from affirming something they believe**
22 **Scripture teaches simply because the Westminster Standards do not include it or are not**
23 **explicit about it.¹⁰ This argument needs no refutation; we rest our case.**

24 CONCLUSION

25 Question before the CRC:

26
27 **Did MOP err when it determined that there was not sufficient evidence to raise a strong**
28 **presumption of guilt in the teaching of TE Meyers in the doctrine of perseverance, and**
29 **this fail to condemn erroneous doctrines that injure the church of God?**

30 Finding of the CRC on specification of error IV.D (#4.d):

31
32 **In reviewing the work of the MIC and weighing the evidence presented with the**
33 **complaint, the committee did not discover any contradiction with the MIC's**
34 **investigation of TE Meyers' views. A careful examination of the content of the MICR**
35 **and the views of TE Meyers reveals he is not teaching a view of perseverance that**
36 **opposes the doctrine in the Westminster Standards.**

37 Recommendation:

38
39 **That the complaint regarding specification of error IV.D (#4.d) be denied, namely, that**
40 **Missouri Presbytery erred when it determined that there was insufficient evidence to**
41

¹⁰ It's clear that at least some of TE Meyers' critics are now pushing this revisionist view of how the Westminster Standards are to function as a confessional norm. Consider this criticism of Meyers: "Second, the silence of the WCF on the relationship of Trinity and covenant only serves to condemn Meyers' speculations since the Westminster divines didn't develop Trinitarian dogma in terms of an eternal covenantal relationship. Such a view would, in light of the WCF, be outside the "system of doctrine" contained in the Westminster Standards which Meyers has committed himself to as an officer in the PCA." Jordan Harris in "Jeff Meyers, Missouri Presbytery, and Covenant Theology," in *The Aquila Report*, "Opinion and Commentary," January 11, 2011. It would be difficult to find a starker example of the Standards functioning virtually as a doctrinal regulative principle—if you are teaching any biblical truth you cannot find explicitly stated in the Westminster Standards, then you are teaching "outside" the system of doctrine, and are therefore, in violation of your ordination vows.

1 raise a strong presumption of guilt in the teaching of TE Meyers on perseverance, which
2 resulted in Missouri Presbytery's further error of failing in its duty to condemn
3 erroneous doctrines and practices that injure the peace, purity, and unity of the Church.
4

5 *****
6

7 **Specification of Error IV (#4.e in complaint)**

8 *IV. Missouri Presbytery erred because it failed to find a strong presumption of guilt in views*
9 *that are contrary to the Standards and consequently failed in its duty to condemn erroneous*
10 *doctrines and practices that injure the peace, purity, and unity of the Church.*

11 [And specifically:]

12
13 *E. Missouri Presbytery erred when it determined that there was insufficient evidence that*
14 *there was a strong presumption of guilt in the teachings of TE Meyers in the doctrine of*
15 *justification by faith alone.*
16

17 **Complainants seem to reason as follows:**

18 **MOP should have found a strong presumption of guilt in TE Meyers' views on**
19 **justification by faith alone, because regardless of anything else TE asserts, his embracing**
20 **of the JFVP affirmation that the faith that justifies is "a personally loyal faith" gives the**
21 **lie to his insistence that he believes and teaches the Westminster doctrine of justification**
22 **by faith alone. MOP was also negligent in not explicitly interacting with Meyers'**
23 **exposition of the parable of the tax collector and the Pharisee, since, so it appears,**
24 **complainants have serious concerns about Meyers' teaching on the theology of that**
25 **story. These are failures in judgment, but in failing here the Presbytery failed to live up**
26 **to its responsibility to condemn doctrinal errors and thereby protect the church of God.**
27

28 **Complaint argument in IV.E.1 (#4.e):**

29 *1. All of Meyers' affirmations of justification by faith alone are negated by his affirmation that*
30 *"personal loyalty" describes the fiduciary aspect of faith. This is exactly what the signers of*
31 *the LOC alleged, and Meyers confirmed that what they said was true. "Living trust" is not a*
32 *plausible understanding of "personal loyalty" as both the context of the JFVP and the*
33 *comments on one of the documents submitted to Missouri Presbytery indicate (e.g. "Trinity &*
34 *Covenant VI," Corrigenda Denuo, 8/31/2007).*
35

36 **Committee Response to IV.E.1 (#4.e):**

37 **The committee would simply point the Presbytery back to the MICR (pp. 21-25) which**
38 **dealt decisively with this allegation. There, individual statements from Martin Luther**
39 **regarding faith were cited to demonstrate how right and proper is the judgment of**
40 **charity among brothers, as set out by the MIC, namely, that "If a view can be**
41 **interpreted in an orthodox fashion, it ought to be so interpreted until once is forced to do**
42 **otherwise" (MICR p. 4, citing an SJC case). By themselves—that is, isolated from the**
43 **full teaching of Luther elsewhere—those statements of his cited *could* be construed in an**
44 **unorthodox way and taken to imply that Luther taught justification by works. But we**
45 **don't *do that* with Luther—rightly. And the MIC's argument was: neither should we do**
46 **it with any brother, including Jeff Meyers, especially when we have his own words as to**
47 **a) what it is, specifically, that justifies us: namely, faith and *not* our ongoing faithfulness;**
48 **and b) what he believed he was affirming in the JFVP phrase, "a personally loyal faith,"**
49 **namely the *quality* of genuine, saving faith. The MIC cited Meyers' unqualified**

1 **affirmation of the doctrine that believers are justified by faith in Jesus Christ and not**
2 **their faithfulness:**

3
4 “TE Meyers affirms, ‘We are justified by faith. Faith, thus receiving and resting on
5 Christ and his righteousness, is the alone instrument of justification’ (WCF 11.2). Since
6 faith is the sole instrument of justification, one is justified when one believes, when one
7 trusts God for his promises in the Gospel.” (JJM Response to the MIC, p. 93, lines 6-
8 11). He also says, ‘My understanding of the classic doctrine of justification has not
9 changed since the assumption of my ordination vows.’ (JJM Response to the MIC, p.
10 92, lines 31-32). Later TE Meyers adds, ‘the instrument of justification, the way we
11 receive God’s judicial verdict of not guilty and righteous in his sight, is through faith
12 alone not faithfulness.’ ‘Of course, those who exercise faith in Jesus and are justified
13 will be faithful to the end. They will have faith-filled lives. But their faithfulness is not
14 the material or instrumental cause of their justification, but the fruit of their salvation.’
15 (JJM Response to the MIC, p. 96, lines 23-28).

16
17 “The second item the signers omitted was the last half of the denial paragraph. The full
18 denial in the JFVP reads as follows:

19
20 “We deny that the faith which is the sole instrument of justification can be
21 understood as anything other than the only kind of faith which God gives,
22 which is to say, a living, active, and personally loyal faith. Justifying faith
23 encompasses the elements of assent, knowledge, and living trust in
24 accordance with the age and maturity of the believer.’ (JFVP, p. 6)
25 [emphasis not in the original]

26
27 “A careful and charitable reading of this denial, in the context in which it was written,
28 would conclude that the phrase ‘living trust’ in the second sentence is an explication of
29 the phrase ‘personally loyal faith’ in the first sentence. TE Meyers has explained and
30 defended the phrase ‘personally loyal faith’ this way:

31
32 “The statement from the JFVP only talks about what kind of faith is true faith,
33 that is, saving faith. To say that the kind of faith that justifies is a ‘living,
34 active, and personally loyal faith’ is simply to define genuine faith over
35 against false or superficial belief. The Scriptures often warn against
36 superficial, historical, or merely intellectual faith” (Matt. 7:26; 13:12; Acts
37 26:27, 28; James 2:19). (JJM Response, p. 98, lines 9-13)

38
39 We find this explanation to be a reasonable exposition of the phrase ‘personally loyal
40 faith’ to which the signers of the LOC object. Moreover, taken together with all the
41 statements on justification by faith alone in the JFVP, the committee finds nothing in the
42 phrase that contradicts the Westminster Standards; rather, it seems to convey the
43 meaning of the closing phrases of WCF XI.2: ‘[Faith...(which) is...the alone instrument
44 of justification...] is no dead faith, but worketh by love.’” (MICR, pp. 24-25)

45
46 **Committee Response to Error IV.E continues:**

47 **Complainants, just like the 29 signers of the LOC, leave out the full JFVP statement on**
48 **justification which will be cited below. That fuller statement lends credibility to TE**
49 **Meyers insistence in his answers to the MIC that, like the Luther citations in the MIC**

1 and the passage in WCF 12.2, he understood himself to be making an affirmation about
2 *the quality*, the kind of faith which God gives when he saves someone. The MIC rightly
3 judged that TE Meyers should be trusted on this point, and Missouri Presbytery, to its
4 credit, concurred with them.

5
6 Nevertheless, because complainants are so offended by the phrase, “a personally loyal
7 faith,” and seem to insist that there is only one, objective, non-negotiable, and
8 confessionally-compromising way of construing those words, the Complaint Review
9 Committee put the following questions to TE Meyers:

10
11 **Questions from the CRC to TE Meyers on the Phrase “a Personally Loyal Faith”**
12 **Background to questions 1-5 below....On p. 96, lines 22-28, of your answers to the**
13 **questions of the Meyers Investigation Committee, you affirm the following:**

14
15 “We might say that the ground of justification is the faithfulness of Jesus. But the
16 instrument of justification, the way we receive God’s judicial verdict of not guilty and
17 righteous in his sight, **is through [sic] faith alone not faithfulness.** As Paul says:
18 ‘we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus
19 Christ’ (Gal. 2:16). Of course, those who exercise faith in Jesus and are justified will
20 be faithful to the end. They will have faith-filled lives. But **their faithfulness is not**
21 **the material or instrumental cause of their justification**, but the fruit of their
22 salvation.” [emphasis added]

23
24 **Now you are a signatory of the Joint Federal Vision Profession and defend the JFVP’s**
25 **characterization of justifying faith as a “personally loyal faith.” The JFVP affirmation**
26 **on justification by faith reads,**

27
28 “We affirm we are saved by grace alone, through faith alone. Faith alone is the
29 hand which is given to us by God so that we may receive the offered grace of God.
30 Justification is God’s forensic declaration that we are counted as righteous, with our
31 sins forgiven, for the sake of Jesus Christ alone.”

32
33 **And then this denial immediately follows:**

34
35 “We deny that the faith which is the sole instrument of justification can be
36 understood as anything other than the only kind of faith which God gives, which is to
37 say, a living, active, and personally loyal faith.” (JFVP, p. 6)

38
39 **The affirmation in this denial (the denial affirms by a double negative) has elicited the**
40 **charge that the JFVP denies the doctrine of justification by faith alone. But the MIC**
41 **was satisfied that by the phrase “*personally loyal faith*” you were not intending to affirm**
42 **the doctrine that we are justified by our faithfulness, and therefore by our works. You**
43 **explained the sense you were attaching to “personally loyal” when you said in one of**
44 **your answers to the MIC,**

45
46 “The documentation provided by the Letter of Concern does not support the claim that
47 I teach justification by works. I do not include ‘loyalty or faithfulness as an instrument
48 of justification,’ as the Letter asserts. That is not what the portion of the JFVP that they
49 quote says. The statement from the JFVP only talks about what kind of faith is true

1 faith, that is, saving faith. To say that the kind of faith that justifies is a ‘living, active,
2 and personally loyal faith’ is simply to define genuine faith over against false or
3 superficial belief. The Scriptures often warn against superficial, historical, or merely
4 intellectual faith (Matt. 7:26; 13:12; Acts 26:27, 28; James 2:19). To say that saving
5 faith is ‘living’ is just to repeat what James says in chapter 2 of his epistle. Chapter 16
6 of the Westminster Confession uses the same kind of language when it speaks of ‘the
7 fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith’” (16.2). (MICR Appendix B. p.98)

8
9 **But this section of the JFVP continues to meet with passionate objections. In fact,
10 complainants have argued that:**

11
12 *All of Meyers affirmations of justification by faith alone are negated by his affirmation that
13 “personal loyalty” describes the fiduciary aspect of faith. This is exactly what the signers of
14 the LOC alleged, and Meyers confirmed that what they said was true. “Living trust” is not a
15 plausible understanding of “personal loyalty” as both the context of the JFVP and the
16 comments on one of the documents submitted to Missouri Presbytery indicate (e.g. “Trinity &
17 Covenant VI,” Corrigenda Denuo, 8/31/2007). [Complaint, IV.E. p. 4]*

18
19 **That opening claim is extremely strong. The offensive clause is the JFVP assertion “that
20 the faith which is the sole instrument of justification [is]... a living, active, and personally
21 loyal faith.” This affirmation appears to be so deeply troubling to some men because
22 they cannot help but understand the word “loyal” as implying a fidelity over some
23 duration of time and as a synonym for “faithful.” They appear to believe that what the
24 JFVP is really meaning to assert would go something like this if it were spelled out:**

25
26 *“The faith which justifies us is that which energizes our ongoing loyalty, our faithfulness
27 to the Lord, i.e., we are justified by the ongoing faith underlying our faithfulness; in
28 other words we are justified by our faithfulness.”*

29
30 **In fact, in common usage very often, if not generally, the word “loyal,” does connote a
31 fidelity that implies duration over time, as in the sentence,**

32
33 *“The assistant was worth the extra money it cost to hire her as she proved loyal to the
34 company.”*

35
36 **And the complainants point out, in their reference above, that you yourself have used the
37 word “loyal” as a synonym for “faithful” and therefore imply that it carries the
38 connotation of a fidelity over some duration of time. They cite something you wrote on
39 your website, *Corrigenda Denuo*, as late as 2007 and roughly a month after the JFVP
40 was promulgated. You said there in one exchange:**

41
42 *“But I think ‘loyalty’ is a fine summary of ‘covenantal relations.’ The form of the
43 relationship is the covenant. The shape of one's relationship will be dictated by the
44 covenant. If one is ‘righteous,’ then one is **faithful or loyal** to the form or terms of the
45 covenant.” [emphasis added] (Corrigenda Denuo, *Trinity & Covenant, part VI*).*

46
47 **So here are the questions:**

1 **1) Have you been aware that in the *Corrigenda Denuo* comment you used “faithful” as a**
2 **synonym for “loyal” in an informal email communication a month after the formal JFVP**
3 **document came out with its statement about “a personally loyal faith”?**

4
5 **TE Meyers’ Answer:**

6 “I was not aware of using those terms as synonyms. I can see where this would be
7 confusing, especially if one thought I was using these terms in some technical sense.”
8

9 **2) Were you self-consciously assigning to the word “loyal” the same meaning in both**
10 **statements?**

11
12 **TE Meyers’ Answer:**

13
14 “I didn’t write the JFVP document, but I did have some influence on the
15 wording of some sections. But I don’t remember being involved in the wording of this
16 section on justification. When I signed the document I was not thinking about how my
17 use of the terms in my blog posts might impact how someone might read the JFVP
18 document. That never even entered my mind. When I signed the JFVP I understood
19 the statement about “a personally loyal faith” to be description of the *kind* of faith that
20 justifies, not to be some covert way of speaking of justification by works. We are
21 justified by a true, lively, genuine trust in the Gospel. The only kind of faith that
22 justifies is the kind that produces fruit, not a dead faith. I’ve explained my views very
23 carefully in the MICR:

24 “The statement from the JFVP only talks about *what kind of faith* is true faith,
25 that is, saving faith. To say that the kind of faith that justifies is a “living, active, and
26 personally loyal faith” is simply to define genuine faith over against false or superficial
27 belief. The Scriptures often warn against superficial, historical, or merely intellectual
28 faith (Matt. 7:26; 13:12; Acts 26:27, 28; James 2:19).” (JJM Response, p. 98, lines 9-
29 13)

30 “This word “loyal” was not meant to be some theological Trojan horse slipped
31 in to disguise some secret belief I have in justification by works or faithfulness. I
32 would ask that my explicit, carefully worded statements composed for the MIC be
33 given priority over logical implications based on my use of similar terms in a variety
34 of contexts.”
35

36 **3) If the answer is yes, then how can you avoid the charge that you and all JFVP**
37 **signatories hold to justification by faithfulness, not justification by faith?**

38 **4) If the answer is no, please explain how your understanding of “loyal” differs in the**
39 **two statements.**

40
41 **TE Meyers’ Answer:**

42
43 “I understand “personally loyal faith” in the JFVP to be another way of describing the
44 fiduciary aspect of faith. As I wrote in my response to the MIC:

45 “To describe saving faith as “personally loyal faith,” as the JFVP does,
46 simply draws out the “volitional element” (*fiducia*) in classic Reformed
47 definitions of saving faith. Saving faith has three marks in most Reformed
48 theological treatments: 1) knowledge (*notitia*), assent (*assensus*), and trust
49 (*fiducia*). Berkhof describes the third dimension of saving faith this way:

1 ‘This is the crowning element of faith. Faith is not merely a matter of
2 the intellect, nor of the intellect and the emotions combined; it is a
3 matter of the will, determining the directions of the soul, an act of the
4 soul going out towards it’s object and appropriating this. . . This third
5 element consists in *a personal trust* in Christ as Savior and Lord,
6 including a surrender of the soul as guilty and defiled to Christ, and a
7 reception and appropriation of Christ as the source of pardon and
8 spiritual life’ (*Systematic Theology*, p. 505).

9 “That the JFVP should choose to describe the fiduciary aspect of faith with
10 the words “personal loyalty” does not imply that one is justified by his
11 meritorious work of “personal loyalty.” No more than one might accuse
12 Berkhof of believing in “justification by a surrender of the soul” or
13 “justification by a volitional act of the soul.” These are all just ways of
14 describing the richness of saving faith.

15 “Faith itself is not something you offer to God to become good enough to be
16 worthy of his friendship, but rather a means by which you are united to
17 Christ so that his sacrifice and righteousness is reckoned to you by God’s
18 gracious declaration.”

19 **5) And, are you prepared to acknowledge that “personally loyal” as a description of**
20 **justifying faith may—at least in some quarters—have obscured as much of the true**
21 **meaning of the JFVP affirmation/denial as you had hoped it would express?**

22
23 **TE Meyers’ Answer:**

24
25 “Yes. This all strikes me as a discussion that skates perilously close to violating Paul’s
26 warning against quarreling about words (2 Timothy 2:14). I have made my convictions
27 about justification explicit in my carefully-worded answers to the MIC. I have stated
28 that I have no reservations about what the Westminster Standards say about the
29 doctrine of justification. I am sorry that the way I’ve used the words “loyal” and
30 “loyalty” have led to such confusion. It was not my intention to subvert the doctrine of
31 justification by Christ alone through faith alone with my informal use of terms
32 regarding covenant loyalty and faithfulness.”

33
34 **Complaint argument in IV.E.2 (#4.e):**

35 **2. Further, the committee also did not demonstrate that they wrestled with the issues involved**
36 **in Meyers’ exposition of the Publican and the Pharisee, which he wrote on The Wrightsaid**
37 **Group on August 31, 2002 and qualified on December 30, 2010**
38 **([http://www.weswhite.net/2010/12/jeffrey-meyers-qualifies-his-exposition-of-the-parable-of-](http://www.weswhite.net/2010/12/jeffrey-meyers-qualifies-his-exposition-of-the-parable-of-the-pharisee-and-the-publican/)**
39 **[the-pharisee-and-the-publican/](http://www.weswhite.net/2010/12/jeffrey-meyers-qualifies-his-exposition-of-the-parable-of-the-pharisee-and-the-publican/)).**

40
41 **Committee Response to IV.E.2 (#4.e):**

42 **It is true that the MICR nowhere explicitly interacts with TE Meyers’ exposition of the**
43 **parable of the tax collector, and perhaps it should have. Nevertheless, the Complaint**
44 **Review Committee, having examined that exposition in detail, does not believe there is**
45 **any credible evidence in it to negate the MIC’s earlier finding that there is no strong**
46 **presumption of guilt in TE Meyers for his views on justification. The CRC put a**

1 **number of questions to TE Meyers concerning his exposition of the parable, and we cite**
2 **just part of that exchange below. We advise all presbyters to read the full exchange at**
3 **the end of this report (Appendix B, pp. 73-81).**

4
5 **In the first exchange included here, we have just cited something John Murray said**
6 **about the parable. We comment on this and then pose a couple of questions to TE**
7 **Meyers:**

8
9 **It seems that Murray’s discussion here touches on some of your own concerns, i.e.,**
10 **that the parable of the tax collector is not “about” an alien righteousness being**
11 **imputed to him but also on some of the concerns of complainants, i.e., that the**
12 **parable *does* have a forensic dimension to it.**

13 **6) Do you agree with Murray that there *is* a forensic dimension to the parable, or not?**

14 **TE Meyers’ Answer:**

15 “Yes, absolutely. The tax collector is the recipient of the forensic declaration by God.
16 He goes away “justified.” He has expressed his faith in God by confessing his sins and
17 asking for God’s mercy. God declares him righteous.”

18 **7) Do you see any help from Murray’s comments here for making clearer what you are**
19 **trying to protect in your exposition of the parable and maybe even for bridging your**
20 **concerns and the concerns of your detractors? If so, please explain briefly.**

21 **TE Meyers’ Answer:**

22 “I believe so. I’ve referred to Murray’s exposition of Romans 4 in
23 communication with the MIC in the past. I understand the concern expressed by the
24 complaint if one takes my comments on the parable of the Pharisee and tax collector in
25 isolation from everything else I’ve said about righteousness and justification. John
26 Murray, also, for example, recognizes that his exposition of Romans 4:3 will
27 immediately lead to questions about the traditional way of speaking about
28 “imputation.” Murray makes it clear that *in this passage* Abraham's faith being
29 "reckoned as righteousness" is not about some alien righteousness being given to him.
30 It's about God counting his faith as meeting the righteous requirements of his
31 covenant. His faith was reckoned to be righteousness. Paul doesn't say that
32 righteousness was imputed to him because of his faith. Not in Romans 4:3.

33 “Now, of course, I believe that Christ's righteousness is imputed to us by faith
34 alone, just as Murray does. But because of the likelihood of misunderstanding Murray
35 has to refer to an appendix to make the case *from other Scripture passages*. So
36 Murray: "In each case of appeal to Genesis 15:6, therefore, we must not, for dogmatic
37 reasons, fail to recognize that it is faith that is imputed (vss. 5, 6, 10, 11, 22, 23). How
38 this comports with the truth attested so clearly elsewhere in this epistle that the
39 righteousness of Christ is the ground of justification, the righteousness by which we
40 are justified, is a question that must be dealt with in its proper place" (see *Commentary*
41 *on Romans*, p. 132)....

1 **8) Is it accurate or not to say that the debate over this parable between you and your**
2 **detractors is really about whether the tax collector’s *contrite faith* is counted as (e.g.,**
3 **reckoned, imputed as) his righteousness, as opposed to *the righteousness of another being***
4 **imputed to him? If that does not accurately describe the debate, what would describe it**
5 **accurately?**

6 **TE Meyers’ Answer:**

7
8 “That is surely part of it. My unnecessarily provocative way of expounding the
9 passage surely led some to conclude that I was denying the imputation of Christ’s
10 righteousness. And others thought I was making some “work” a condition for
11 justification. That was not my intent. Here’s how I explained myself on one of the
12 blogs ([http://thequietprotest.blogspot.com/2011/01/highlighting-differences-what-](http://thequietprotest.blogspot.com/2011/01/highlighting-differences-what-is.html#comments)
13 [is.html#comments](http://thequietprotest.blogspot.com/2011/01/highlighting-differences-what-is.html#comments)) that posted serious objections to my exposition:

14 ‘All sorts of inferences are being drawn from this old blog post of mine. It was
15 not my intention in that little post to answer so many different questions. Only
16 to point out how the Bible itself has a variety of ways of talking about
17 justification.

18 ‘No, I don't believe that the publican was justified because of the virtue of his
19 humility. I don't believe he earned his justification through his covenant
20 faithfulness. Of course, the publican was not faithful to God's covenant. He
21 confessed as much. Neither the Pharisee nor the publican led righteous lives.
22 No one does. Everyone deserves God's wrath and curse.

23 ‘But the publican did repent. In humble faith he called out to God for
24 deliverance and forgiveness. All of God's post-fall covenants contain
25 provisions for those who break the covenant. In the Mosaic covenant there is
26 provision for forgiveness and justification when one by faith repents and offers
27 the right sacrifice (or trusts that what is going on in the tabernacle and temple is
28 God's gracious provision for sinners). In this sense, the publican was faithful to
29 the conditions of the old covenant. He was saved by grace through faith.

30 ‘The publican fulfilled this condition of the old covenant—he had humble
31 faith. Sure, God granted him that faith as a gift. But the passage doesn't deal
32 with that. We learn that from other places in the Bible. Look, if every time
33 anyone says something about man fulfilling the condition of the covenant,
34 someone else starts screaming "works salvation" we are not going to get very
35 far. Every covenant has conditions. That's just the language of our
36 confessional standards:

37 ‘WLC Q. 32. How is the grace of God manifested in the second
38 covenant?

39 A. The grace of God is manifested in the second covenant, in that he
40 freely provideth and offereth to sinners a mediator, and life and
41 salvation by him; and *requiring faith as the condition* to interest
42 them in him, promiseth and giveth his Holy Spirit to all his elect, to

1 work in them that faith, with all other saving graces; and to enable
2 them unto all holy obedience, as the evidence of the truth of their
3 faith and thankfulness to God, and as the way which he hath
4 appointed them to salvation.'

5 'So God "*requires* faith as *the condition* to interest them in him." The publican
6 met that condition. He was faithful to that covenant condition. He went home
7 justified. He didn't earn justification by virtue of his humility. He didn't merit
8 salvation by doing enough so that God would analyze his life and judge him to
9 be mostly faithful. He confessed his unfaithfulness and trusted in God to be
10 merciful to him...."

11 **We skip down in the exchange to another question, just after we had put a long quote to**
12 **TE Meyers from John Calvin's exposition of the parable:**

13 **So 9) Do you agree with Calvin's statements above regarding the tax collector? If not,**
14 **please explain how you disagree and why. If you do agree, please say a few things as to**
15 **why you think this is a good exposition of the parable.**

16
17 **TE Meyers' Answer:**

18
19 "I see no problems with Calvin's exposition. I agree with it. It is paradoxical that the
20 tax collector, though "ungodly" and "unrighteous," actually fulfills the condition of the
21 covenant in his faith-filled confession of sin and pleading for mercy. He does not trust
22 in his works or in his "righteousness." This is the applicable "law for us all," as Calvin
23 says. "God is appeased only when we cease to trust our works and pray to be
24 reconciled freely." I agree with that assessment."
25

26 **And 10) if you do concur with Calvin's interpretation here, are you willing to affirm that**
27 **this parable is, indeed, about God justifying the ungodly?**

28
29 **TE Meyers' Answer:**

30
31 "Yes, I've said as much in my answer to Question #9. I've never denied that the
32 parable is about God justifying the ungodly. The tax collector is "righteous" both in
33 the sense that he fulfilled the condition of the covenant (= faith) and also in the sense
34 that God graciously declared him righteous by that same faith. God required faith as
35 the condition of forgiveness and blessing. He was ungodly and his faith was reckoned
36 as righteousness, as Paul says of Abraham. He is thereby justified by faith."
37

38 **If you do concur with Calvin's comments on the tax collector that "he was wretched and**
39 **lost," then it's hard to see how that is consistent with what you claimed when you said**
40 **that "The Tax Collector...is 'righteous'" and "faithful to the covenant." You expressed it**
41 **in a very provocative way when you wrote:**

42
43 "The TC's (*Tax Collectors*) humble plea *fulfills* the terms of the covenant. The TC
44 is faithful to the covenant, that is 'righteous.' His faithfulness to the covenant *is* his
45 righteousness. This is why Jesus sums it all up with a call to humility. The covenant is

1 faithfully fulfilled by those who humble themselves. The humble are justified.”
2 (Wrightsaid post, 2002)

3
4 **And earlier on you had said, “‘Righteousness’ in the Bible means covenant faithfulness. A**
5 **person is righteous when he does what the covenant requires of him.” If we substitute “tax**
6 **collector” for “a person” in your generalization that “A person is righteous when he does**
7 **what the covenant requires of him,” it yields the claim that “The tax collector does what**
8 **the covenant required of him, and so was righteous.”**

9
10 **But when you express the lesson of the parable that way, it *sounds like* a denial that the**
11 **story is about the justification of the ungodly—and the complainants sense that**
12 **disconnect—one that, at least on the surface of things, is hard to deny: The story seems**
13 **to be about a man whose admitted disobedience shows him to be a covenant breaker,**
14 **and you are saying it’s about a man whose humble trust in his plea for mercy shows him**
15 **to be a covenant keeper.**

16
17 **11) But can we say it’s about *both*? Do you acknowledge a paradoxical dimension here,**
18 **i.e., that the tax collector “does what the covenant requires of him” precisely *in***
19 **acknowledging (albeit implicitly) his covenant-breaking disobedience as sin and owning**
20 **that he is deserving only of divine punishment, as evidenced by his conscience-stricken**
21 **cry for God’s mercy to be shown to him and his unwillingness even to look up?**

22
23 **TE Meyers’ Answer:**

24
25 “I see now that in my answer to Q. 10 I have anticipated the paradoxical dimension
26 that you mention here. We have this same paradoxical element in our confessional
27 standards whenever there is mention of faith being the “condition” of the covenant....

28
29 **You said at one point in the Wrightsaid conversation:**

30
31 *“...once one takes “the law” as a reference to the entire “instruction” (torah) of the*
32 *Hebrew Bible, particularly the foundational five books, then one must come to grips*
33 *with the fact that the torah itself contains provision for the restoration of sinners. And*
34 *that drawing near by means of sacrifice was [/] is part of the “statutes” of the law.*
35 *When one is said to be “righteous” or “blameless” in accordance with all “the law” says*
36 *(Luke 1:6), this certainly does not mean that one is “morally flawless.” Rather, it refers*
37 *to covenant faithfulness with regard to everything, even the “commandments and*
38 *statutes” that require confession of sin and forgiveness.” (pp. 38-39)*

39
40 **12) Is it right for us to find in that passage evidence of your conviction that the parable**
41 **is, in fact, about the justification of the ungodly? If not, please explain why not. If the**
42 **answer is yes, can you see the benefit of affirming in the future that this story is about**
43 ***both* what true faithfulness to the covenant actually looks like, *and* about the**
44 **graciousness of the God who “justifies the ungodly,” to use the Apostle Paul’s celebrated**
45 **phrase?**

46
47 **TE Meyers’ Answer:**

48
49 “Yes to both questions.”

1
2 **In sum, the CRC finds nothing in TE Meyers exposition, as he has clarified it, that can**
3 **count as credible evidence that he believes or teaches that the sinful sons of Adam and**
4 **daughters of Eve are justified by anything but faith alone, resting in Jesus Christ.**
5

6
7 **CONCLUSION**
8

9 **Question before the CRC:**

10 **Did MOP err when it determined that there was not sufficient evidence to raise a strong**
11 **presumption of guilt in the teaching of TE Meyers in the doctrine of justification by faith**
12 **alone and in this fail to condemn erroneous doctrines that injure the church of God?**
13

14 **Finding of the CRC on complaint specification of Error IV.E (#4.e):**

15 **The committee determines that MOP did, in fact, examine TE Meyers carefully in the**
16 **area of justification by faith alone and was correct in its judgment that his views are in**
17 **accord with the Scriptures and the interpretation of them we find in the Westminster**
18 **Standards.**
19

20 **Recommendation:**

21 **That the complaint regarding specification of error IV.E (#4.e) be denied, namely, that**
22 **MOP erred when it determined that there was insufficient evidence to raise a strong**
23 **presumption of guilt in the teaching of TE Meyers on justification by faith alone, which**
24 **resulted in Missouri Presbytery's further error of failing in its duty to condemn**
25 **erroneous doctrines and practices that injure the peace, purity, and unity of the Church.**
26

27 *****
28

29 **If the MOP concurs with the CRC on the specifications of error, it makes the following**
30 **amends a mute point. If the MOP finds against the recommendations of the CRC, the**
31 **following amends may become a substitute motion.**
32

33 *****
34

35
36
37 **Amends (Remedies Proposed by Complainants):**

38 *1. That Missouri Presbytery acknowledge its error in not finding a strong presumption of guilt*
39 *in TE Jeffrey Meyers' teachings on covenant theology, the imputation of Christ's merits,*
40 *baptism, perseverance, and justification.*
41

42 *2. That Missouri Presbytery determine that there is a strong presumption of guilt in Jeffrey*
43 *Meyers' teachings on covenant theology, the imputation of Christ's merits, baptism,*
44 *perseverance, and justification.*
45
46
47

1 **Concluding Remarks**
2

3 Missouri Presbytery will now have to add to the hundreds of hours of the combined
4 work of the men on the Meyers Investigation Committee the hundreds of hours of the
5 combined work of the men on the Complaint Review Committee in examination of the
6 question as to whether TE Meyers is guilty of the charge of “opposing the Westminster
7 Standards.” Quantity is never a substitute for quality, and so the expenditure of many
8 man hours means little if the time was poorly spent and the work done carelessly or with
9 a blind and unjust prejudice. It is for the Presbytery to judge now the work of this
10 Complaint Review Committee, even as it has already judged the work of the original
11 investigating committee.
12

13 We believe it is crucial for the Presbytery to take full account of *the long history of*
14 *difference and debate within orthodox Reformed circles on the very issues raised in this*
15 *controversy--differences going all the way back to the 16th and 17th centuries.*
16 Complainants, as well as the 29 signers of the original letter of concern, would have us
17 believe that nothing less is at stake than the doctrinal integrity of our church, that the
18 central and most precious truths of Scripture are being compromised by allowing TE
19 Meyers to remain a minister in good standing among us. The committee rejects this
20 conclusion most emphatically. It is true that at times TE Meyers has been too polemical
21 and too one-sided in his theological formulations, but he has acknowledged and
22 confessed as much, and we are convinced he has matured theologically. But we believe
23 that this controversy over his views and teaching is, essentially, a re-presentation of old
24 intramural disputes within the Reformed camp and must be seen—and relativized—as
25 such. *In other words, we believe that no one school of interpretation on these disputed*
26 *issues should be adopted as the only orthodox position to the exclusion of the others.* That
27 was the judgment as well of the Missouri Presbytery’s 2006 report on Federal Vision.
28

29 We ask the Presbytery to keep in view that the Federal Vision *movement* was not under
30 investigation in all the work of these two committees; the beliefs and teaching of fellow-
31 elder Jeffrey Meyers was. We do not see our judgment and recommendations, therefore,
32 as an endorsement of the Federal Vision movement, though, regrettably, some are likely
33 to view them as such. Rather, we see our judgment and recommendations as the proper
34 and just defense of a brother in Christ, fallen and weak as are we, yet a man whom we
35 believe to be committed to the supremacy of Holy Scripture in the life and teaching of
36 the church, and also committed to that system of doctrine expounded by our Reformed
37 fathers in the Westminster Standards as they interpreted the Bible—and yet with a deep
38 desire to see the church grow in its understanding of all that God has revealed in his
39 written Word, according to the age old principle, *ecclesia reformata semper reformanda,*
40 “the church reformed and always being reformed.” We believe that the judgment of
41 charity constrains us to trust these commitments of our brother, TE Jeffrey Meyers.

1 **Summary of Recommendations to the MOP**
2

3 **The Complaint Review Committee, erected by vote of Missouri Presbytery and**
4 **appointment of its Moderator, Lowell Pitzer, in January 2011, has presented to the**
5 **Presbytery in its report the following recommendations concerning the complaint**
6 **brought by TE Jay Bennett, et al. on January 16, 2011:**
7

8 **1. That the complaint regarding specification of error I (#1) be denied, namely, that**
9 **MOP erred by being unjustly and improperly biased against the signers and in favor of**
10 **TE Meyers when it received the allegations against him.**
11

12 **2. That the complaint regarding specification of error II (#2) be denied, namely that**
13 **MOP did not “properly weigh the evidence.”**
14

15 **3. That the complaint regarding specification of error III (#3) be denied, namely that**
16 **MOP erred because it failed to address the specific doctrinal allegations precisely.**
17

18 **4. That the complaint regarding specification of error IV.A (#4.a) be denied, namely,**
19 **that MOP erred in determining that there was insufficient evidence to raise a strong**
20 **presumption of guilt in TE Meyers for his views on covenant theology, which resulted in**
21 **Missouri Presbytery’s further error of failing in its duty to condemn erroneous doctrines**
22 **and practices that injure the peace, purity, and unity of the Church.**
23

24 **5. That the complaint regarding specification of error IV.B (#4.b) be denied, namely,**
25 **that MOP erred when it determined that there was insufficient evidence to raise a strong**
26 **presumption of guilt in the teaching of TE Meyers on the imputation of Christ’s merit,**
27 **which resulted in Missouri Presbytery’s further error of failing in its duty to condemn**
28 **erroneous doctrines and practices that injure the peace, purity, and unity of the Church.**
29

30 **6. That the complaint regarding specification of error IV.C (#4.c) be denied, namely,**
31 **that MOP erred when it determined that there was insufficient evidence to raise a strong**
32 **presumption of guilt in the teaching of TE Meyers on baptism, which resulted in**
33 **Missouri Presbytery’s further error of failing in its duty to condemn erroneous doctrines**
34 **and practices that injure the peace, purity, and unity of the Church.**
35

36 **7. That the complaint regarding specification of error IV.D (#4.d) be denied, namely,**
37 **that Missouri Presbytery erred when it determined that there was insufficient evidence**
38 **to raise a strong presumption of guilt in the teaching of TE Meyers on perseverance,**
39 **which resulted in Missouri Presbytery’s further error of failing in its duty to condemn**
40 **erroneous doctrines and practices that injure the peace, purity, and unity of the Church.**
41

42 **8. That the complaint regarding specification of error IV.E (#4.e) be denied, namely, that**
43 **MOP erred when it determined that there was insufficient evidence to raise a strong**
44 **presumption of guilt in the teaching of TE Meyers on justification by faith alone, which**
45 **resulted in Missouri Presbytery’s further error of failing in its duty to condemn**
46 **erroneous doctrines and practices that injure the peace, purity, and unity of the Church.**
47

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9	D. Full body of the 2006 Missouri Presbytery Report on the Federal Vision
10	- Attached as a separate PDF File
11	
12	E. Full body of the 2011 Meyers Investigative Committee Report including the Q and A
13	with TE Meyers
14	- Attached as a separate PDF File

Appendix A Complaint

And now this day, Sunday, January 16, 2011, TE M. Jay Bennett and TE Joseph E. Rolison come and complain against the action of Missouri Presbytery on January 8, 2011, in determining that there was insufficient evidence to raise a strong presumption of guilt in the teachings of TE Jeffrey Meyers in the areas of covenant theology, the imputation of Christ's merits, baptism, perseverance, and justification. We offer the following reasons:

1. Missouri Presbytery erred because it was biased against the signers of the letter of concern, which led to the investigation. The investigation began in the context of accusing the signers of the Letter of Concern with violating the Ninth Commandment and stating, "The good name of TE Jeffrey Meyers has already been dishonored." This statement indicates that these men thought that the allegations were false before they conducted an investigation. In addition, they demonstrated that they thought the signers had sinned in sending the letter to them: "We also consider your actions to be out of accord with the clear biblical injunction to put the cause of another's honor even before our own." This was contrary to the letter's insistence that we should contact someone directly before we make such allegations. Thus, the Presbytery clearly erred from the outset by applying a standard to the signers that they did not even apply to themselves.
2. Missouri Presbytery erred because it did not properly weigh the evidence. According to the Missouri Presbytery Investigative Committee Report (MICR), "Context, emphasis, purpose, and *considering the full corpus of a* [sic] *what a person has written and taught* are all crucial factors in accurately interpreting the meaning of his individual statements" (MICR, 24, emphasis original). However on several points the committee did not demonstrate that they properly considered the full corpus and context of Meyers' writings.
 - a. TE Meyers signed the Joint Federal Vision Profession (JFVP) in 2007 as a representation of his "honest convictions" (p. 1). In addition, the MICR page 108 states that TE Meyers helped compose the JFVP. But the committee said: "We believe TE Meyers' own words should be given precedence over the conjectures that can be drawn from broad statements contained in the JFVP." The committee wrongly downplayed the words in the JFVP contrary to their own document and the rules of evidence.
 - b. The MICR demonstrates a failure to take into account the work and writings of Federal Vision proponent James Jordan. In the "Introduction and Acknowledgements" of Meyers' book *The Lord's Service*, he writes:

But Jim Jordan does not really need to be singled out. One does not need to read between the lines in this book to see his influence on every page. My book is largely a popularization of his profound biblical, theological, and liturgical insights. So deeply has James Jordan's work affected my thought and life that I suspect many parts come perilously close to plagiarism. (Jeffrey Meyers, *The*

1 *Lord's Service: The Grace of Covenant Renewal Worship* [Moscow, ID: Canon
2 Press, 2003] 11)

3
4 Meyers' dependence on Jordan should have been given at least as much weight
5 as Meyers' citations of Calvin, O. Palmer Robertson, and others.

6
7 c. Similarly, Meyers claims that his views on the covenant are derived from such
8 men as John Murray and O. Palmer Robertson. However, if we take Meyers' *full*
9 *corpus* into account, we should note that on page 40 of his book *The Lord's*
10 *Service*, in the chapter titled "Covenant and Worship," Meyers cites Murray and
11 Robertson, but he also cites James Jordan, Norman Shepherd, and Cornelis van
12 der Waal as examples of "recent advances in biblical theology." The committee's
13 investigation does not demonstrate giving any weight to these "crucial factors."

14
15 3. Missouri Presbytery erred because it failed to address the specific doctrinal allegations
16 precisely. In the section on perseverance, the Presbytery erred because they exonerated
17 him of something that was not alleged. They said that there was insufficient evidence
18 for a strong presumption of guilt in the doctrine of the "perseverance of the elect."
19 However, the allegation was that baptism effects a saving, covenantal union with all the
20 baptized and that some who are united to Christ in this way do fall away. This is
21 different from saying that the elect persevere. The question was whether there were
22 those who are reprobate who are saved out of a state of sin and misery and into a
23 position of grace but fall away. The same can be said of the section on covenant
24 theology. The fact that TE Meyers says "I do not believe that the prelapsarian covenant
25 is the same as the postlapsarian covenants" (MICR 54) does not address the question
26 of whether TE Meyers affirms the bi-covenantal structure of the Standards. If it did,
27 then it would mean that Meyers believed in more than two covenants because he listed
28 more than two here. However, the committee did not give any indication that it dealt
29 with his affirmation that the covenants before and after the fall were the same covenant
30 as the one into which man was created and into which he was saved:

31
32 The covenant is, therefore, not simply an external means, not merely a remedial
33 arrangement by which God accomplishes salvation for fallen men, rather it is also
34 the goal of creation. He created us for and now saves us to participate in his
35 covenantal life. The Persons of the Trinity possess the fullness of life and
36 blessedness as they love and serve one another sacrificially" ("Trinity & Covenant,
37 Part VI," Corrigenda Denuo, 8/31/2007, for the same terminology see "Trinity &
38 Covenant, Part IV," Corrigenda Denuo, 8/22/2007).

39
40 This should have led to a much more careful explanation of the senses in which Meyers
41 believe there is one covenant and the senses in which he believes there is more than one.
42 (Note: James Jordan gives an explanation of this in his article "Monocovenantalism" on
43 BiblicalHorizons
44 [<http://biblicalhorizons.wordpress.com/2010/06/05/monocovenantalism/>], and echoes of
45 Jordan's view are found in fn. 7 on p. 46 of *The Lord's Service*).

46
47 4. Missouri Presbytery erred because it failed to find a strong presumption of guilt in
48 views that are contrary to the Standards and consequently failed in its duty to
49 condemn erroneous doctrines and practices that injure the peace, purity, and unity of the

1 Church.

- 2
3 a. Missouri Presbytery erred in determining that there was insufficient evidence to
4 raise a strong presumption of guilt in TE Meyers' views on covenant theology. TE
5 Meyers stated:

6
7 I do think the latest scholarly work in biblical theology demands that we go
8 back and redo a great deal of the Westminster standards. They were written
9 when people still thought of the covenant as a contract and believed that
10 „merit“ had some role to play in our covenantal relations with God. The whole
11 bi-polar covenant of works/grace schema has got to go. And if that goes, the
12 whole „system“ must be reworked. (MICR, 67)

13
14 TE Meyers confesses this as a “sin of overstatement” (66), but he did not retract his
15 statement that the “bi-polar covenant of works/grace schema has to go.” On the
16 contrary, he states in *The Lord's Service*, “The covenant has not been adequately
17 appreciated or understood until recently” (52). He also stated on October 7, 2007: I
18 do not believe that I am required to believe and confess all the details in the
19 confessions and catechism. Nor am I bound to their form. The chapter on the covenant,
20 for example, is filled with problems. So much progress has been made in the last
21 century on the biblical theology of the covenants (Corrigenda Denuo,
22 [http://jeffreyjmeyers.blogspot.com/2007/10/are-westminster-standards-](http://jeffreyjmeyers.blogspot.com/2007/10/are-westminster-standards-sufficient.html)
23 [sufficient.html](http://jeffreyjmeyers.blogspot.com/2007/10/are-westminster-standards-sufficient.html)]).
24

- 25 b. Missouri Presbytery erred when it determined that there was not sufficient evidence
26 to raise a strong presumption of guilt in the teaching of TE Meyers on the imputation of
27 Christ's merit. The committee also exonerated him of something here of which he was
28 never accused, namely, “the necessity of Christ's perfect obedience.” The question
29 was whether Christ's righteousness includes His meriting of God's favor and eternal
30 life for us through His perfect obedience. The question also involves whether Christ's
31 merits are legally transferred to our account. Meyers clearly denies that this is the
32 case. Meyers stated: “What I do have a problem with is speaking of the works of Christ
33 during his life in such a way that he is thought to have racked up points to earn God's
34 favor according to some fictional, still-in-force-after-the-fall, strict-justice covenant of
35 works, and that these merits are then transferred to Christians” (De Regno Christi,
36 9/28/2008). Meyers confirms this view on pp. 81, 92, 105 of the MICR. Further, it
37 should be noted that Chad Van Dixhoorn, who is cited as an authority by the
38 committee, has stated in his article on the Larger Catechism, “Christ's life has
39 everything to do with our salvation: he spent his life fulfilling all righteousness;
40 he kept the law that Adam broke. It is because of Jesus' active, lifelong obedience
41 that God the Father sees us as righteous in Christ” (New Horizons,
42 http://www.opc.org/new_horizons/NH00/0010b.html).

- 43
44 c. Missouri Presbytery erred when it determined that there was insufficient evidence to
45 raise a strong presumption of guilt in TE Meyers' teachings on baptism. On January
46 28, 2008, TE Meyers stated, “Baptism unites us to Christ and therefore makes us
47 participate in the circumcision of Christ,” and, “Baptism unites us to Christ so that we
48 can be said to have died and to have risen with him” (Biblical Horizons
49 [http://biblicalhorizons.wordpress.com/2008/01/28/the-
circumcision-of-christ/](http://biblicalhorizons.wordpress.com/2008/01/28/the-circumcision-of-christ/)]).

1 The committee sites the language of WCF 28.1 that baptism is a seal of our union with
2 Christ as evidence that this is legitimate. But that which seals or confirms something
3 is not that which effects it (cf. WCF 14.1). On the contrary, the WCF teaches that the
4 Spirit unites us to Christ in our effectual calling which happens through the
5 instrumentality of the Word (WCF 10.1, cf. WCF 14.1). Meyers' error is confirmed in
6 the MICR 113-115 and JFVP 5,
7 7.

8
9 d. Missouri Presbytery erred when it determined that there was insufficient evidence to
10 raise a strong presumption of guilt in TE Meyers in the doctrine of perseverance. The
11 JFVP states: "All who are baptized into the triune Name are united with Christ in His
12 covenantal life" (JFVP, 7). According to Meyers, this covenantal life is "From eternity
13 the Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit share a fullness of covenantal life, love,
14 glory in their personal relations with one another; and it is this covenantal personal
15 fellowship of the Trinity that is the life of the covenant into which we are graciously
16 admitted" (Trinity & Covenant IV, Corrigenda Denuo, 8/22/2007). Thus someone who
17 falls away falls from a position of grace in the covenant. This is exactly what the JFVP
18 goes on to affirm. "All who are baptized into the triune Name are united with Christ in
19 His covenantal life, and so those who fall from that position of grace are indeed falling
20 from grace" (JFVP, 7, cf. CD, 12/15/2007). Meyers states, "They may receive certain
21 benefits temporarily, but the saving benefits (in the fullest sense of that phrase) are
22 reserved for the elect who are gifted with true, saving faith" (MICR 65). But this was
23 never the question. The question is whether there is a salvation less than the fullest,
24 eternal sense, such as a position of grace that the baptized reprobate participate in but
25 later lose. All his qualifications of saving benefits never going to the reprobate are
26 negated because it is not clear in what sense he is speaking. On the contrary, it is clear
27 that TE Meyers believes that the reprobate receive benefits that cannot fit into
28 our theological system, and we agree that what he says does not fit in our theological
29 system (cf. "Temporary Faith & Forgiveness," Corrigenda Denuo, December 15, 2007,
30 MICR 112).

31
32 e. Missouri Presbytery erred when it determined that there was insufficient evidence that
33 there was a strong presumption of guilt in the teachings of TE Meyers in the doctrine of
34 justification by faith alone. All of Meyers affirmations of justification by faith alone are
35 negated by his affirmation that "personal loyalty" describes the fiduciary aspect of faith.
36 This is exactly what the signers of the LOC alleged, and Meyers confirmed that what
37 they said was true. "Living trust" is not a plausible understanding of "personal loyalty"
38 as both the context of the JFVP and the comments on one of the documents submitted
39 to Missouri Presbytery indicate (e.g. "Trinity & Covenant VI," Corrigenda
40 Denuo, 8/31/2007). Further, the committee also did not demonstrate that they
41 wrestled with the issues involved in Meyers' exposition of the Publican and the
42 Pharisee, which he wrote on The Wrightsaid Group on August 31, 2002 and qualified
43 on December 30, 2010 ([http://www.weswhite.net/2010/12/jeffrey-meyers-qualifies-his-
44 exposition-of-the-parable-of-the-pharisee-and-the-publican/](http://www.weswhite.net/2010/12/jeffrey-meyers-qualifies-his-exposition-of-the-parable-of-the-pharisee-and-the-publican/)).

45
46 Amends:

47
48 1. That Missouri Presbytery acknowledge its error in not finding a strong presumption of
49 guilt in TE Jeffrey Meyers' teachings on covenant theology, the imputation of Christ's

- 1 merits, baptism, perseverance, and justification.
- 2 2. That Missouri Presbytery determine that there is a strong presumption of guilt in
- 3 Jeffrey Meyers' teachings on covenant theology, the imputation of Christ's merits,
- 4 baptism, perseverance, and justification.
- 5

Appendix B

Questions of Clarification for TE Jeff Meyers in View of Complaint: Justification

Questions to Jeff Meyers Posed by the Complaint Committee—on the Meaning of “A Personally Loyal Faith” in the JFVP:

Background to question 1). On p. 96, lines 22-28, of your answers to the questions of the Meyers Investigation Committee, you affirm the following;

*We might say that the ground of justification is the faithfulness of Jesus. But the instrument of justification, the way we receive God’s judicial verdict of not guilty and righteous in his sight, is **through [sic] faith alone not faithfulness.** As Paul says: “we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ” (Gal. 2:16). Of course, those who exercise faith in Jesus and are justified will be faithful to the end. They will have faith-filled lives. But **their faithfulness is not the material or instrumental cause of their justification, but the fruit of their salvation.** [emphasis added]*

Now you are a signatory of the Joint Federal Vision Profession and defend the JFVP’s characterization of justifying faith as a “personally loyal faith.” The JFVP affirmation on justification by faith reads,

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.

And then this denial immediately follows:

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. (JFVP, p. 6)

The affirmation in this denial (the denial affirms by a double negative) has elicited the charge that the JFVP denies the doctrine of justification by faith alone. But the MIC was satisfied that by the phrase “*personally loyal faith*” you were not intending to affirm the doctrine that we are justified by our faithfulness, and therefore by our works. You explained the sense you were attaching to “personally loyal” when you said in one of your answers,

The documentation provided by the Letter of Concern does not support the claim that I teach justification by works. I do not include “loyalty or faithfulness as an instrument of justification,” as the Letter asserts. That is not what the portion of the JFVP that they quote

1 *says. The statement from the JFVP only talks about what kind of faith is true faith, that is,*
2 *saving faith. To say that the kind of faith that justifies is a “living, active, and personally*
3 *loyal faith” is simply to define genuine faith over against false or superficial belief. The*
4 *Scriptures often warn against superficial, historical, or merely intellectual faith (Matt. 7:26;*
5 *13:12; Acts 26:27, 28; James 2:19). To say that saving faith is “living” is just to repeat what*
6 *James says in chapter 2 of his epistle. Chapter 16 of the Westminster Confession uses the*
7 *same kind of language when it speaks of “the fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith”*
8 *(16.2). (MICR Appendix B. p.98)*

9
10 But this section of the JFVP continues to meet with passionate objections. In fact,
11 complainants have argued that:

12
13 *All of Meyers affirmations of justification by faith alone are negated by his affirmation that*
14 *“personal loyalty” describes the fiduciary aspect of faith. This is exactly what the signers of*
15 *the LOC alleged, and Meyers confirmed that what they said was true. “Living trust” is not a*
16 *plausible understanding of “personal loyalty” as both the context of the JFVP and the*
17 *comments on one of the documents submitted to Missouri Presbytery indicate (e.g. “Trinity &*
18 *Covenant VI,” Corrigenda Denuo, 8/31/2007).*

19 [Complaint, p. 4]

20
21 That opening claim is extremely strong. The offensive clause is the assertion “*that the faith*
22 *which is the sole instrument of justification [is]... a living, active, and personally loyal faith.*”
23 This affirmation appears to be so deeply troubling to some men because they cannot help but
24 understand the word “loyal” as implying *a fidelity over some duration of time* and as a
25 synonym for “faithful.” They appear to believe that what the JFVP is really meaning to assert
26 would go something like this if it were spelled out:

27
28 *“The faith which justifies us is that which energizes our ongoing loyalty, our faithfulness to*
29 *the Lord, i.e., we are justified by the ongoing faith underlying our faithfulness; in other words*
30 *we are justified by our faithfulness.”*

31
32 In fact, in common usage very often, if not generally, the word “loyal,” does connote a fidelity
33 that implies duration over time, as in the sentence,

34
35 *“The assistant was worth the extra money it cost to hire her as she proved loyal to the*
36 *company.”*

37
38 And the complainants point out, in their reference above, that you yourself have used the word
39 “loyal” as a synonym for “faithful” and therefore imply that it carries the connotation of a
40 fidelity over some duration of time. They cite something you wrote on your website,
41 Corrigenda Denuo, as late as 2007 and roughly a month after the JFVP was promulgated.
42 You said there in one exchange:

43
44 *“But I think ‘loyalty’ is a fine summary of ‘covenantal relations.’ The form of the relationship*
45 *is the covenant. The shape of one’s relationship will be dictated by the covenant. If one is*
46 *‘righteous,’ then one is **faithful or loyal** to the form or terms of the covenant.”* [emphasis

1 added](Corrigenda Denuo, *Trinity & Covenant, part VI*).

2
3 **So here are the questions: 1) Have you been aware that in the Corrigenda Denuo**
4 **comment you used “faithful” as a synonym for “loyal” in an informal email**
5 **communication a month after the formal JFVP document came out with its statement**
6 **about “a personally loyal faith”?**

7
8 **TE Meyers’ Answer:** I was not aware of using those terms as synonyms. I can see where this
9 would be confusing, especially if one thought I was using these terms in some technical sense.

10
11 **2) Were you self-consciously assigning to the word “loyal” the same meaning in both**
12 **statements?**

13
14 **TE Meyers’ Answer:** I didn’t write the JFVP document, but I did have some influence on the
15 wording of some sections. But I don’t remember being involved in the wording of this section
16 on justification. When I signed the document I was not thinking about how my use of the
17 terms in my blog posts might impact how someone might read the JFVP document. That
18 never even entered my mind. When I signed the JFVP I understood the statement about “a
19 personally loyal faith” to be description of the *kind* of faith that justifies, not to be some covert
20 way of speaking of justification by works. We are justified by a true, lively, genuine trust in
21 the Gospel. The only kind of faith that justifies is the kind that produces fruit, not a dead
22 faith. I’ve explained my views very carefully in the MIR:

23
24 The statement from the JFVP only talks about *what kind of faith* is true faith, that is,
25 saving faith. To say that the kind of faith that justifies is a “living, active, and
26 personally loyal faith” is simply to define genuine faith over against false or superficial
27 belief. The Scriptures often warn against superficial, historical, or merely intellectual
28 faith (Matt. 7:26; 13:12; Acts 26:27, 28; James 2:19). (JJM Response, p. 98, lines 9-
29 13)

30
31 This word “loyal” was not meant to be some theological Trojan horse slipped in to
32 disguise some secret belief I have in justification by works or faithfulness. I would ask
33 that my explicit, carefully worded statements composed for the MIC be given priority over
34 logical implications based on my use of similar terms in a variety of contexts.

35
36 **3) If the answer is yes, then how can you avoid the charge that you and all JFVP**
37 **signatories hold to justification by faithfulness, not justification by faith?**

38 **4) If the answer is no, please explain how your understanding of “loyal” differs in the**
39 **two statements; and**

40
41 **TE Meyers’ Answer:** I understand “personally loyal faith” in the JFVP to be another way
42 of describing the fiduciary aspect of faith. As I wrote in my response to the MIR:

43
44 To describe saving faith as “personally loyal faith,” as the JFVP does, simply
45 draws out the “volitional element” (*fiducia*) in classic Reformed definitions of
46 saving faith. Saving faith has three marks in most Reformed theological treatments:

1 1) knowledge (*notitia*), assent (*assensus*), and trust (*fiducia*). Berkhof describes the
2 third dimension of saving faith this way:

3 This is the crowning element of faith. Faith is not merely a matter of the
4 intellect, nor of the intellect and the emotions combined; it is a matter of the
5 will, determining the directions of the soul, an act of the soul going out towards
6 its object and appropriating this. . . This third element consists in a *personal*
7 *trust* in Christ as Savior and Lord, including a surrender of the soul as guilty
8 and defiled to Christ, and a reception and appropriation of Christ as the source
9 of pardon and spiritual life (*Systematic Theology*, p. 505).

10 That the JFVP should choose to describe the fiduciary aspect of faith with the words
11 “personal loyalty” does not imply that one is justified by his meritorious work of
12 “personal loyalty.” No more than one might accuse Berkhof of believing in
13 “justification by a surrender of the soul” or “justification by a volitional act of the
14 soul.” These are all just ways of describing the richness of saving faith.

15 Faith itself is not something you offer to God to become good enough to be worthy
16 of his friendship, but rather a means by which you are united to Christ so that his
17 sacrifice and righteousness is reckoned to you by God’s gracious declaration.

18 **5) Are you prepared to acknowledge that “personally loyal” as a description of justifying**
19 **faith may—at least in some quarters—have obscured as much of the true meaning of the**
20 **JFVP affirmation/denial as you had hoped it would express?**
21

22 **TE Meyers’ Answer:** Yes. This all strikes me as a discussion that skates perilously close
23 to violating Paul’s warning against quarreling about words (2 Timothy 2:14). I have
24 made my convictions about justification explicit in my carefully-worded answers to the
25 MIC. I have stated that I have no reservations about what the Westminster Standards say
26 about the doctrine of justification. I am sorry that the way I’ve used the words “loyal” and
27 “loyalty” have led to such confusion. It was not my intention to subvert the doctrine of
28 justification by Christ alone through faith alone with my informal use of terms regarding
29 covenant loyalty and faithfulness.
30

31
32 Questions on The Parable of the Tax Collector
33

34 It might seem that questions about the exegesis of particular passages of Scripture are outside
35 the purview of this committee, whose assigned task was to help MOP decide if it erred when it
36 judged there to be no strong presumption of guilt in the allegation that your teaching shows
37 you to be in opposition to the Westminster Standards. In your answers to the MIC you have
38 given strong assent to the core doctrines in the Standards you are accused of undermining; and
39 in any case, it is not this or that exegetical judgment that is at issue but rather your fidelity to
40 *the doctrines* of the Faith as we find them expressed and expounded in the Standards.

1 But the argument of the complainants is that the statements you have made about what Jesus
2 meant to teach us in the parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector in Luke 18 gives
3 credence to the allegation that you teach justification not by faith alone but by faithfulness.
4 Complainants allege wrongdoing on the MIC's part in reference to that committee's judgment
5 that there was no strong presumption of guilt that you deny the doctrine of justification by
6 faith alone. The complaint states,

7 *"Further, the committee also did not demonstrate that they wrestled with the issues involved*
8 *in Meyers' exposition of the Publican and the Pharisee, which he wrote on The Wrightsaid*
9 *Group on August 31, 2002 and qualified on December 30, 2010*
10 *([http://www.weswhite.net/2010/12/jeffrey-meyers-qualifies-his-exposition-of-the-parable-of-](http://www.weswhite.net/2010/12/jeffrey-meyers-qualifies-his-exposition-of-the-parable-of-the-pharisee-and-the-publican/)*
11 *the-pharisee-and-the-publican/).*"

12 So in light of complainants' assertion that the MIC overlooked your exposition of Luke 18:9-
13 14 and should not have, we believe it is appropriate to probe a bit and ask you to clarify how
14 you see some of your 2002 statements about this parable as being reconcilable with certain
15 answers you gave to the MIC questions.

16 Here are some of your comments on the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector from the
17 email list, Wrightsaid, made in 2002:

18 *"Here in Luke 18 we learn that the Pharisee was not righteous (even though they thought he*
19 *was) and the tax collector was righteous. **The key is to understand what "righteous" means.***
20 ***It does not refer to moral purity or conformity to a legal standard (the "Lutheran" mistake).***
21 ***"Righteousness" in the Bible means covenant faithfulness. A person is righteous when he***
22 ***does what the covenant requires of him. The Pharisee thinks he's righteous but in fact is not;***
23 ***the tax collector does not claim to be righteous, but in fact he is. The TC goes back to his***
24 ***house "justified" or "rectified," which in context means, "shown to be righteous."***

25 *This text says nothing about God "imputing an alien righteousness" to the TC. One has to*
26 *read that into the passage. Jesus, rather, is exposing the fact that the Pharisees are not truly*
27 **faithful* to the covenant. The TC's humble plea *fulfills* the terms of the covenant. The TC*
28 *is faithful to the covenant, that is "righteous." His faithfulness to the covenant *is* his*
29 *righteousness. This is why Jesus sums it all up with a call to humility. The covenant is*
30 *faithfully fulfilled by those who humble themselves. The humble are justified.*

31 *So I don't understand how one can read into this passage a Lutheran doctrine of justification.*
32 *Nothing is said about imputation. Nothing is said about an alien righteousness being needed.*
33 *In fact, the notion of an alien righteousness being imputed to the TC hardly fits with the story.*
34 *The TC's righteousness is his humility. In other words, covenantal faithfulness*
35 *(=righteousness) in this story means humility. **When it says that the man is "justified" it***
36 ***means that he has proven his genuine "righteousness" (faithfulness to the covenant). To***
37 ***confess one's sins and plead for mercy is righteous. It fulfils the terms of God's covenant***
38 ***with Israel."** (reported on Wes White Blog pp. 1-2)" [emphasis added]*

1 Then on Dec. 30, 2010, when these earlier comments of yours appeared on a blog, you
2 engaged in the following conversation about your view of the parable:

3 “Thomas,

4 *All I’m saying is that the tax collector had humble faith. God requires humble faith.*
5 *That’s what it means to be faithful to his covenant. The publican me[t] that*
6 *requirement. The Pharisee did not. He went home justified. The Pharisee did not. I’m*
7 *not sure what is so controversial about that. I’m not saying that the tax collector*
8 *EARNED God’s favor by his “work” of humble faith. And I’m not saying that the*
9 *publican worked up this humble faith on his own. This passage says nothing about*
10 *what we know is true from other passages in Scripture: God graciously gifted this man*
11 *with humble faith by the work of the Holy Spirit. **And this passage says nothing about***
12 ***the dynamics of HOW God was able to justify the publican, other than through his***
13 ***humble prayer of confession and faith. The details about HOW God can do this come***
14 *later, after the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus. The focus of this passage is*
15 *on the something other than the theological dynamics of the biblical doctrine of*
16 *justification.” [emphasis added]*

17

18 John Murray never mentions the imputation of Christ’s righteousness while discussing this
19 parable in his Appendix on Justification in his commentary on Romans. Yet he insists that
20 there is still a forensic dimension to it. Murray says,

21 *“In Luke 18:14—‘this one went down to his house justified’—we may rightly sense that*
22 *‘declared to be righteous’ is too attenuated to express the thought. We may not by any means*
23 *remove the concept from the realm of the judicial or forensic. But there is surely reflection*
24 *here upon the status constituted as well as on the status declared to be—the publican went*
25 *down to his house in a righteous state. And the term ‘justified’ indicates the righteous state*
26 *effected as well as the righteous state declared to be. If the forensic import is duly*
27 *maintained, the thought could be expressed by saying that he went down to his house*
28 *‘righteous.’” (John Murray, Commentary on Romans, p. 352)*

29 Going on to talk not about the parable but about Paul’s treatment of Abraham in Romans 4
30 Murray says,

31 *“The formula derived from Gen.15:6 is to the effect that [Abraham’s] faith was reckoned for*
32 *righteousness....[I]t is... feasible to take [this expression] to mean that it was the faith of*
33 *Abraham that was reckoned as righteousness....The thought then would be that God reckoned*
34 *to Abraham the faith which he exercised and that it was reckoned as righteousness. Faith is*
35 *well-pleasing to God and in that respect it is reckoned or imputed for what it is. (John*
36 *Murray, Romans, pp.353-54)*

37 Murray stresses that Paul seems to be teaching that it is Abraham’s faith that God reckons as
38 his righteousness, not the alien righteousness of another (i.e., of Jesus Christ). To be sure,

1 Murray accepts the doctrine of the imputation of Christ's righteousness (as taught, for
2 instance, in Romans 5:19) as the ground of our justification; but he doesn't think that is what
3 Paul is referring to directly when he cites Genesis 15:6 and states that Abraham's faith was
4 reckoned "unto" righteousness. This emphasis that Paul puts on Abraham's faith, however,
5 does not mean that faith is regarded as a deserving work in Abraham. Murray says,

6 *"Just as salvation does not consist in confession nor is it to be defined in terms of confession,*
7 *so righteousness does not consist in faith nor is it to be defined in terms of faith itself."*
8 (Murray, Romans p. 356)

9 Then why does Paul emphasize that God reckoned Abraham's *faith* as righteousness? Here is
10 Murray's summarizing statement on the question:

11 *"...we are compelled to say that in the New Testament teaching the righteousness*
12 *contemplated in justification is not faith itself but something that comes into our possession by*
13 *faith. The question then remains why, in the formula of Gen. 15:6 as quoted by Paul, is faith*
14 *represented as reckoned for righteousness? It may not be possible to answer this question*
15 *with any decisiveness. But the consideration that appears more relevant than any other is that*
16 *the righteousness contemplated in justification is righteousness by faith in contrast with*
17 *righteousness by works and the emphasis falls to such an extent upon this fact that although it*
18 *is a God-righteousness yet it is also and with equal emphasis a faith-righteousness."*
19 (Murray, Romans, p. 358)

20 It seems that Murray's discussion here touches on some of your own concerns, i.e., that the
21 parable of the tax collector is not "about" an alien righteousness being imputed to him but also
22 on some of the concerns of complainants, i.e., that the parable *does* have a forensic dimension
23 to it.

24 **1) Do you agree with Murray that there is a forensic dimension to the parable, or not?**

25 **TE Meyers' Answer:** Yes, absolutely. The tax collector is the recipient of the forensic
26 declaration by God. He goes away "justified." He has expressed his faith in God by
27 confessing his sins and asking for God's mercy. God declares him righteous.

28 **2) Do you see any help from Murray's comments here for making clearer what you are**
29 **trying to protect in your exposition of the parable and maybe even for bridging your**
30 **concerns and the concerns of your detractors? If so, please explain briefly.**

31 **TE Meyers' Answer:** I believe so. I've referred to Murray's exposition of Romans 4 in
32 communication with the MIC in the past. I understand the concern expressed by the
33 complaint if one takes my comments on the parable of the Pharisee and tax collector in
34 isolation from everything else I've said about righteousness and justification. John
35 Murray, also, for example, recognizes that his exposition of Romans 4:3 will immediately
36 lead to questions about the traditional way of speaking about "imputation." Murray makes
37 it clear that *in this passage* Abraham's faith being "reckoned as righteousness" is not about
38 some alien righteousness being given to him. It's about God counting his faith as meeting

1 the righteous requirements of his covenant. His faith was reckoned to be righteousness.
2 Paul doesn't say that righteousness was imputed to him because of his faith. Not in
3 Roman 4:3.

4 Now, of course, I believe that Christ's righteousness is imputed to us by faith alone, just as
5 Murray does. But because of the likelihood of misunderstanding Murray has to refer to an
6 appendix to make the case *from other Scripture passages*. So Murray: "In each case of
7 appeal to Genesis 15:6, therefore, we must not, for dogmatic reasons, fail to recognize that
8 it is faith that is imputed (vss. 5, 6, 10, 11, 22, 23). How this comports with the truth
9 attested so clearly elsewhere in this epistle that the righteousness of Christ is the ground of
10 justification, the righteousness by which we are justified, is a question that must be dealt
11 with in its proper place" (see *Commentary on Romans*, p. 132).

12 In other words, I affirm the dogmatic doctrine of justification because of Christ's
13 righteousness imputed to us and received by faith alone. That dogmatic doctrine is built
14 up faithfully *from many Scriptures passages*. That is the nature of dogmatic/systematic
15 theology. I will not, however, read this full systematic theological doctrine into every
16 passage that uses any of the technical words we associate with the doctrine of justification
17 in Reformed dogmatics.

18 **3) Is it accurate or not to say that the debate over this parable between you and your**
19 **detractors is really about whether the tax collector's *contrite faith* is counted as (e.g.,**
20 **reckoned, imputed as) his righteousness, as opposed to *the righteousness of another being***
21 **imputed to him? If that does not accurately describe the debate, what would describe it**
22 **accurately?**

23 **TE Meyers' Answer:** That is surely part of it. My unnecessarily provocative way of
24 expounding the passage surely led some to conclude that I was denying the imputation of
25 Christ's righteousness. And others thought I was making some "work" a condition for
26 justification. That was not my intent. Here's how I explained myself on one of the blogs
27 ([http://thequietprotest.blogspot.com/2011/01/highlighting-differences-what-](http://thequietprotest.blogspot.com/2011/01/highlighting-differences-what-is.html#comments)
28 [is.html#comments](http://thequietprotest.blogspot.com/2011/01/highlighting-differences-what-is.html#comments)) that posted serious objections to my exposition:

29 All sorts of inferences are being drawn from this old blog post of mine. It was not my
30 intention in that little post to answer so many different questions. Only to point out
31 how the Bible itself has a variety of ways of talking about justification.

32 No, I don't believe that the publican was justified because of the virtue of his humility.
33 I don't believe he earned his justification through his covenant faithfulness. Of course,
34 the publican was not faithful to God's covenant. He confessed as much. Neither the
35 Pharisee nor the publican led righteous lives. No one does. Everyone deserves God's
36 wrath and curse.

37 But the publican did repent. In humble faith he called out to God for deliverance and
38 forgiveness. All of God's post-fall covenants contain provisions for those who break
39 the covenant. In the Mosaic covenant there is provision for forgiveness and

1 justification when one by faith repents and offers the right sacrifice (or trusts that what
2 is going on in the tabernacle and temple is God's gracious provision for sinners). In
3 this sense, the publican was faithful to the conditions of the old covenant. He was
4 saved by grace through faith.

5 The publican fulfilled this condition of the old covenant—he had humble faith. Sure,
6 God granted him that faith as a gift. But the passage doesn't deal with that. We learn
7 that from other places in the Bible. Look, if every time anyone says something about
8 man fulfilling the condition of the covenant, someone else starts screaming "works
9 salvation" we are not going to get very far. Every covenant has conditions. That's just
10 the language of our confessional standards:

11 WLC Q. 32. How is the grace of God manifested in the second covenant?

12 A. The grace of God is manifested in the second covenant, in that he freely
13 provideth and offereth to sinners a mediator, and life and salvation by him; and
14 *requiring faith as the condition* to interest them in him, promiseth and giveth his
15 Holy Spirit to all his elect, to work in them that faith, with all other saving graces;
16 and to enable them unto all holy obedience, as the evidence of the truth of their
17 faith and thankfulness to God, and as the way which he hath appointed them to
18 salvation.

19 So God "*requires* faith as *the condition* to interest them in him." The publican met that
20 condition. He was faithful to that covenant condition. He went home justified. He
21 didn't earn justification by virtue of his humility. He didn't merit salvation by doing
22 enough so that God would analyze his life and judge him to be mostly faithful. He
23 confessed his unfaithfulness and trusted in God to be merciful to him.

24 To move to another Reformed biblical expositor, consider Calvin's exposition of the parable
25 of the tax collector (TC):

26 "*For the Lord especially insists on this, that the publican knew only too well that he was*
27 *wretched and lost and betook him to the mercy of God. For although he was a sinner, he*
28 *trusted in free pardon and looked to God to be favorable to him. In sum, that he may receive*
29 *favor he confesses that he is unworthy of it. And indeed, since it is only by the forgiveness of*
30 *sins that God is reconciled to us, this is where we have to start if we want Him to accept our*
31 *prayers. Moreover, he who begins by being convicted and guilty and yet asks for forgiveness*
32 *is renouncing confidence in his works; and what Christ was aiming at was that God will only*
33 *be entreated by those who flee trembling to His mercy alone....This verse teaches clearly what*
34 *it really is to be justified—to stand before God as if we were righteous. For the publican was*
35 *not said to be justified because he had suddenly acquired some new quality but because he*
36 *was received into grace by the canceling of his guilt and the blotting out of his sins. And from*
37 *this it follows that righteousness consists in the forgiveness of sins. Because just as the*
38 *Pharisee's virtues were stinking...so that his laudable goodness before men counted for*
39 *nothing with God, so the publican obtained righteousness by no help of the merits of his works*
40 *but only by his prayer for pardon....Wherefore Christ is without doubt laying down a law for*

1 *us all, as if He said that God is appeased only when we cease to trust in our works and pray to*
2 *be reconciled freely....But the one foundation of our faith is that God accepts us, not because*
3 *we deserve it, but because He does not impute our sins.”*

4 (Calvin, Commentary on the Gospels vol. 2, pp. 129-130)

5 **So 4) Do you agree with Calvin’s statements above regarding the tax collector? If not,**
6 **please explain how you disagree and why. If you do agree, please say a few things as to**
7 **why you think this is a good exposition of the parable.**

8 **TE Meyers’ Answer:** I see no problems with Calvin’s exposition. I agree with it. It is
9 paradoxical that the tax collector, though “ungodly” and “unrighteous,” actually fulfills the
10 condition of the covenant in his faith-filled confession of sin and pleading for mercy. He
11 does not trust in his works or in his “righteousness.” This is the applicable “law for us
12 all,” as Calvin says. “God is appeased only when we cease to trust our works and pray to
13 be reconciled freely.” I agree with that assessment.

14 **And 5) if you do concur with Calvin’s interpretation here, are you willing to affirm that**
15 **this parable is, indeed, about God justifying the ungodly?**

16 **TE Meyers’ Answer:** Yes, I’ve said as much in my answer to Question #9. I’ve never
17 denied that the parable is about God justifying the ungodly. The tax collector is
18 “righteous” both in the sense that he fulfilled the condition of the covenant (= faith) and
19 also in the sense that God graciously declared him righteous by that same faith. God
20 required faith as the condition of forgiveness and blessing. He was ungodly and his faith
21 was reckoned as righteousness, as Paul says of Abraham. He is thereby justified by faith.

22 If you do concur with Calvin’s comments on the tax collector that “he was wretched and lost,”
23 then it’s hard to see how that is consistent with what you claimed when you said that “*The*
24 *Tax Collector...is ‘righteous’*” and “*faithful to the covenant.*” You expressed it in a very
25 provocative way when you wrote:

26 “*The TC’s humble plea *fulfills* the terms of the covenant. The TC is faithful to the covenant,*
27 *that is ‘righteous.’ His faithfulness to the covenant *is* his righteousness. This is why Jesus*
28 *sums it all up with a call to humility. The covenant is faithfully fulfilled by those who humble*
29 *themselves. The humble are justified.*” (Wrightsaid post, 2002)

30 And earlier on you had said, “*‘Righteousness’ in the Bible means covenant faithfulness. A*
31 *person is righteous when he does what the covenant requires of him.*” If we substitute “tax
32 collector” for “a person” in your generalization that “*A person is righteous when he does what*
33 *the covenant requires of him,*” it yields the claim that “The tax collector does what the
34 covenant required of him, and so was righteous.”

35 But when you express the lesson of the parable that way, it *sounds like* a denial that the story
36 is about the justification of the ungodly—and the complainants sense that disconnect—one
37 that, at least on the surface of things, is hard to deny: The story seems to be about a man

1 whose admitted disobedience shows him to be a covenant breaker, and you are saying it's
2 about a man whose humble trust in his plea for mercy shows him to be a covenant keeper.

3 **6) But can we say it's about *both*? Do you acknowledge a paradoxical dimension here,**
4 **i.e., that the tax collector “ does what the covenant requires of him” precisely *in***
5 **acknowledging (albeit implicitly) his covenant-breaking disobedience as sin and owning**
6 **that he is deserving only of divine punishment, as evidenced by his conscience-stricken**
7 **cry for God's mercy to be shown to him and his unwillingness even to look up?**

8 **TE Meyers' Answer:** I see now that in my answer to Q. 10 I have anticipated the
9 paradoxical dimension that you mention here. We have this same paradoxical element in
10 our confessional standards whenever there is mention of faith being the “condition” of the
11 covenant.

12 WLC Q. 32. How is the grace of God manifested in the second covenant?

13 A. The grace of God is manifested in the second covenant, in that he freely provideth
14 and offereth to sinners a mediator, and life and salvation by him; *and requiring faith as*
15 *the condition to interest them in him*, promiseth and giveth his Holy Spirit to all his
16 elect, to work in them that faith, with all other saving graces; and to enable them unto
17 all holy obedience, as the evidence of the truth of their faith and thankfulness to God,
18 and as the way which he hath appointed them to salvation.

19 Just to be clear, I deny that meeting this condition is something we accomplish on our own
20 in order to draw down the grace and mercy of God. A covenantal requirement or
21 condition does not imply that meeting the condition will “merit” the benefits of the
22 covenant. If that were the case, then we merit God's grace in the new covenant when we
23 meet the condition of faith that God requires of us. I reject the notion that conditions
24 signal a meritorious covenant. The Westminster divines clearly did not think that was the
25 case. The parable in question does not speak to this issue, but we know from many other
26 passages of Scripture that the tax collector's humble faith was itself a gracious gift of God
27 worked in him through the ministry of the Spirit.

28 **You said at one point in the Wrightsaid conversation:**

29 *...once one takes “the law” as a reference to the entire “instruction” (torah) of the Hebrew*
30 *Bible, particularly the foundational five books, then one must come to grips with the fact that*
31 *the torah itself contains provision for the restoration of sinners. And that drawing near by*
32 *means of sacrifice was [/] is part of the “statutes” of the law. When one is said to be*
33 *“righteous” or “blameless” in accordance with all “the law” says (Luke 1:6), this certainly*
34 *does not mean that one is “morally flawless.” Rather, it refers to covenant faithfulness with*
35 *regard to everything, even the “commandments and statutes” that require confession of sin and*
36 *forgiveness. (pp. 38-39)*
37

38 **7) Is it right for us to find in that passage evidence of your conviction that the parable is,**
39 **in fact, about the justification of the ungodly? If not, please explain why not. If the**

1 **answer is yes, can you see the benefit of affirming in the future that this story is about**
2 ***both* what true faithfulness to the covenant actually looks like, *and* about the**
3 **graciousness of the God who “justifies the ungodly,” to use the Apostle Paul’s celebrated**
4 **phrase?**

5
6 **TE Meyers’ Answer:** Yes to both questions.
7

8
9 *****

10
11
12 **Questions of Clarification for TE Jeff Meyers Posed by**
13 **Complaint Committee: Baptism**
14

15
16 Questions on Ananias’s Baptism of Paul:
17

18 In its investigation the MIC put this question to you:
19

20 **Is justification both an act and a process? Explain your answer from Scripture and**
21 **compare with the Westminster Standards.**
22

23 And you answered this way:
24

25
26 *Justification is “an act of God’s free grace” (WLC Q.70, WSC Q. 33). **Justification does not***
27 ***proceed by degrees; it is not a gradual process. Justification is instantaneous and therefore***
28 ***complete as soon as the sinner believes in Christ** (Rom. 4:7; Luke 18:24; Rom. 5:1). *I’ve**
29 **never believed or taught otherwise. Justification is a judicial pronouncement from God. I**
30 **agree with Berkhof’s summary: Justification**
31

32 is unique in the application of the work of redemption in that it is a judicial act of
33 God, a declaration respecting the sinner, and not an act or a process of renewal, such
34 as regeneration, conversion, and sanctification (Systematic Theology, p. 513).
35

36 ***Scripture makes it clear that the justification of a sinner that responds to***
37 ***the Gospel by faith is God’s act of declaring them forgiven and righteous in his sight** (Rom.*
38 *3:24, 25; Rom. 4:6-8; Gal. 2:16; Phil. 3:9). *Justification is not repeated over and over for the**
39 **Christian* (Rom. 5:21; Heb. 10:14; Psalm 103:12; Isa. 44:22). *A justified Christian is exempt**
40 **from condemnation* (Rom. 8:1, 32-34). [emphasis added]*
41

42 (Appendix B, JJM Response. p. 94, lines 6-17)

43 The implication of all these statements is clear: You believe that persons are forgiven in the
44 moment they trust in Christ, *their faith* rather than works, sacraments or anything else being
45 that by which their heavenly Father remits their sins. Yet in one Wrightsaid email list
46 exchange in May 2004, you said the following in regard to the Apostle Paul and the forgiving

1 of his sins:
2
3

4 *“After Paul's experience on the road to Damascus, Pastor Ananias says to him,*
5 *‘Arise, be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.’*
6 *It's pretty certain that the reason baptism was offered immediately is because*
7 *the forgiveness of sins is attached to the action. When were Paul's sins forgiven?*
8 *When was he ‘converted’? On the road to Damascus or in Damascus when Ananias*
9 *poured water over his head in the name of the triune God? The text is pretty clear.”*

10 (Complaint Appendix, p.35)
11

12 **Here are our questions: 1) Are you saying here that Paul’s conversion, i.e., his putting**
13 **his trust in Christ, took place on the road to Damascus but his sins were not forgiven**
14 **until he was baptized by Ananias in Damascus?**
15

16 **TE Meyers’ Answer:** No, I do not believe that. But I can see how my statement could
17 lead one to conclude that I was separating conversion, forgiveness, and baptism. That was
18 not my intention. The series of questions I ask in that Wrightsaid discussion are ill
19 phrased, to say the least. Once again, my overly provocative way of highlighting the
20 importance of baptism has led to unintended consequences. I regret that.
21

22 Paul’s “conversion” is the entire complex of events in Acts 9 (retold as his “testimony” in
23 Acts 22). I don’t know exactly when Paul exercised saving faith in that narrative. I don’t
24 think anyone does. Locating the precise moment of his conversion doesn’t seem to be
25 Luke’s concern in Acts 9 or even Paul’s interest in is recounting his encounter with Jesus
26 and Ananias in Acts 22. Perhaps Paul trusted Christ precisely when Ananias said to him,
27 “Arise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name” (Acts 22:16). In
28 that case Paul may have “called on the name of Jesus” for the first time right then and
29 there, his sins being washed away, when he placed his faith in Christ alone.
30

31 Even so, it is certainly possible that Saul exercised saving faith either in the encounter
32 with Jesus on the road or sometime during the three days following that event. If that was
33 the case, then he was justified and forgiven at that point. I don’t deny that is possible. But
34 Ananias does not say, “Arise and be baptized because your sins have been forgiven since
35 you have called on the name of the Lord.” Rather, he puts it to Saul as something he still
36 needs. He needs to call on the name of the Lord in baptism and receive the forgiveness of
37 sins. I, therefore, am forced to take Paul’s recollection of the story to be that he placed his
38 faith in Jesus and received the forgiveness of sins at the time of his baptism by Ananias.
39

40 Now, that is not to say that something similar happens with everyone’s conversion. In my
41 meeting with the committee last week I think I made it clear that I do not believe that the
42 forgiveness of sins is always only given at the time of baptism. I told the story of the
43 unbaptized man I led to faith in Christ that had to wait a few weeks before baptism. As a
44 believer, even before his baptism, he was justified and therefore forgiven. If he would
45 have died between the time of his first trusting in Jesus and his baptism, he would have
46 gone to heaven.

1
2 As I said in my answers to the MIC, statements like the one in Acts 22:16 are there to
3 encourage *believers* to trust that God delivers what he promises through the means he has
4 instituted.

5
6 **2) If so, how is that not a denial of what you affirmed in your MIC answers cited above**
7 **when you said, “Justification is instantaneous and therefore complete as soon as the sinner**
8 **believes in Christ?”** You say in the Wrightsaid quote that “*the text is pretty clear*” in
9 meaning that Paul’s sins were forgiven “*when Ananias poured water over his head in the*
10 *name of the triune God,*” and that the immediacy of Paul’s baptism was “*because the*
11 *forgiveness of sins is attached to the action.*” We don’t think anyone truly Reformed would
12 argue against the idea that forgiveness is “attached” to the ritual action of baptism; the real
13 issue though, is in *how* it is attached.

14
15 **TE Meyers’ Answer:** I believe I may have answered this question in my response to Q.
16 1. I do not know how to connect all the theological dots here. I cannot answer all the
17 questions that arise when we reflect on passages like Acts 22:16. I don’t know exactly
18 *how* the forgiveness of sins (or any other promise associated with the sacrament, for that
19 matter) is attached to the act of baptism. I certainly cannot logically explain the precise
20 temporal relationship between baptism and faith in such a way that it covers every
21 instance. All I know is that baptism, faith, and forgiveness are inexorably tied together,
22 according to the Scriptures.

23
24 I think the mystery of those connections is what the Westminster divines are struggling
25 with in their paradoxical discussion of this subject in WCF 28.6. They say that the
26 efficacy of baptism is “not tied to the moment of the time wherein it is administered.”
27 But then they immediately speak of the grace promised” in baptism being “not only
28 offered, but really exhibited and conferred by the Holy Spirit” to those infants and adults
29 to whom “that grace belongeth unto.”

30
31 As I said in my written answers in the MIC, I do not know how to connect all the
32 theological dots here. I cannot answer all the questions that arise when we reflect on
33 passages like Acts 22 from the perspective of God’s election. Even so, I am afraid that
34 in the interests of the demands of our “system” we have often effectively neutralized
35 passages like this and failed to hear the Spirit’s wisdom. Just to be clear, I am not
36 denying the Calvinistic system—not at all. I just don’t believe it is right for us to use the
37 doctrines of election and predestination to squelch passages that we cannot make fit into
38 our system. I say that because as a Minister of the Word I have a pastoral concern to be
39 true to the Bible above all else.

40
41 **So another question to you is this: 3) Do you believe that the remission of Paul’s sins was**
42 **“attached to the action” of baptism a) as a sign, seal, and application of a forgiveness**
43 **that had been granted “as soon as he believed in Christ,” to use your terminology in the**
44 **MIC answers, or b) was forgiveness “attached to the action” of baptism in the sense that**
45 **God normally forgives sins *in the moment of and by* that sacramental action?**
46

1 **TE Meyers' Answer:** My answer to 3a: yes, as soon as he believed in Christ. Taking
2 Ananias's charge to Paul at face value, I believe Paul "called on the name of the Lord"
3 subsequent to Ananias's exhortation. Paul expressed his trust in Jesus by submitting to
4 baptism by means of which his virgin faith received the sign and seal of the forgiveness
5 of his sins.

6
7 My answer to 3b is: No, I think that way of putting it is too categorical and therefore
8 misleading.

9
10 Allow us to ask you to consider this lengthy quote from John Calvin, in his commentary on
11 Acts 22. Calvin shows himself careful to guard against opposite errors, either attributing too
12 much to baptism or, conversely, attributing too little to it as an instrument that God takes up in
13 his hand to reassure our weak faith. He says on Acts 22:16:

14 *" And when he [Ananias] adds, Wash away your sins, he is bringing out the force and effect of*
15 *baptism by these words, as if he had said, "Wash away your sins by baptism." But since in*
16 *this way more appears to be attributed to the external and corruptible element than is proper,*
17 *the question is asked, whether baptism is the cause of our cleansing. Certainly since the blood*
18 *of Christ is the one and only expiation for sins, and since it was shed once for this purpose,*
19 *and the Holy Spirit is cleansing us continually by the sprinkling of it through faith, the honor*
20 *for this cannot be transferred to the symbol of water, without doing injury to Christ and the*
21 *Holy Spirit. And experience shows how prone men are to this superstition. Therefore many*
22 *godly men, for fear of putting their trust in the outward sign, weaken, the power of baptism*
23 *too much. But a proper balance must be preserved, so that the sacraments are kept in their*
24 ***proper place**, in case they may obscure the glory of Christ, and yet not lack their own*
25 ***efficacy and value.***

26 *Accordingly we must hold, in the first place, that it is God alone who washes us from our sins*
27 *by the blood of His Son, and that He acts by the secret power of the Spirit, in order that this*
28 *washing may be effective in us. Therefore when it is a question of the remission of sins, we*
29 *must look for no other originator of it than the Heavenly Father; we must imagine no other*
30 *material cause than the blood of Christ. But when it comes to the formal cause the Holy*
31 *Spirit indeed plays the leading role, but an inferior **instrument** is added, **the preaching of the***
32 ***Gospel and baptism itself.** Finally, even if God alone is acting by the inward power of His*
33 *Spirit, yet that does not prevent Him from **making use, as He pleases, of the instruments and***
34 ***means (media)**, which He knows to be suitable, not because He shuts up in the element*
35 *something taken either from the Holy Spirit, or from the blood of Christ, but because He*
36 *wishes the sign itself to be a prop for our weakness. **Therefore since baptism helps our faith***
37 ***to receive remission of sins from the blood of Christ and that alone, it is called the laver***
38 ***(lavacrum) of the soul.** So when he mentions washing **Luke is not describing the cause**, but is*
39 *referring to Paul's understanding, for, by receiving the symbol, he grasped better that his sins*
40 *were expiated. However we must also note this, that **a bare form (figuram) is not set before***
41 ***us in baptism, but the giving of the reality [rei exhibitionem] is also connected to it at the***
42 *same time, because God does not deceive us in His promises, but truly **fulfills what He***
43 ***signifies under figures.** However, on the other hand, we must be on our guard that the*
44 ***grace of God is not tied to the sacraments.** For the external administration of baptism is of no*
45 *value, except when it **pleases God** that it should be so. Another question, which can be raised,*
46 *is also answered from this. For, since Paul had proof of the grace of God, **his sins had***

1 **already** [i.e., before he was baptized] **been forgiven**. *Therefore he was not merely washed by*
2 *baptism* [i.e., the water merely cleaning off his physical body], *but obtained fresh*
3 **confirmation of the grace** *which he had* [already] *received*. [emphasis added] (John Calvin,
4 Acts, [vol. 2] in NT Commentaries, vol. 7, pp. 217-19).

5
6 Calvin here calls baptism an “instrument” in the hands of the Holy Spirit (albeit, an “inferior”
7 one) and part of the “formal cause” in the procurement of the remission of sins. Yet he clearly
8 affirms that Paul’s sins were already forgiven when Ananias baptized him, and that his
9 baptism was to be for him a “fresh confirmation of the grace” toward him that he had seen—
10 literally—on the road to Damascus and had already given himself to. Calvin, as always, is the
11 model of carefulness and a humble desire not to overstate the truth in any direction. And
12 while you do not give evidence of guarding yourself in both directions in your statements here
13 in the Wrightsaid discussion, we do see in your MIC answers a pastoral emphasis similar to
14 Calvin’s when it comes to the sacraments. You stress wanting to underscore as much as
15 God’s Word does that the sacraments, precisely as seals of what God himself does in saving
16 us through Christ when we trust in him, are meant to encourage us and reassure us that the
17 Lord of mercy and grace gives what he promises. Hence, in your MIC answers, in regard to
18 the sealing aspect of the sacraments, you said,

19
20 *If the sacrament of baptism seals to us all the promises of God (forgiveness, new life, union*
21 *with Christ, adoption, etc., see WLC Q. 165), then we ought to believe that God has given us*
22 *these things because we have been baptized. In other words, **by faith we count baptism to***
23 ***confirm all these realities for us!** Applying this to our children, we would say that the*
24 *parents and the church are believing all that God has promised in baptism for any particular*
25 *child. If baptism “signifies, seals, and applies” all these gracious benefits, then we should*
26 *trust that God ordinarily delivers what he promises.*

27 [emphasis added]

28 (MICR, Appendix B, p.64)

29
30 **But here are our questions to you regarding Calvin’s interpretation of Acts 22:16:**

31 **4) Do you agree in the main with what Calvin asserts here? Calvin is not the standard—**
32 **the Scriptures are, and the Westminster Standards represent our agreed-upon synthesis**
33 **of biblical teaching. But this passage might be a good touchstone since Calvin shows**
34 **himself here to be sympathetic to your desire to be faithful to the more “realistic”**
35 **passages on the sacraments as well as to the desire of others who want to avoid the**
36 **danger of attributing to the sacraments more than the biblical writers *intend to attribute***
37 **to them.**

38
39 **TE Meyers’ Answer:** I agree with almost all of Calvin’s exposition and application of
40 this passage. Even so, I’m not sure that his statement near the end of that quotation is
41 warranted. He is pretty confident that Paul’s sins had already been forgiven before his
42 encounter with Ananias. That may be true, but the text doesn’t give any indication that that
43 is the case. Ananias holds out forgiveness of sins to Paul. He doesn’t say your sins have
44 been forgiven so, therefore, be baptized. He says, “Be baptized and wash away your sins.”
45 Calvin’s comments, of course, would apply to many, if not most adult converts. So I have

1 no problem with what he says, assuming the right context. I'm just not convinced that the
2 text warrants his interpretation of Paul's prior forgiveness.

3
4 **5) If the answer is No, and there are things in Calvin's exposition you disagree with,**
5 **please lay them out for us and explain why you disagree.**

6
7 **TE Meyers' Answer:** See my response to question #4.

8
9 **6) If the answer is Yes, you concur with Calvin fully here, then are you willing to accept**
10 **the judgment that your treatment of Ananias and Paul was too one-sided? And if so,**
11 **how would you restate it?**

12
13 **TE Meyers' Answer:** Yes, I believe so. This is the statement that started it all:

14
15 *"After Paul's experience on the road to Damascus, Pastor Ananias says to him, 'Arise,*
16 *be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.' It's pretty*
17 *certain that the reason baptism was offered immediately is because the forgiveness of*
18 *sins is attached to the action. When were Paul's sins forgiven? When was he*
19 *'converted'? On the road to Damascus or in Damascus when Ananias poured water*
20 *over his head in the name of the triune God? The text is pretty clear."*

21
22 My desire was to provoke people to think about the way the Bible refers to baptism and
23 how God uses baptism. American evangelicals and even Reformed folk often bristle at the
24 way baptism is described in the New Testament. But the way I asked the questions in that
25 paragraph gives the impression that "conversion" and "baptism" were *separated* in Paul's
26 experience. That he was converted on the road to Damascus and then baptized and
27 forgiven three days later. That is not what I intended. The whole complex of events in
28 Acts 9 or later by Paul in Acts 22 is the narration of his conversion. It culminates in his
29 baptism by Ananias. That is the way I ought have phrased it. Every "conversion" in the
30 book of Acts culminates in baptism. When a person comes under conviction of sin and
31 turns to Jesus, he or she submits to Baptism and thereby expresses outwardly his or her
32 faith in Jesus as proclaimed in the Gospel. But Baptism is also more significantly God's
33 assurance to the convert that his or her sins are forgiven.

34
35 Is it possible that I have been too "one sided" in this old Wrightsaid post? Yes, of course.
36 The quote will surely look one sided and even dangerously skewed if not taken together
37 with all my explicit statements about justification by faith. But it seems to me that we
38 might have the same problem with many Reformed formulations of the sacrament of
39 baptism if we isolated them from their contexts. We often have no problem with
40 minimizing baptism's role in conversion. We do it regularly. We are uncomfortable with
41 connecting baptism with the forgiveness of sins, even though the Bible does so regularly.

42
43 Moreover, it should be noted that many Reformed confessional documents have connected
44 baptism with the forgiveness of sins. This is to say nothing of the Nicene Creed where we
45 confess to believe in "one baptism for the forgiveness of sins." This is not something odd

1 or strange. The Westminster Confession itself is quite clear that baptism is a sign and seal
2 of our remission of sins. In fact, the very first paragraph in the chapter on Baptism (WCF
3 28.1) emphasizes that baptism *not only* unites a person to the visible church, but baptism
4 *also* is to be to the person baptized a sign and seal of his union with Christ, regeneration,
5 and remission of sins:

6 Baptism is a sacrament of the new testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, *not only* for the
7 solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible church; but also, *to be unto him*
8 *a sign and seal of the covenant of grace, of his engrafting into Christ, of regeneration,*
9 *of remission of sins, and of his giving up unto God, through Jesus Christ, to walk in*
10 *newness of life.* Which sacrament is, by Christ's own appointment, to be continued in
11 his church until the end of the world (emphasis mine).

12 What this means, at the very least, is that the one who is baptized is encouraged to *believe*
13 the promises made to him or her in baptism, promises that include “the remission of sins.”

14 Reformed theology has a legacy of affirming that baptism confers the forgiveness of sins.
15 The *Scots Confession* (1560) was written by John Knox and used in the Scottish church
16 until Westminster replaced it in the mid-17th century. Article 21, “Of the Sacraments”
17 teaches this about baptism:

18 . . . we utterly damn the vanity of they who teach that the sacraments are nothing more
19 than naked and bare symbols. No, rather we are firmly persuaded that *by Baptism* we
20 are engrafted into Christ Jesus, to be made partakers of his righteousness, *through*
21 *which our sins are covered, and because of which pardon and grace are accomplished*
22 (Art. 21).

23 Knox’s confession probably says much more than we are willing to say about baptism.
24 But this way of putting it is part of our Reformed tradition.

25 The *French Confession of Faith* (1559), composed by John Calvin & De Chandieu, says
26 something similar:

27 . . . baptism, is given as a testimony of our adoption; *for by it we are grafted into the*
28 *body of Christ, so as to be washed and cleansed by his blood,* and then renewed in
29 purity of life by his Holy Spirit. We hold also that although we are baptized only once,
30 yet the profit to us that it signifies reaches over our whole lives and to our death, so
31 that we have a lasting witness that Jesus Christ will always be our justification and
32 sanctification (Art. 35, emphasis mine).

33 This Reformed confession clearly teaches *by baptism we are grafted into the body of*
34 *Christ, so as to be washed and cleansed by his blood.* These statements might be seriously
35 misunderstood if they are lifted out of their larger context, but they are echoing the Bible’s
36 own language and are later qualified in other parts of these confessional documents so as
37 to exclude any magical or automatic conferral of forgiveness apart from faith.

1 I believe the Reformed symbolic documents make these statements because *believers* are
2 encouraged to *believe* that God’s promise of forgiveness is rightfully theirs because of
3 their baptism. Notice how I have put this. *Believers* are to *believe* God works through
4 baptism. These Reformed confessions are not composed of a string of general
5 philosophical propositions about what always happens in the abstract whenever water is
6 poured on someone’s head and the name of the Trinity is invoked. There are pastoral
7 concerns here. Believers ought to *trust* that God gives them what he promises in baptism.

8 Confessing that baptism is for the forgiveness of sins, therefore, not unusual in the
9 Reformed confessional tradition. Given how willing our Reformed forbearers were to talk
10 about baptism and forgiveness in such a nearly unqualified way, it ought not to be
11 considered unusual now to talk this way *when the situation calls for it*. The difficulty, of
12 course, is explaining just how baptism, faith, and forgiveness are precisely related
13 temporally and metaphysically.

14 It’s one thing when in response to a group of people who are crying, “What must I do to
15 be saved?” a Reformed pastor says, “Repent and be baptized everyone of you for the
16 forgiveness of your sins” (Acts 2:38). It’s another thing entirely to sit in a classroom and
17 try figure out how repentance, faith, baptism, forgiveness, and election are precisely
18 related! I don’t pretend to be able to unravel the knots that seem to form whenever
19 questions about the relations between faith, baptism, forgiveness, conversion, and election
20 are all mentioned in the same sentence.

21 In the Wrightsaid response mentioned above, one page after the statements about Ananias and
22 Paul, you assert, citing that story in Acts 22 and other texts, that

23
24 *Normally God forgives sins and grants new life in baptism. What else can Matt.28, Acts*
25 *22:16, John 3, Rom.6, 1 Cor. 12, Col. 2, 1 Peter 3, etc. mean? (p. 36)*

26
27 Now since baptism is a ritual act, occurring in time, the assertion here that “*Normally God*
28 *forgives sins...in baptism*” can only mean in the moments the act of baptism is administered.

29
30 **7) But how can this reasonably be squared—especially in the case of adults who put their**
31 **trust in Christ and then present themselves for baptism—with your assertion in the MIC**
32 **answers cited above that “*Justification is instantaneous and therefore complete as soon as***
33 ***the sinner believes in Christ*”?**

34
35 **TE Meyers’ Answer:** I believe I’ve dealt with this already in my answers to earlier
36 questions. Once again, I’m not sure I can reconcile the two poles. Without proper
37 qualifications my statement can be severely misunderstood and dangerous. I grant that. It
38 is way too one-sided. And looking now at the next question below I see you are asking me
39 to affirm just that.

40
41 I don’t believe I can restate the proposition in a single sentence that would do justice to all
42 the concerns that might arise. Every theological proposition needs to be qualified and
43 explained. How baptism and forgiveness are precisely related cannot be reduced to a
44 single slogan or theological proposition. Notice what Calvin does with Ananias’s charge

1 to Paul in the *Institutes* (4.15.15):

2
3 Why, then did Ananias tell Paul to wash away his sins through baptism if sins are not
4 washed away by the power of baptism itself? I reply: we are said to receive, obtain,
5 and acquire what, according as our faith is aware, is shown forth to us by the Lord,
6 whether when he first testifies to it, or when he confirms more fully and more surely
7 what has been attested. Ananias meant only this: “To be assured, Paul, that your sins
8 are forgiven be baptized. For the Lord promises forgiveness of sins in baptism; receive
9 it, and be secure.”

10
11 Calvin appears to assume here that Paul had exercised faith prior to his encounter with
12 Ananias. That’s certainly possible, but not the only explanation. But notice that even in
13 referring to baptism as that which “confirms more fully” what has been attested to Paul by
14 God through the Word, Calvin feels the need to use the strong language of “the Lord
15 promises the forgiveness of sins in baptism.” And then in the very next paragraph Calvin
16 seems to have a twinge of guilt about seeming to reduce the sacrament to a symbol of
17 something already received.

18
19 Yet it is not my intention to weaken the force of baptism by not joining reality and
20 truth to the sign, in so far as God works through outward means. But from this
21 sacrament, as from all others, we obtain only as much as we receive in faith.

22
23 Calvin expresses, I believe, what I’ve been trying to say about the faithful reception of the
24 sacrament of baptism. As our Shorter Catechism puts it, the sacraments become effectual
25 means of salvation *for believers*. I’m not confident that I can formulate a precise sentence
26 or series of sentences that answers every theological conundrum associated with questions
27 about the efficacy of the sacraments. But I do know that in many situations, *believers*
28 need to be encouraged to trust that God faithfully gives what he promises in baptism. But
29 in different circumstances other people must be warned that apart from faith baptism will
30 not be a guarantee of the forgiveness of sins or of any other promise associated with that
31 sacrament.

32
33 **8) Are you willing to accept our judgment that your statement, “Normally God forgive**
34 **sins...in baptism,” is too one-sided? If not, defend it; and if you are willing, how would**
35 **you restate it?**

36
37 **TE Meyers’ Answer:** Yes, it is too categorical and needs qualification. But I’m not
38 willing to restate it because, as I said in my answer to the last question, I’m not confident I
39 can formulate a slogan that will express in the abstract, apart from concrete circumstances,
40 exactly how God uses baptism in every situation.

41
42 **9) The MIC exhorted you to be careful in the way you express yourself, especially when**
43 **using terms that others might easily misunderstand. Are you willing, under that general**
44 **exhortation, to accept a very specific one, namely, that in the future, not only for the**
45 **sake of those you teach and for your colleagues in ministry in the PCA but also for your**
46 **own greater understanding of God’s truth, you need to guard yourself against**

1 **overstatement in either direction on some of these sensitive “both/and” issues—as Calvin**
2 **does so admirably, even trying to pay attention to this when you are arguing things out**
3 **informally?**

4
5 **TE Meyers’ Answer:** Yes, I accept the rebuke and will work on formulating theological
6 propositions with more care in the future. I hope my answers to these questions from the
7 committee give some evidence of my progress on this front.

8
9 *****

10
11 **Questions of Clarification for TE Meyers Posed by**
12 **Complaint Committee: Covenant Theology**

13
14
15 **Background to Question 1:** You have been charged by the original LOC and by
16 complainants as well of denying the "bicovenantal" structure of God's relationship with Adam.
17 On p. 13 of your answers to the MIC you said the following:

18
19 *"h. Another point of continuity between the two covenantal arrangements has to do with*
20 *the ultimate goal of the covenant—to know and enjoy God himself or as chapter 7 of the*
21 *Westminster Confession puts it: man was promised 'the fruition of him [the Creator] as*
22 *their blessedness and reward' (WCF 7:1). "*

23
24 **1) When you use the singular here and refer to "the ultimate goal of the covenant," it**
25 **sounds like you are affirming that while there may be two or even more "covenantal**
26 **arrangements," there is really only *one covenant* between God and man. Is that what**
27 **you mean by the phrase "the ultimate goal of the covenant?" Or are you using the term,**
28 **"the covenant" here generically so that the whole phrase means, in essence, "the**
29 **ultimate goal of all God's covenantal relationships with man?"**

30
31 **TE Meyers’ Answer:** Yes, this accurately expresses what I intended in this passage. I
32 should have been more careful with my language. I have this way of speaking of “the goal of
33 the covenant” burned into my memory by my former professor O. Palmer Robertson who
34 would regularly use this phrase. By that language he meant the “end” of all the successive
35 covenants. But he was stressing the unity of the divine covenants. I just checked his book
36 *Christ of the Covenants* and found that he used the singular “the covenant” when speaking of
37 the goal of the covenants:

38
39 The divine covenants of Scripture are bound together not only by a structural unity.
40 They manifest also a thematic unity. This unity of theme is the heart of the covenant as
41 it relates God to his people. Throughout the biblical record of God’s administration of
42 the covenant, a single phrase recurs as the summation of the covenant relationship: “I
43 shall be your God, and you shall be my people.” The constant repetition of this phrase
44 or its equivalent indicates the unity of God’s covenant. This phrase may be designated
45 as the “Immanuel principle” of the covenant. The heart of the covenant is the
46 declaration “God is with us” (*Christ of the Covenants*, p. 45, 46).

1
2 The covenants of God are one. The recurring summation of the essence of the
3 covenant testifies to this fact. (*Christ of the Covenants*, p. 52).

4
5 **Background to Question 2:** Complainants cite something you wrote in 2007:

6
7 “*The covenant is, therefore, not simply an external means, not merely a remedial*
8 *arrangement by which God accomplishes salvation for fallen men, rather it is also the goal of*
9 *creation. He created us for and now saves us to participate in his covenantal life. The Persons*
10 *of the Trinity possess the fullness of life and blessedness as they love and serve one another*
11 *sacrificially” (“Trinity & Covenant, Part VI,” *Corrigenda Denuo*, 8/31/2007....)*

12
13 Complainants cite that passage of yours as proof that you affirm the view that, in their words:

14
15 “*the covenants before and after the fall were the same covenant as the one into which man*
16 *was created and into which he was saved.” (Complaint.3, p. 2)*

17
18 **So question 2) is this: In the passage just above from *Corrigenda Denuo*, What did you**
19 **mean by the phrase, “The covenant” in the clause in the first sentence, “The covenant is,**
20 **therefore, not simply an external means....”?** **Does it refer to the one overarching set of**
21 **intra-Trinitarian relationships saved persons are drawn up into, or were you referring to**
22 **“covenant” as a category, so that the phrase really means, “The covenant as a category**
23 **is, therefore, not simply an external means....?”** **Or does it mean something other than**
24 **these two alternatives?**

25
26 **TE Meyers’ Answer:** In the “Trinity & Covenant” quotation I was referring to my conviction
27 that the *ad intra* Trinitarian relations between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are the origin and
28 ground of God’s *ad extra* covenantal relations with humanity. By “external means” I meant
29 something closer to *ad hoc*—God’s covenantal relations with humanity were not created out
30 of thin air, so to speak. The loving relations between the Persons of the Godhead were turned
31 outward to embrace the human creature. That’s the origin of the first covenant, and the
32 covenants that follow after the fall. If you look again at my answers in the MIR (pages 25-26)
33 you will find citations of respected Reformed theologians (J. I. Packer, Berkhof, and Abraham
34 Kuyper) who have articulated similar connections between the intra-Trinitarian relations and
35 God’s covenantal dealings with man. Berkof, for example, says:

36
37 In fact, it is exactly in the trinitarian life that we find the archetype of the historical
38 covenants, a covenant in the proper and fullest sense of the world, the parties being on
39 equal footing, a true *suntheke*. (*Systematic Theology*, p. 266).

40 **Background to Question 3:** In your answers to the MIC questions regarding the Covenant
41 you cited O. Palmer Robertson and his reservations about applying that term, “covenant of
42 works” to God’s relationship with Adam. On p. 5, line 24, of your answers you say, “I agree
43 with Robertson’s critique and suggestions in the paragraph I quoted above.”

1 **3) But do you also agree with Robertson’s very strong affirmation in the material you**
2 **cited from his book, *The Christ of the Covenants*, that,**

3
4 **“Two basic epochs of God’s dealing with man must be recognized: pre-fall and post-**
5 **fall. All the dealings of God with man since the fall must be seen as possessing a basic**
6 **unity.”**

7 (MICR Appendix B. pp. 4-5)

8
9
10 **TE Meyers’ Answer:** Yes. As I wrote near the end of my MIR answers (p. 109): “In the
11 interest of clarity let me state emphatically that I deny that God’s pre-fall covenant with Adam
12 was the same as God’s post-fall gracious covenantal arrangement with sinful man in Christ. I
13 have never taught they were the same.”

14
15 **Background to Question 4:** Complainants believe that various remarks you have made about
16 the WCF and covenant theology are evidence of your aberrant views. These remarks include
17 the indented paragraph cited in the text of complaint, found under 4.a. and read as follows:

18
19 *“I do think the latest scholarly work in biblical theology demands that we go back and redo a*
20 *great deal of the Westminster standards. They were written when people still thought of the*
21 *covenant as a contract and believed that ‘merit’ had some role to play in our covenantal*
22 *relations with God. The whole bi-polar covenant of works/grace schema has got to go. And if*
23 *that goes, the whole ‘system’ must be reworked.”* (MICR, p. 67)

24
25 **4) To clarify, You never really made clear which parts of this paragraph you came to**
26 **regard as overstatement; can you do that now, and can you clarify for us *how* you**
27 **overstated your concerns? How would you rewrite that paragraph now in such a way**
28 **that it expressed your concerns but did not *overstate* them? For instance, would you still**
29 **say that “*the whole bi-polar covenant of works/grace schema has got to go?*”**

30
31 **TE Meyers’ Answer:** I overstated my concerns with inflammatory language. That’s what
32 I would change. The works/grace comment must be interpreted. I did not adequately
33 explain to what I was referring. If you go back to my answers to the MICR on covenant
34 and merit, I think you will see what I meant by this statement. It’s the overly “economic”
35 view of the covenant of works that I have problems with. Obviously, there is a place for
36 the biblical language of “works” verses “grace.”

37
38 **5) Are you able/willing to confess as overstatements similar comments brought to our**
39 **attention by complainants (e.g. a statement from Jan 7, 2004, in which you said that**
40 **“*16th and 17th century formulations were wrong about many things*” and that it is “*time***
41 ***we grow up and make the necessary changes;*” the claim in your book, *The Lord’s Service,***
42 **that “*The covenant has not been adequately appreciated or understood until recently*”**
43 **[p.52])?**

1 **TE Meyers' Answer:** I will quote the answer I gave to others who have asked about my
2 statement that has been repeatedly cited on various web sites. The original statement:

3
4 When will modern Presbyterians admit that this 500-year-old document is no longer
5 sufficient? Man, everybody in conservative Presbyterian circles talks as if Westminster
6 was the high point, and therefore the end-point of Reformation era creed-writing. But
7 it often strikes me to be exactly the opposite—a sterile document that signaled the end
8 of creative theological reflection in the Reformed churches. And what do we think?
9 This 17th-century scholastic document will be enough for the next 100 years? 500
10 years? Silly. Just silly.

11
12 Here is what I said to clarify that statement:

13
14 I was quite specific in that quotation. I don't "despise" our confession or catechisms.
15 □But I do reject the notion that the Westminster Standards are sufficient for all times
16 and places. Where I am required to confess the "sufficiency" of the Westminster
17 Standards? My ordination vows? The Confession of Faith? The Catechisms? No.
18 The Westminster Confession warns us against elevating human documents to the level
19 of infallibility. WCF 31.3 says, "All synods or councils, since the apostles' times,
20 whether general or particular, may err; and many have erred. Therefore they are not to
21 be made the rule of faith, or practice; but to be used as a help in both."

22
23 Why then is the WCF thought to be the infallible, unchangeable rule of faith for all
24 time by some men? My point in this comment you quoted has to do with the undue
25 veneration that has been paid to this 17th-century document. Decrying its misuse does
26 not imply that I have no place for its proper use.

27
28 To say that it is not "sufficient" to provide answers to all of our questions in the 21st
29 century is not to suggest that it has no value "to help" (as 31.3 makes clear). But the
30 Bible alone is sufficient. I know of no Reformed doctrine of the "sufficiency of
31 Westminster" or the "sufficiency of Dort," for that matter. I'll stand by that.

32
33 To say that it is rather "sterile" for modern times is to critique its scholastic *form* not
34 the truth of the Scriptures that are embodied in its 17th-century language and thought
35 forms.

36
37 To continue to use a 500-year-old document as the final arbiter of all "controversies of
38 religion" goes against the core principles of the WCF itself. The divines themselves
39 did not determine what was true and biblical by some strict subscription to some
40 earlier credal document. They went to the Scriptures. And in their opening chapter on
41 the Holy Scripture they warned us about the temptation to do otherwise. Twice we are
42 told that "in all controversies of religion" the church is always to finally appeal to the
43 Scriptures (1:8; 1:9).

1
2 It is rather provincial, un-historical, and, yes, silly to think that the Westminster
3 Standards will “be enough” to guide the church in the next 100-500 years. I’ll stand by
4 that. No human creed or confession or catechism is sufficient for its own time, let
5 alone for ages to come. Why is this document the last confessional document needed
6 till the end of time? I see this as just another way of confessing *the absolute*
7 *sufficiency of Holy Scripture and warning against idolizing human confessional*
8 *documents*. What’s so un-Reformed about that?
9

10 Finally, as for the "sterile" comment, perhaps that was not the right choice of words.
11 Remember, this quotation was lifted from an ad hoc comment I made on someone
12 else's blog post. I think you have to extend some charity when you are analyzing
13 quotations from informal comments on blogs. Nevertheless, I did say it. What did I
14 mean?
15

16 Something is "sterile" it lacks the power to produce fruit. So the language and
17 categories of these 17th-century documents are simply not capable of capturing the
18 interest and imagination of people in the 21st century. That's all I meant. I've seen this
19 over and over as a pastor for over 20 years. It lacks the power and usefulness that it
20 once had. That's all. Remember, Westminster comes at the *end* of a very fruitful time
21 of confession and catechism writing in the post-Reformation era. Lot's of confessions
22 and catechism were written with a view to instructing and guiding nations, regions,
23 and cities. No one felt the need to impose one confession on everyone. This was
24 healthy and good. After Westminster (not because of Westminster) that all ended, for
25 whatever reason. The documents are "sterile" because we don't live in the 17th-century
26 any more. The language and thought forms are somewhat alien. We need to apply the
27 Bible to our own locations and times in fresh, compelling ways.
28

29 **Background to Question 6:** On October 7, 2007, you are cited as saying "*the covenant has*
30 *not been adequately appreciated or understood until recently.*"
31

32 **6) To clarify, What did you mean by that? Do you now consider this as a case of**
33 **overstatement?**
34

35 **TE Meyers' Answer:** All I meant is that the 20th century made enormous advances in
36 biblical studies on the covenant. No one who has studied the development of biblical
37 theology in the 20th century could deny this. Read almost any modern Reformed work on
38 the covenant and compare it to the Westminster standards and you will see the difference.
39 I think of John Murray's opening comments in his little essay on the *The Covenant of*
40 *Grace* (Tyndale, 1953):
41

42 Theology must always be undergoing reformation. The human understanding is
43 imperfect. However architectonic may be the systematic constructions of any one

1 generation or group of generations, there always remains the need for correction and
2 reconstruction so that the structure may be brought into close approximation to the
3 Scripture and the reproduction be a more faithful transcript or reflection of the
4 heavenly exemplar.

5
6 I am thinking here of works on the covenant like the following:

7
8 George E. Mendenhall, *Law & Covenant in Israel and the Near East* (1955).

9
10 Meredith Kline, *Treaty of the Great King* (Eerdmans, 1963).

11
12 Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments* (Eerdmans, 1948).

13
14 Geerhardus Vos, *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation* (Presbyterian and
15 Reformed, 1980).

16
17 O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants* (Presbyterian & Reformed, 1980).

18
19 Wilson Benton, "Federal Theology: Review for Revision" in *Through Christ's Word:
20 A Festschrift for Dr. Philip E. Hughes*, edited by W. Robert Godfrey and Jesse L.
21 Boyd III (Presbyterian and Reformed, 1985, pp. 180-204).

22
23 W. J. Dumbrell, *Covenant & Creation: A Theology of the Old Testament Covenants*
24 (Baker, 1984).

25
26 **Background to Question 7:** In the same 2007 quote you continue,

27
28 *"I do not believe that I am required to believe and confess all the details in the confessions
29 and catechisms. Nor am I bound to their form. The chapter on the covenant, for example, is
30 filled with problems."*

31
32 **7) To clarify, concerning what you are required confessionally to affirm, did you mean
33 this statement simply as a recognition of our policy of system subscription? If not,
34 explain what you did mean at that time.**

35
36 **TE Meyers' Answer:** Yes, I was referring to "system subscription." I have interacted
37 with Westminster on the covenant extensively in my answers in the MIR. As an example
38 of a "detail," I would cite the Confession's use of "testament" as a way of explaining the
39 relationship between the death of Jesus and the covenant of grace (WCF 7.4). I don't
40 believe Hebrews 9:15 is talking about the covenant as a "last will and testament."

41
42 **8) Concerning the chapter being "filled with problems," do you see problems beyond
43 what you have already articulated in your responses to questions posed by the Meyers**

1 **Investigation Committee or in the exceptions and scruples you registered with the**
2 **various presbyteries you have been in? If so, what are these “problems”?**
3

4 **TE Meyers’ Answer:** I’ve outlined my concerns on this topic already in the MIR answers.
5 The only thing I would suggest is that so much more might be *added* to this chapter on the
6 covenant. Much more could be said about the progression of covenants in the Bible, for
7 example.
8

9 *****
10

11
12 **Questions of Clarification for TE Jeff Meyers in View of Complaint:**
13 **Christ’s Obedience**
14

15 **1) Do you believe that Christ’s obedience to the positive demands of the law and will of**
16 **God at every point in his life as the faithful New Adam--from the law prohibiting theft,**
17 **for instance, to the command of the Father that he suffer and die to save us--is counted**
18 **as ours, that is, imputed to us, if our trust is in Christ, just as his death-to-sin is counted**
19 **as our death-to-sin, and his resurrection-to-life is counted as our resurrection-to-life if**
20 **we trust him to save us (see Romans 6:5-11)?**
21

22 **TE Meyers’ Answer:** Yes. I affirm the imputation of Christ’s righteousness to believers
23 (WSC) . I have always affirmed this Reformation truth. Apart from the judicial imputation of
24 Christ’s work to us there is no hope of salvation for sinful humans. We are justified by God’s
25 “imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ” (WCF XI.1) to us when we believe the
26 Gospel. I have explained my objections to conceptions of imputation based on the “merit
27 system” of some Reformed theologians, but I have tried to be crystal clear that this does *not*
28 mean I reject the truth of the imputation of the alien righteousness of Christ, to use Luther’s
29 language. I affirm the imputation of the perfectly obedient, vindicated, risen, glorified
30 righteousness of Christ to believers.
31

32 **Background to question 2:** Consider these remarks by Francis Turretin in his discussion of
33 the obedience of Christ and its relationship to our salvation:
34

35 X. Third, we remark that the obedience of Christ has a twofold efficacy, satisfactory and
36 meritorious; the former by which we are freed from the punishments incurred by sin; the latter
37 by which (through the remission of sin) a right to eternal life and salvation is acquired for
38 us....
39

40 XII. While we think these two benefits should be distinguished, we do not think it should be
41 anxiously inquired (as some do) by what acts Christ made satisfaction or merited. They
42 attribute the satisfaction to his sufferings, the merit to his actions alone, so that by the former
43 he freed us from death and by the latter acquired for us a right to life. The Scripture nowhere
44 appears to distinguish the obedience of Christ into parts, but sets it before us as a unique thing
45 by which he has done everything which the law could require of us. Again, as Christ by the
46 obedience of his life has rendered what was due from us (and to which we were otherwise

1 personally bound), by that very obedience he has satisfied for us the demands of the law. As
2 his passive obedience proceeded from unspeakable love to us (which is the fulfilling of the
3 law), we cannot deny that it was meritorious, as it had the relation of a *lytrou* and times (or
4 price) by which a right to life has been acquired for us. Therefore these things should not
5 be curiously distinguished because both these benefits conjointly depend upon the entire
6 virtue of the cause—the obedience of Christ. For neither could sin be expiated before the law
7 was perfectly fulfilled, nor could a right to life be acquired before the guilt of sin was
8 removed. Therefore he merited by making satisfaction and by meriting made satisfaction.
9 Herein lay the utmost merit—that he performed an arduous and most difficult work (by his
10 most perfect obedience), impossible to all other beings and by no means obligatory upon
11 himself, by his most perfect obedience. By this obedience, he both manifested his amazing
12 love to us and his submission to the Father and in all things conformed to the special law of
13 his own calling. Yet it would have been of no avail to us had it not been sealed
14 and consummated by his death. And the satisfaction is not to be ascribed only to the external
15 oblation of his blood, but principally to an internal act—his spontaneous and unchangeable
16 will by which we are said to be sanctified (Heb. 10:14); not only to the payment of a price
17 (*lytrou*), but of the whole of the price (*lytrou*) (which is Christ delivering up and subjecting
18 himself for us). (Institutes of Elenctic Theology, Francis Turretin, Topic 14. Q13. [vol. 2, pp.
19 447-48])
20

21 **2) Can you affirm what Turretin teaches here? If not, please explain. If so, and with**
22 **the dangers inherent in the concept of merit you already laid out in your MIC answers—**
23 **with those cautions already registered, can you explain briefly what you can affirm**
24 **positively in Turretin’s use of the word merit here?**
25

26 **TE Meyers’ Answer:** Yes, I believe I can affirm what Turretin says here—that is, if I can
27 fully understand it. The statement is not entirely transparent. How can I affirm Turretin’s use
28 of the word merit? Because not every use of the word “merit” is linked with the system of
29 thought I’ve critiqued in my answers in MIR. I understand Jesus’ merit to be about the
30 infinite value of his obedience and satisfaction that is grounded in his divine Person. It
31 wasn’t just a sinless human who obeyed, even to the point of death on the cross. It was God
32 the Son who satisfied our debt in union with our human nature.
33

34 A much better way of putting things can be found in the Scottish Presbyterian theologian
35 Robert Rollock's *A Treatise of God's Effectual Calling* (1597). No one, I trust, will question
36 Rollock's credentials as a trusted Reformed and Presbyterian theologian. Here’s the relevant
37 section:
38

39 It may be demanded, Had it not been sufficient for our good, and to the end he might
40 redeem us, if he had only lived well and holily, and not also so to have suffered death
41 for us? I answer, it had not sufficed. For all his most holy and righteous works had not
42 satisfied the justice and wrath of God for our sins, nor merited the mercy of God,
43 reconciliation, righteousness, and life eternal for us. The reason is, for that the justice
44 of God did require for our breach of God's covenant, that we should be punished with
45 death eternal, according to the condition denounced and annexed to the promise of that
46 covenant. Therefore, no good works of our own, or of any mediator for us, after the

1 breach of that covenant of works, could have satisfied the justice of God, which of
2 necessity after a sort required the punishment and death of the offender, or certainly of
3 some mediator in his stead. If, then, all the good and holy works of the Mediator could
4 not satisfy that wrath and justice of God for sin, it is clear they could not merit any
5 new grace or mercy of God for us.
6

7 But you will say, that the good and holy works of Christ our Mediator have wrought
8 some part at least of that satisfaction, whereby God's justice was appeased for us, and
9 some part of that merit whereby God's favour was purchased for us? I answer, these
10 works did serve properly for no part of satisfaction or merit for us: for that, to speak
11 properly, the death of Christ and his passion only did satisfy God's justice, and merited
12 his mercy for us.
13

14 If any will yet farther demand, May we not divide the satisfaction and merit of Christ
15 into his doings and sufferings, that we may speak on this manner, Christ by his death
16 and passion hath satisfied God's justice, and by his good and holy works he hath
17 merited God's mercy for us, that so satisfaction may be ascribed to his death, and merit
18 to his works; that the righteousness wherewith we are justified before God may be
19 partly the satisfaction which Christ performed by his death for us, partly the merits
20 which he obtained by his works for us? I answer; to speak properly, the satisfaction
21 and merit which is by the passion of Christ only, both was and is our righteousness, or
22 the satisfactory and meritorious death of Christ, or the satisfaction which was by
23 Christ's death, or the merit of his death, or the obedience of Christ, as being obedient
24 to his Father unto the death, the death also of the cross, to be short, that justice of
25 Christ which he obtained when in his passion he satisfied his Father's wrath- this is our
26 righteousness. For we may say, that either the death of Christ, or his satisfaction, or his
27 merit, or his obedience, or his righteousness, is imputed unto us for righteousness. For
28 all these are taken for one and the same thing.
29

30 But here it may be replied, If the works of Christ cannot properly procure for us any
31 satisfaction nor merit, nor any part of satisfaction or merit, then it may be demanded,
32 What hath been, and what is the use of Christ's works, or of his active obedience, or of
33 the obedience of his life? I answer, that the holiness of the person of Christ, and of his
34 natures, divine and human, and of his works, is the very ground or foundation of the
35 satisfaction and merit which we have in the passion of Christ. That is, the excellency
36 and worthiness of that person and of his works did cause that his passion was both
37 satisfactory and meritorious: for if this person which suffered had not been so holy and
38 excellent, as also his life so pure and godly, it is most certain that his passion could
39 neither have satisfied God's wrath nor merited mercy for us. For which cause the
40 Apostle, (Heb. vii. 26,) speaking of this ground of his meritorious passion of Christ,
41 saith that such an high priest it became us to have, which is holy, blameless, undefiled,
42 separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens. And thus far of Christ, and
43 how he may be said to be under the covenant of works (*The Select Works of Robert*
44 *Rollock* Vol. 1 [Woodrow Society 1849], pp. 53-55).
45
46

1
2 **Questions of Clarification for TE Jeff Meyers in View of Complaint:**
3 **The Status of Various Statements**
4

5 **1) Does the 2006 MO Presbytery Report on FV Theology reflect a refinement of your**
6 **earlier views on the issues under investigation? In others words, to what extent are the**
7 **views and doctrinal articulations presented in blog posts and writings before 2006**
8 **superseded by the Presbytery document to which you signed your name and to which**
9 **you submitted in accordance with the Presbytery's action (in adopting the report)?**

10
11 **TE Meyers' Answer:** I would ask that people reading my old blog posts and comments
12 made on internet discussion lists give these statements the kind of weight they deserve.
13 It's one thing to post a comment on a blog late at night or to answer quickly a question or
14 concern expressed by an interlocutor on a discussion list; it's another thing entirely to
15 work through theological issues with a dozen other presbyters over the course of a year
16 and formulate a consensus document. The members of the MO Presbytery FV study
17 committee spent hundreds of hours debating various theological statements and positions.
18 That has precedence over blog posts and comments on the Internet.

19
20 Beyond that, I had to sit down and carefully formulate answers to questions put to me by
21 the presbytery before the January 2011 meeting. The answers I gave in the MIR are the
22 result of careful thought and consideration. They should be given much more weight than
23 throw-away comments made on the Internet. I would request that my carefully-worded
24 answers to questions put to me by the committee, and my vow of subscription to the
25 Westminster standards not be overridden by my more informal comments on discussion
26 lists and blogs.

27
28 People change. Even pastors learn things. If I go back and read or listen to sermons I
29 preached 20 years ago, I often cringe. I've had to retract positions that I promoted like a
30 bull dog in the past.

31
32 It's not easy to admit our mistakes. I have left a string of friends behind in past churches
33 that I convinced to believe things that I now reject. I have to swallow my pride and confess
34 my error. This is not unusual. Christians ought to grow and mature in their understanding
35 of the faith, which means that they may have to confess that many of their earlier views
36 were wrong and retract them. Augustine once wrote:

37
38 "Cicero, the prince of Roman orators says of someone that "He never uttered a
39 word which he would wish to recall". High Praise indeed!—but more applicable
40 to a complete ass than to a genuinely wise man. . . . If God permit me, I shall
41 gather together and point out, in a work specially devoted to this purpose, all the
42 things that justly displease me in my books: then men will see that I am far from
43 being a biased judge in my own case. . . . For I am the sort of man who writes
44 because he has made progress, and who makes progress—by writing. (*Epistle*
45 143.2-3)."

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Augustine did just what he had proposed. At age 75 he wrote his famous *Retractions* in which he acknowledged the progress he had made in his understanding of the Christian faith and corrected the errors that necessarily clutter the path of one who is constantly learning. Augustine’s honesty has always been a model for me. I hope to live up to it even in my old age.

2) Did your signature on the 2007 JFVP represent a further refinement of your theological views or convictions from the 2006 MO Presbytery report? Explain to us the context of the 2007 JFVP: Was it written in reaction to the 2007 GA report on Federal Vision? Please explain. Was it written to deny the declarations in the 2007 GA Report on Federal Vision and offer declarations that were essentially alternatives?

TE Meyers’ Answer: I didn’t write the JFVP. I signed that document because of all sorts of false accusations that were floating around about myself and my friends. The document was written to answer outrageous criticisms of “our” theological positions. It was not written in response to the 2007 GA report, at least not in response to the declarations. There were, however, many misleading things said in the body of that 2007 report and I believe some of the JFVP was written to clarify and correct those mistakes. Just look at my lengthy critique of the 2007 GA report to see how often the theological positions of the men being reviewed were distorted or misrepresented. The JFVP was designed to clear the air of popular caricatures and to restore “our” Reformed *bona fides*, if you will. I don’t believe there is anything in the JFVP that was meant to be an explicit denial of the declarations adopted at the conclusion of the report.

3) Should there be any contradiction (apparent or real) between anything you had written before the BCO 31-2 investigation of your views began in the spring of 2010, and your answers to the MO Presbytery Meyers Investigation Committee (written in the fall of 2010 and included in the January 2011 MIC Report), would you affirm that your answers to the MIC supersede, sharpen and potentially correct what you have written in the past?

TE Meyers’ Answer: Yes.

Appendix C Complaint Addendum

#5302 **From:** Jeff Meyers <jeffmeyers@...>
Date: Wed Aug 11, 2004 7:59 am
Subject: [Re: Re: critique of Horton](#)

jeffmeyer
[Offline](#)
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On Aug 11, 2004, at 9:16 AM, watchblack wrote:

> One suggestion is Mark Karlberg's "Covenant Theology in Reformed
> Perspective" I believe you can find this online electronically at
> www.twoagepress.org/books.htm

Oh, my. This is a perfectly awful book. What's worse Karlberg is a
Titus 3:10 man.

Men on this list favorable to N.T. Wright should read these books on
the covenant. They are by far and away the best on the subject:
James B. Jordan, [_Through New Eyes: Developing a Biblical View of the](#)

[World_](#)

<http://tinyurl.com/4tz4h>

[Jordan, _Covenant Sequence in Leviticus and Deuteronomy_](#)

Available from Biblical Horizons - see below.

Ralph Smith, [_Eternal Covenant_](#)

<http://www.canonpress.org/pages/bibstudies.asp#eternalcov>

Peter J. Leithart, [_A House for My Name_](#)

<http://www.canonpress.org/pages/bibstudies.asp#house>

And above all, make sure you write Jordan and ask for his series "Biblical Theology
Basics" (No. 1-14, Jan. 2002 - Feb. 2003). This is must reading for
understanding the biblical theology of the covenants.

You can order them here:

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Biblical Horizons

P.O. Box 1096

Niceville, Florida 32588

850-897-5299

I think you can order all of the books I've mentioned above directly from Jordan.

Jordan's works have been foundational in my own thinking and ministry. Even if you don't agree with everything he says, no one who reads these books comes away looking at the Bible the same way. I highly recommend them.

Jeffrey J. Meyers

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<http://www.prpc-stl.org>

<http://www.corrigenda.blogspot.com>

"A man without imagination is more of an invalid than one who lacks a leg"

- Karl Barth, CD III/1, p. 81

[Reply](#)

#651 **From:** Jeff Meyers <jeffmeyers@...>
Date: Mon Nov 25, 2002 11:21 am
Subject: [Re: faith/works](#)

On Monday, November 25, 2002, at 01:50 PM, Joel and Rachel Wilhelm wrote:

> Joel G. and Mark seem to be saying that the II Tim. passage *is*
> fighting
> merit theology (I agree). What I do not understand is where this "merit
> theology" is coming from if covenantal nomism is assumed? I can see the
> covenantal nomism argument making sense in Romans/Galatians but if
> here in
> II Tim we see merit rearing its' head, where did it come from? Are
> there
> different strands of Judaism in view? Or something else?

First, the passage you referenced says nothing about "merit." Second, the NPP is not diametrically opposed to reading the NT as being opposed to all sinful pride. Covenant "nomism" is not necessarily incompatible with such a reading. The Jews became proud and thought that their observance of the law commended them to God. Paul rebukes them.

jeffmeyer
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Take, for example, circumcision. It was intended as a humiliating rite, one that ought to have reminded Abraham and his descendants that they would not secure the promise by means of the flesh (=penis). God cut off the power and virility of man. The promise will be fulfilled by God himself, apart from man's power. But it seems pretty clear from

reading the NT that circumcision came to be considered an act of heroic spirituality, especially for Gentile God-fearing adults. This is behind Paul's polemic in Galatians. What was intended as humiliation

has become a badge of spirituality for the Judaizers. All the "works of the law" (meaning that which made the Jew's distinct in the old world) were being treated by the Judaizers as works of heroic spirituality rather than temporary distinctives designed to set apart the Jews as kings and priests to the Gentiles until the coming of the Messiah.

So it's not unlikely that Paul has these things in mind when he writes that God has not called us "according to our works" in 2 Tim. 1:8-9. What is this but a polemic against pride? Surely the Reformers were largely correct in using Galatians against the late Medieval Roman church. Admitting this is not exactly the same thing as saying that the Jews thought they were meriting God's favor by generic "good works."

And notice another interesting thing about Galatians. If Paul's

polemic is against those who think they are meriting salvation by doing generic good works, that is, obeying the moral law of God. . . if the phrase "works of the law" refers to obedience to the moral law. . . if being "under the law" refers to this, then why does he commend obedience to the law in Gal. 5:13-14. Furthermore, how can we read

Paul's opposition of "faith" and "works" as an abstract dichotomy between "passive trust" and "active working" when he describes what the Galatians are being deflected from (by the Judaizers) as "OBEYING the truth" (Gal. 4:7)?

Jeff Meyers

[Reply](#)

#116 **From:** Jeffrey Meyers <jeffmeyers@...>
Date: Thu Aug 15, 2002 12:19 pm
Subject: [Re: Re: How do you know you're a Christian?](#)

edistobum <[LFTrinity@...](#)> wrote:

> If Bill, Jeff and the others are willing to take these statements at
> face value for defining what a Christian is I would like to ask a
> few questions:

>

> 1. Does Baptism save, does it remit sin?

Acts 22:16, "And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name."

Calvin: "Therefore, there is no doubt that all pious folk throughout life, whenever they are troubled by a consciousness of their faults, may venture to remind themselves of their baptism, that from it they may be confirmed in assurance of that sole and perpetual cleansing which we have in Christ's blood.² And again: "But we must realize that at whatever time we are baptized, we are once and for all washed and purged for our whole life."

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"
"

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Therefore as often as we fall away, we ought to recall the memory of our baptism and fortify our mind with it, that we may always be sure and confident of the forgiveness of sins."

The Nicene Creed: "I believe in one baptism for the remission of sins."

- > 2. If we are to take Calvin and Bucer at face value what is to keep
- > us from saying that those baptized in the name of the Trinity in a
- > Roman church are Christians? If you say no, is there a defect in RC
- > baptism? If so what? Should it be repeated? If not why not?

Catholics are Christians. They are baptized into the Name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Once again, they may be faithful Christians or faithless Christians.

- > 3. If baptism makes a person a Christian, what happens when that
- > person grows up and does not hold to the faith? Are they now, not
- > Christians? Were they ever Christians?

Hebrews 10:26-31: "For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has spurned the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace? For we know him who said, 'Vengeance is mine; I will repay.' And again, 'The Lord will judge his people.' It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

Jeff M

[Reply](#)

#101 **From:** Jeffrey Meyers <jeffmeyers@...>
Date: Thu Aug 15, 2002 10:40 am
Subject: [Re: Re: Intro and a few notes](#)

jeffmey
[Offlin](#)
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edistobum <[LFTrinity@...](#)> wrote:

> Sorry Mark, I was thinking of Jeff's post (#48 I think) where he
> says: If you are baptized you are a disciple and if a disciple then
> a Christian.
>

> It seems to me that that is saying the same thing as if someone in
> OT said: "If you are circumcised you are a Jew no matter what but it
> is clear from OT and NT that there is an outward circumcison and a
> circumcison of the heart. It seems pretty clear to me that the same
> is true of baptism.

Hold on. I would not deny that one has to take one's baptism to heart. A male Israelite was incorporated into the priestly covenantal community by means of circumcison. His membership in the company of God's people was quite objective and independent of any inward disposition. But once a member of God's priestly people, that individual man had to be faithful. He

had to trust Yahweh. He had to live as one who had been given a new life (the old cut away, the new emerging). If, as time went on, he did not trust Yahweh and did not live faithfully, then he would be warned: "Circumcise the foreskin of your heart! You ARE a Jew! You have been delivered and live by the grace of Yahweh. You are by grace a member of God's people. Now live appropriately!"

So what's the difference between this and what we ought to say to our baptized children, friends, and neighbors? Everyone who is baptized must strive to "improve" their baptism, as our WLC says. Everyone who is baptized is a Christian. They are all graciously marked out by God as disciples. They are mercifully given a new name and incorporated into the body of Christ. They therefore ought trust in God's promise made to them, indeed, *sealed* to them at Baptism. But not everyone does. And some that do early on will waver later during times of temptation in their life. Then we say, "Trust in Jesus! You are a baptized Christian! God loves you and Jesus has died for you!"

I thought we all made this clear in the past. One can be a faith-full or a faith-less Christian.

And maybe more important to our discussion: one can be a child-like Christian and still be faithful. Baptized children are Christians. They are disciples. They belong to Jesus. They are members of his body, of his Church. They don't grow up and "become" Christians in high school or college when they have a particularly powerful experience of God's love or grace. They can and should have these experiences as they mature. But for baptized Christian children these experiences are not "conversion." Baptism seals to our children all the promises of God in Christ. They are forgiven, justified, adopted, etc. by means of their baptism into the church. They are called Christians. They ARE Christians.

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How is this not historic, Reformation theology?

Jeff

[Reply](#)

[Summarize Messages](#)

[S](#)

#2527 **From:** Jeff Meyers <jeffmeyers@...>
Date: Tue Dec 9, 2003 8:20 am
Subject: [Re: Wright at ETS on Lutheran vs Reformed views on law](#)

On Dec 9, 2003, at 7:39 AM, Christopher A Hutchinson wrote:

> I am no Reformation scholar,
> but I do know enough that there is not as much as a difference between
> the Lutheran and classical Reformed positions on Paul's view of the law
> than NTW here is asserting. That is, if the Reformed tradition may be
> judged by its actual early confessions, rather than on a back-and-forth
> scholarly debate on what Calvin thought.

>
> One caveat: there may be some radical Lutheran systematics that I am
> not
> familiar with, but from what I know of "what holds sway," among
> evangelical Calvinists today, we are in line with the classic Reformed
> interpretations of Paul, which are similar to the Lutheran position,
> notwithstanding a somewhat more robust view of the third use of the
> Law.

Chris, I've spent 9 years in graduate seminar classes at a conservative Lutheran seminary (Concordia in St. Louis). Granted, these are LCMS types, so they are radically Lutheran. Just so, their view and use of

jeffmeyers
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the law is NOT simply different from ours when it comes to the so-called "third use." They use the law-gospel dichotomy as a theological, philosophical, epistemological, and hermeneutical crux for EVERYTHING. True, they go way beyond Luther in this, but you would be amazed to see how often the law-gospel division is used to ground and/or justify exegetical and theological positions. The L-G dichotomy is their meat and drink.

In addition, since the advances of what we call "biblical theology" in the last century, especially as they have been applied to redemptive historical concerns by Reformed men, the distance between Lutheran and Reformed has widened. For example, we don't understand Paul's polemic against "works of the law" in Galatians first of all as a systematic theological point, but as a redemptive historical argument.

We can appropriate his polemic for systematic questions and ask what this means for Christian believers today, of course. But when we come to these questions by way of biblical theology with redemptive historical concerns we don't get an abstract law=command understanding.

We get something much different. The Torah (which include much more than simply "commands") gives way to Jesus Christ and the new world he inaugurates. Read Richard Hays wonderful commentary on Galatians side by side with Luther's and be amazed at the difference. Once you understand the *historia salutis* issues in Galatians, it's hard to go back and appreciate a commentary that is driven by an alien and abstract law-gospel dichotomy.

Just a few inadequate comments.

JJM

[Reply](#)

My New Book on Worship
[List](#) [< Prev Topic](#) | [N](#)
[Summarize Messages](#)

[Topic](#)

#1801

From: Jeff Meyers <jeffmeyers@...>

Date: Sat Oct 11, 2003 11:46 am

Subject: [My New Book on Worship](#)

jeffmeyersbh

[Offline](#)

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Although it's not directly related to the study of NT Wright, my new book on worship does draw on my study of Wright's covenantal perspective. If any of you are interested, you can find it at Canon Press:

<http://www.canonpress.org/pages/newrele.asp>

You can also order it from James Jordan at:

Biblical Horizons
P.O. Box 1096
Niceville, Florida 32588
850-897-5299

I believe those of you interested in reforming Reformed worship in a more liturgical direction will benefit from it. And if you're not interested in this, you should be! ; -)

Jeff Meyers

[Reply](#)

#2918 **From:** Jeff Meyers <jeffmeyers@...>
Date: Wed Jan 7, 2004 11:45 am
Subject: [Re: Re: New lecture uploaded to Wrightsaid](#)

jeffmey
[Offlin](#)
[Send](#)

On Jan 7, 2004, at 3:18 PM, Christopher A Hutchinson wrote:

> Peter,

>

> My point is that your comments are one more example of crying "foul,"

> on

> this list, when elbows fly both ways.

>

> Your brother, Chris Hutchinson, te, pca

>

> P.S. It would also help Christian unity if you would not bash an

> entire

> countryb with uncharitable and unproven generalizations.

First of all, who are you talking to Chris? Peter Leithart? How and where did he "bash and entire country with uncharitable and unproven generalizations"? I think you're seriously confused, brother. I believe you meant NT Wright's comments, not Peters.

Your objection to crying "foul" must refer to NT Wright's words, which you quote:

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>> Speaking as one of those who is regularly thus
>> carpet-bombed, what I find frustrating is the refusal of the
>> traditionalists to do three things:.... second, to engage in the
>> actual
>
>> exegetical debates upon which the whole thing turns, instead of
>> simply repeating a Lutheran or similar line as though that settled
>> matters;

You didn't read carefully enough. These are not Peter's words, but
NTW's.

And who appointed you as the Piety Police Officer for this list. Why
not engage the arguments and issues and not be so worried about
everyone's "tone." It gets a little tiresome.

> As one who would happily call myself a traditionalist (although a third
> stringer at best), I argued on this list a few weeks ago that Jim
> Jordan
> was simply wrong when he stated that justification by faith is clear in
> the Ten Commandments. No one answered back, so I assume that I win
> that
> exegetical debate.

Well, it could be that no one thought your arguments were worth
answering. It seems pretty clear to me that the first word of the
decatalogue (not commandments) has to do with trusting Yahweh alone. The
language of "having" or "possessing" no other god is marriage language.

Israel, the bride, is to cling to Yahweh, her Husband and Lord, in

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faithfulness. What is this but salvation by faith? How is that wrong?

> Second, I showed the list that early Reformed confessions set forth a
> clear law-gospel contrast. Again, no one argued back, so I assume
> that I
> win that historical debate.

NT Wright's point is that these confessions could be (and probably are) wrong. His argument is that the Lutheran law-gospel dichotomy is not particularly helpful in exegeting passages in Paul (to put it mildly).

I'm always amazed (and apparently so is NTW) at how Reformed scholars and pastors who profess to believe in sola scriptura have become so ultra traditional in recent years. Roman Catholics are half as fanatical about their tradition as Westminster Confession Presbyterians. Face the facts: 16th and 17th century theological formulations were wrong about many things. It's time we grow up and make the necessary changes. This will mean that we Presbyterians will have to give up our security blankets and grow up a little. Even if I don't agree with Wright on everything he says about justification, at least he is moving us forward and showing us places where we need to reform our tradition.

JJM

[Reply](#)

Date: Fri Aug 30, 2002 8:33 pm
Subject: [Re: Pharisee/Tax collector](#)

« [Offi](#)
= [Send](#)

Joel and Rachel Wilhelm <joelandrachel@...> wrote:

> Luke 18:9-14 (ESV)

> He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were
> righteous, and treated others with contempt: "Two men went up into the temple
> to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing
> by himself, prayed thus: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men,
> extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast
> twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.' But the tax collector,
> standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his
> breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!' I tell you, this man went
> down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts
> himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted."
>
> We have the term "justified"--(dikaioo)--there used in a very Lutheran way it
> seems to me.

What's "Lutheran" about this parable? Be careful not to read too much into it. The verb justified here cannot bear the full weight of the Lutheran doctrine of Justification. Always remember that theological terms used in systematic and confessional theology are loaded with a great deal more than such words normally bear. (see Poythress, *Symphonic Theology*).

When the terms "justification" or "justify" or "righteous" (all have the same root) occur in the Bible they *never* mean everything that they mean in systematic theological contexts. The doctrine of "justification" is built up from many different passages, even from the story of the Bible as a whole, so that when we hear the word "justification" we think of the whole

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shebang. But you can't dump all of that into each occurrence of one of these words in the Bible.

Here in Luke 18 we learn that the Pharisee was not righteous (even though they thought he was) and the tax collector was righteous. The key is to understand what "righteous" means. It does not refer to moral purity or conformity to a legal standard (the "Lutheran" mistake). "Righteousness" in the Bible means covenant faithfulness. A person is righteous when he does what the covenant requires of him. The Pharisee thinks he's righteous but in fact is not; the tax collector does not claim to be righteous, but in fact he is. The TC goes back to his house "justified" or "rectified," which in context means, "shown to be righteous."

This text says nothing about God "imputing an alien righteousness" to the TC. One has to read that into the passage. Jesus, rather, is exposing the fact that the Pharisees are not truly *faithful* to the covenant. The TC's humble plea *fulfills* the terms of the covenant. The TC is faithful to the covenant, that is "righteous." His faithfulness to the covenant *is* his righteousness. This is why Jesus sums it all up with a call to humility. The covenant is faithfully fulfilled by those who humble themselves. The humble are justified.

So I don't understand how one can read into this passage a Lutheran doctrine of justification. Nothing is said about imputation. Nothing is said about an alien righteousness being needed. In fact, the notion of an alien righteousness being imputed to the TC hardly fits with the story. The TC's righteousness is his humility. In other words, covenantal faithfulness (=righteousness) in this story means humility. When it says that the man is "justified" it means that he has proven his genuine "righteousness" (faithfulness to the covenant). To confess one's sins and plead for mercy

is righteous. It fulfils the terms of God's covenant with Israel.

I don't have my little commentary on Luke by NT Wright at the moment. My assistant (ahem) has it. But I've read enough of Wright to channel him after a scotch or two, so I'd bet a pint of beer that Wright says something similar.

Jeffrey J. Meyers

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[Reply](#)

#281 **From:** Jeffrey Meyers <jeffmeyers@...>
Date: Sat Aug 31, 2002 8:06 am
Subject: [Re: Re: Pharisee/Tax collector](#)

jeffmey
[Offlin](#)
[Send](#)

edistobum <LFTrinity@...> wrote:

> What I would like to ask you is if the occurrence of the word
> hilasthati that seems to me and in all of my work to carry the idea
> of atonement with it. The only place that the same verb occurs is in
> Heb 2:17 which I always see translate with the make atonement does
> have something to do with the idea of substitution. In not
> imputation then certainly Jesus is certainly recognizing the plea

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> from the man for forgiveness.

> I'm not sure what you are saying. You basically say that the
> Pharisee thought he was righteous and he was not but the tax
> collector thought he was not righteous and was. What made the
> difference? Was it something they did? If the man went down
> righteous where did it come from? Was it his own? Was his lack of
> thinking he was righteous something that made him righteous or was
> there something else?

Sorry for a quick note. Don't have much time. I'm not sure about the verb
you mention, I'll have to check it out.

As for what I am saying: I am not denying the reality of imputation or the
necessity of an alien righteousness. Nor, of course, the whole structure of
"justification" as we have come to define it in systematic theology. And I
DO think that the parable is consistent with these doctrines (obviously).
But I don't believe that its ALL here in this passage. The rectification of
the TC follows upon his being faithful to the covenant.

You ask where the "righteousness" of the TC came from. There's nothing in
the parable to indicate that something was imputed to him. He was rectified
because he did what was right. He was declared by God to be in the right.
He was judged to be faithful (=righteous) to the real terms of the covenant.
Ultimately, of course, the ability to be faithful came from God. But that's
not what is in view in this parable. You would have to go somewhere else to
find that truth.

Here in *this* parable true "righteousness" is being revealed. That is,
true faithfulness to God's covenantal requirements. Who's really faithful

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to God's covenant? The Pharisee or the TC? God declares that it is the TC. God "justifies" the man and his humble posture. *This,* God declares, is true "faithfulness" (or righteousness).

Jeff Meyers

PCA

Reasonably religious Wright reader

[Reply](#)

#35 **From:** Jeffrey Meyers <jeffmeyers@...>
Date: Mon Aug 12, 2002 8:29 pm
Subject: [RUF Critique #1](#)

[jeffmey](#)
» [Offlin](#)
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Men,

Here's just a few words in response to the bullets offered by the anonymous author of the "CRITIQUE OF N. T. WRIGHT'S What Saint Paul Really Said" that was posted to the list.

> INTRODUCTION

>

> * N. T .Wright is an Anglican, the Dean of Lichfield Cathedral (Staffordshire,
> England), and taught/teaches at Oxford. Wright is toward the right in the
> critical "British Evangelical" tradition (very similar to Dunn). (A British
Evangelical is one who believes Jesus rose from the dead, but everything else
> is up for grabs.)

This is an extremely prejudicial way of putting things. This gives the

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impression that NTW might believe and confess that everything besides the resurrection NTW is up for grabs. Anyone who's read a little of NTW knows that this is not the case. I challenge anyone to find a denial of any orthodox doctrine in NTW. He is far from being a muddle-headed English Evangelical.

> * Compared to critical scholarship, Wright has many conservative conclusions
> and several very idiosyncratic conclusions. He is convinced Paul has a
> coherent theology and is annoyed with critical scholars who do not want to
> discuss the big issues (Saint Paul, 21). Also, as opposed to many critics,
> Wright believes that Paul's theology has relevance for today (Saint Paul,
> 21-22).

Well, no kidding. But why select these relatively innocuous "conclusions."
NTW has a lot more meat to offer than just these two.

> * Wright has generally conservative conclusions (not method) concerning the
> historicity of X. See his Jesus and the Victory of God (1996). He is also
> well-known for being against the Jesus Seminar's liberal
> historical-conclusions.

I wasn't aware that there was a "conservative method" of scholarly inquiry into the historicity of Christ. And once again this statement is unnecessarily pejorative. NTW is not only against the conclusions of the Jesus Seminar, but PRIMARILY against their sloppy historical methodology. This statement makes it appear that Wright adopts a non-conservative historical methodology (whatever that might be) but happens to come to "generally conservative conclusions." Has the author of these comments even read NTPG?

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> * Wright's previous main Paul book is *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (1991). This is a collection of exegetical essays of which it is hard to grasp Wright's overall big-picture Pauline theology-

Well, not exactly. If the author of this handout is reviewing *WSPRS* (1997), then NTW's "previous main book[s]" are *Jesus and the Victory of God* (1996) and *The New Testament and the People of God* (1992). But what does one mean by "main book"? This also neglects to mention that NTW has a number of sermonic, devotional books which have received very nice reviews in the WTS, like *The Crown and the Fire* (1992) and *Following Jesus* (1994).

> * *What Saint Paul Really Said: Was Paul of Tarsus the Real Founder of Christianity?* (1999) is Wright's attempt to coherently put together his Pauline theology emphasizing the phrase "Righteousness of God" and "justification." It is done in a semi-popular manner (few footnotes). He is currently working on more of a full-blown Paul book.

>

> * As Wright explains in the preface, the subtitle only relates to his last chapter (8). It interacts w/ A. N. Wilson and concludes "no."

Which is good.

> * A great review of this book and Dunn's *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* is by Gaffin ("Paul the Theologian," *WTJ* 62 [2000] 121-41).

> *Wright's Historical/Theological Starting Points*

It's not that great. It's a bit too crabby and doesn't take the time to try to understand NTW's own method and theology.

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- > * Paul did not write the Pastorals but did write Col and probably Eph.
- > Wright's views are based on only Rom, 1-2 Cor, Gal, & Phil (8).

This is a misrepresentation that has already been addressed on the list. It is simply wrong.

- > * Wright and Wright's Paul do not distinguish between OT Judaism and the
- > Judaism of the "Second Temple period." Wright also has a high degree of
- > certainty of what can be known about Second Temple Judaism.

I'm not sure where this second sentence comes from, but the first is silly. Of course he distinguishes between true OT religion and the religion of STJ. Otherwise, what was Jesus attacking in the Gospels? What NTW is intent on doing is getting at an accurate description of the Judaism of Jesus' and Paul's day, one that does not read late Medieval Catholicism back into the Rabbis (or worse, identify Judaism with the Reformation's perception of late Medieval Catholicism).

- > * Wright is firmly in the E.P. Sander's (former colleague at Oxford) camp as
- > to the theology of the Second Temple period.

How can anyone who has done any kind of reading in this area say this. NTW's appropriation of Sanders is sic et non. He spends a great deal of time criticizing Sanders and trying to improve upon his formulations. Even in this book (pp. 18-20) NTW criticizes Sanders. To name just one example, Sander's view of the nature of the eschatological outlook of the apostolic and post-apostolic church is one he adopted from Schweitzer, which NTW rejects. His other books, esp. NTPG and JVG deal extensively with the way he differs from Sanders. The statement made above seems like a political one--identify him with Sanders to frighten people off.

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> * "Judaism of Paul's day was not, as has been regularly supposed, a religion of
> legalistic works- righteousness. ..."The Jew keeps the law out of gratitude,
> as a proper response to grace-not, in other words, in order to get into the
> covenant people, but to stay in. ...I do not myself believe such a refutation
> [of Sanders] can or will be offered; serious modifications are required but I
> regard his basic point as established" (18-20, italics his).

Well, this is okay as far as it goes. But not the whole story about
Judaism.

> * Primarily, Saint Paul is a polemic against the Reformed and/or generic
> Evangelical view of J and the "Gospel."

Is it? If it is, why doesn't NTW say so. That's not his concern. His
concern is to correct the way that everyone--Protestants and Catholics as
well as conservatives and liberals--have read Paul. It is an attempt to do
exactly what we as Reformed (= "reformed according to the Word," remember)
profess to be all about: continually subjecting our traditional formulations
and theological propositions to the plumbline of the Scriptures. If we
think that we are above the need for reformation, then we are no longer a
Reformed church.

> * Wright points out umpteen times that Saul was not "proto-Pelagian" (e.g.,
> 32). ?????: he never mentions semi-Pelagian.

So. He's not dealing with this controversy.

> * Saul (pre-Xn Paul) was a very strict Sharnnite Pharisee who was politically

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> motivated and wanted to get rid of by force the Romans and the Jewish groups
> who were not pure enough (26- 29). He saw Israel as still in exile. Paul
> expanded on this Saul political idea. X's death is the finalization of the
> exile covenant-curse upon X, the representative Israelite. Now, X is the king.
> Israel is brought back from exile and is/will be vindicated. the Gentiles can
> now come to the Israelite King (35-37, 51, 84, 106,117,126,138).

>

> * Wright is on very thin ice as to Paul's Shammite Pharisee political
> background. Here is one major place that Sanders and Wright disagree.

One place? There are many others.

>There is

> no extant document that says this; Wright infers it. The Mishnah (200 AD),
> which is the earliest extant Pharisaic theological writing, does not have this
> view. Wright argues that Sanders did not realize that the views in the Mishnah
> had been sanitized by later non-political Hillelite Pharisees (32).

Well, of course he infers it. That's the nature of historical research.
Read NTPG! Two can play this game. There's no extant document that says
that the first century Jews were trying to merit God's favor through their
works.

> * Paul's views are Jewish in their "derivation," and not Hellenistic (78-79).
> Paul had a "Jewish message for a pagan world" (82, italics his). Hence, Wright
> is anti-"history-of-religions" view of Paul. ????: Wright has many good
> insights here.

Why all the question marks at the end of the second sentence. This is good,
isn't it? What's the problem?

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> * R of G is a very important concept in Paul and directly related to the
> Gospel and J (114-15).

>

> * Wright is anti-"apocalyptic Paul"as in Beker and Martyn (152), although he
> spends virtually no time on this subject.

Is this bad? Of course not. Read page 152 where NTW deals with this. He is saying that Paul's message is rooted in the OT and that Jesus words and works did not effect a clean break with the past (as in apocalyptic construals). What? Does NTW have to use our peculiar lingo ("redemptive historical") for us to know what he is talking about?

> Miscellaneous Issues

>

> * Wright has a good chapter concluding that Paul believes in a Triune God and
> that this is consistent w/ I AD Jewish monotheism. Paul claims for Jesus the
> title ofYHWH (63-72). ?????: best chapter in the book.

Fine, but what's the four question marks about?

> * ????? minor complaint: Wright does not ask if Paul's Triune view is
> consistent w/ the OT. Only that based on various Second Temple Jewish texts,
> "many Jews were very flexible about how they spoke of this one true God" (64).

Very minor. This is not a textbook on the Trinity or theology proper.

> * In Jesus and the Victory ofGod (451), Wright implies that X's
> self-consciousness about His divinity was not complete.

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Not complete? When? Ever? This is very common misunderstanding of NTW's position on the development of Jesus consciousness as Messiah and God.

> * Wright has some good thoughts on how Paul' s view of God the Creator
> affected his proclamation to the Gentiles. Jewish monotheism of one creator
> meant that the Jewish message was given to the pagan world that was created by
> the one God (83, 86-87).

> * Wright sees Covenant as the main category of Paul. Forensic J and R of G
> terms along w/ eschatology need to be understood in the context of Covenant
> (96-99, 131). Of course, this is not the Covenant ideas of RT, nor the OT, but
> of Second Temple (117).

The "main category" of Paul? Does NTW use that language? That Wright's concept of the covenant is not that of the WCF is pretty clear. Whether this is a bad remains to be seen. The WCF and the bi-polar Cov of Works/Grace scheme needs to be subjected to some careful scrutiny by men who do not worship at the idol of Westminster. Maybe Wright is just the one to do that, not being a part of our tradition.

> * Wright has a definition of the "Gospel" that is constantly contrasted to RT
> and generic Evangelicals. The Gospel is "a narrative proclamation of King
> Jesus' victory. ..."Jesus, the crucified and risen Messiah, is Lord. ...[It is
> the announcement of] the return of Israel from exile. ..and God's victory over
> all the world" (43-46). "'The gospel' itself is neither a system of thought,
> nor a set of techniques for making people Xns; it is the personal announcement
> of the person of Jesus" (151).

Exactly. Read the NT.

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> * The Gospel is not "a description of how people get saved; of the theological
> mechanism whereby, in some people's language, X takes our sin and we his
> righteousness; in other people's language, Jesus becomes my personal saviour;
> in other languages again, I admit my sin, believe that he died for me and
> commit my life to him" (41).

I suppose this quote is supposed to be damning. Actually it is quite in line with every "Gospel" sermon recorded in the book of Acts.

> * Wright emphasizes that the Gospel is a "proclamation" by a herald of the
> King Jesus for people to bow to the King. This Gospel message "results in
> people being saved" (Wright never says how).

Oh, come on. He does say how. Read p. 129.

>It is not begging people to
> accept Jesus or explaining a gospel plan (45). Wright here seems to be arguing
> against generic Evangelicals, who have a low view of the power of the preached
> Word.

> * ????: Wright's "gospel" concerns the R-H events of X emphasizing his Lordship
> (not his being savior) and does not include ordo salutis or, apparently,
> personal salvation is general (40-41).

I'm looking hard, but not seeing how Wright emphasizes that Jesus is Lord and not Savior. It is precisely as Lord that he has saved his people. As Lord he has served us self-sacrificially, fulfilled the covenant, and become savior.

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>Wright never even relates "faith" to
> "gospel." (For Wright, "faith" relates to J which has "nothing" to do w/
> entering the covenant community [151].)
> Righteousness of God

Never even? Please.

"Within this context 'justification' . . . Means that those who believe in Jesus Christ are declared to be members of the true covenant family; which of course means that their sins are forgiven, since that was the purpose of the covenant. They are given the status of being 'righteous' in the metaphorical law court." (p. 129).

So what's the problem?

That's all for now. I've gotta get some rest!

JM

[Reply](#)

#48 **From:** Jeffrey Meyers <jeffmeyers@...>
Date: Tue Aug 13, 2002 9:18 am
Subject: [Re: Re: RUF Critique #1](#)

Doug Serven <[servenatorus@...](#)> wrote:

> Jeff, John and Mark, your posts have been extremely
> helpful, especially when you take the time (I realize
> we all don't have unlimited time here!) to explicate

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- > your disagreements with our mystery author's thoughts.
- > It's not quite as helpful when you say "Aw, come on"
- > but it's ok to get exasperated at times, especially at
- > the end of emails.

Good point. I can't speak for anyone else, but I say "Aw, come on" when I detect that the person criticizing NTW has really not taken the time to read him thoroughly or sympathetically. When someone says, for example, that NTW doesn't believe in justification by faith or denies that Jesus is God or some such nonsense, then I say, "Gimme a break!" So many men are just repeated stock criticisms that they hear others say without taking the time to read NTW themselves. Of course, not everyone must read NTW. But if you are not going to read him then defer judgment to someone else.

- > My take on the reason why this is an issue at RUF
- > staff training is this: All across the US, campuses
- > have Religious Studies departments. OU in fact
- > recently started one (and realized they had no classes
- > on Christianity so they scurried to find one). Here's
- > what happens: Joe Freshman is a Xian, but has no idea
- > anything about the Bible or even why he believes (I
- > realize he may not be a Xian afterall, but certainly
- > thinks he is one at this point). He either decides to
- > get a RS degree or enroll in some classes, thinking,
- > hey, I can get credit for reading the Bible. Then he
- > gets blasted in class by profs who teach him Jesus
- > Seminar stuff, Sanders and Dunn stuff and leave him a
- > bloody mess for us to pick up the pieces.
- > This is bad, bad, bad.

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But surely Sanders and Dunn are not altogether bad, bad, bad. I don't think you intend to lump Jesus Seminar stuff with stuff from Sanders and Dunn.

What have you read of Dunn?

And as an aside, Doug, you should be careful about how you use the word "Christian." You guys in RUF could do us Pastors a great service by using the word more consistently. In the scenario you outline above you speak of Joe Freshman as a Christian, but maybe not. Well, he either is or he is not. It's very open, public, and objective. If he's been baptized in the church, he's a Christian. Period. I'm sick of hearing "testimonies" from men coming under care at Presbytery or being ordained that go something like this:

"I thought I was a Christian before I went to college and met up with the RUF minister. I was raised in the church, went to worship and Sunday School with my parents, but I wasn't really a Christian. . . "

Sorry. That doesn't work. Baptism makes one a disciple and disciples are called Christians. One may be a faithful disciple or an unfaithful disciple. But one is a disciple and Christian when one is baptized. This is the universal testimony of the NT and the entire Christian tradition.

I don't want the children of my church-- who have been taught that they are Christians by baptism and have been at the Lord's Table from earliest memory as a full member of the family of God--I don't want them to go away to college and have some campus minister say to them something like the following: "You may not really be a Christian. You may have thought you were a Christian as a child, but were you really one? Are you really saved? Have you been converted?" etc.

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What I want them to say to our children is: "You are a baptized member of the church of Jesus Christ. You bear the name Christian. God has been merciful to you all your life. He has loved you and incorporated you into his family. Wear that name faithfully and not in vain. You are growing up. God is putting you in new situations that demand greater faithfulness. Trust in him. Your childhood faith will no longer be enough. Now you must depend on him in the midst of mighty intellectual and fleshy temptations.

Etc."

And this discussion of who's a Christian is directly linked with NTW's perspective on the objectivity of the covenant. This is something that we Presbyterians must recover. We have been overly influenced by Revivalism and Pietism.

- > The question is -- where does Wright fit in this
- > milieu? He's big news right now and some seem to think
- > that he is in the same strain as Sanders/Dunn.
- > Obviously, you disagree and that's fair enough.
- >
- > But you seem to come across as thinking it's
- > absolutely ludicrous for anyone to think Wright has
- > problems.

Not at all. Wright does have problems. So does B.B. Warfield and Charles Hodge and Berkhof. But we don't dismiss these men as dangerous simply because we don't agree with them on every front. NTW problems, however, earn him a prompt dismissal.

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>In your interacting with "their"
> interacting, it's as if you think Wright has freed us
> from the bondage of Reformed theology/WCF.

Well, maybe he will help us do just that. We need to recognize that traditions, even Reformed traditions, may become idols that keep us in bondage. Personally, I would like to see us out from under the straightjacket of the Westminster standards. It has become way more than it was ever intended to be. Some within our circles are in danger of doing what they do in the LCMS--making our confessional standards the hermeneutic by which we interpret the Bible. If NTW rubs our nose in the Bible and helps us see that the categories used in our tradition to explain covenant, justification, righteousness, etc. are not necessarily the best and most biblical, then I say, more power to him.

> I ask you this -- think for a second about not
> defending Wright so much. Where do you find him
> unclear and wonder about what he means? Why would
> people be having problems, assuming they aren't just
> blasting away for fun at him or because they don't
> like his clothes or Anglican status or something.

Mostly on peripheral issues: women's ordination (as Mark has mentioned), social ethics (as Barlow has pointed out), etc. I have often had some disagreements with his exegesis of individual passages.

> I'd like to hear from the anti-Wright faction, but
> don't know if they are going to jump into this fray.
> Hope they will,

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Well, I hope we do hear from them too.

Thanks for the good questions, Doug.

Jeff

[Reply](#)

#4643 **From:** Jeff Meyers <jeffmeyers@...>
Date: Sat May 22, 2004 7:55 am
Subject: [Re: Re: The Gospel Message](#)

[jeffmeyer](#)

Offline

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On May 22, 2004, at 8:45 AM, Christopher A Hutchinson wrote:

> And that I would
> personally never baptize a convert who did not have a rudimentary
> understanding of God's law and their own sin, and hence why Christ
> came.

> But as the membership vows indicate, we in the PCA are required to so
> minimally catechize, as has been the historic Reformed practice.

This rules out baptizing infants.

But a more serious matter to me is the fact that the NT nowhere requires catechesis before baptism. The book of Acts makes it pretty clear that people were baptized immediately. They did not go to a "class" before baptism. There was no required pre-baptismal instruction. Adults responded to the preaching of the Gospel, asked to be baptized, and were baptized on the spot. Catechizing came afterwards, as per Jesus instruction in Matt. 28. Thus, with the

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"conversion" of the head of the household entire families, including slaves, were baptized and began to be disciplined.

JJM

[Reply](#)

#4652 **From:** Jeff Meyers <jeffmeyers@...>
Date: Sat May 22, 2004 5:21 pm
Subject: [Re: Re: The Gospel Message](#)

[jeffmeyer](#)
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On May 22, 2004, at 6:37 PM, Christopher A Hutchinson wrote:

> The Phillipian jailer example actually gets to some of what I was
> speculating about regarding the dangers of trying to imitate the NT
> church in every instance. Few of us would baptize a household the same
> night the head of household came to faith.

I would. We don't because we've gotten away from the Bible's
covenantal perspective. You asked if I would baptize a whole tribe if
their leader converted. I answer, yes, if the leader has the authority
to insure that all of his people will receive instruction in the faith/

> And in fact, most of our
> churches do not us allow us to practice private baptisms except in
> extraordinary cases. But an earthquake and the presence of an apostle
> is
> an extraordinary case.

Nah. Ananias, for example, wasn't an apostle, just a pastor; and he

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baptized Paul immediately (Acts 22). After Paul's experience on the road to Damascus, Pastor Ananias says to him, "Arise, be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord." It's pretty certain that the reason baptism was offered immediately is because the forgiveness of sins is attached to the action. When were Paul's sins forgiven? When was he "converted"? On the road to Damascus or in Damascus when Ananias poured water over his head in the name of the triune God? The text is pretty clear.

> Now, one might reasonably extrapolate from Acts that we ought to
> baptize
> at the very next public worship service, but once we have gone there,
> why
> not go a bit further and allow the church some more reasonable amount
> of
> time to evaluate a man's faith and allow him to understand exactly what
> he is getting into, i.e. counting the cost, as Jesus counsels?

How is this a reasonable extrapolation? Name one place in the

NT--anywhere--that even suggests that baptism must take place in a public worship service. Don't get me wrong. I don't think it's wrong to do it in the assembly. In fact, I think it is quite helpful, but there's no biblical evidence that it was done in worship services during the apostolic age.

> I think

> this is a reasonable adjustment to the biblical narrative in our
> post-apostolic era. Otherwise, if we want to be "truly biblical" in
> this

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> manner, then we must baptize converts within hours of their
> confessions.

Exactly what we should do. The tradition is wrong.

> And if a man has genuine faith, and providential death occurs before
> his
> baptism, he is still going to heaven, even as the thief on the cross
> and
> elect infants dying in infancy.

Sure. Let God take care of the exceptions. We don't do theology by
exceptions. Normally God forgives sins and grants new life in baptism.

What else can Matt. 28, Acts 22:16, John 3, Rom. 6, 1 Cor. 12, Col. 2,
1 Peter 3, etc. mean? By the way, NTW is pretty consistent about this.

Look what he has to say about all of these passages.

JJM

[Reply](#)

#2429 **From:** Jeff Meyers <jeffmeyers@...>
Date: Thu Dec 4, 2003 8:44 pm
Subject: [Re: Re: Decided it was time to publish this](#)

On Dec 4, 2003, at 10:06 PM, Jeff Hutchinson wrote:

> Yes, that would be an accurate assumption. Isn't that your
> understanding as well? We who confess the Westminster Standards are
> to consider any departure from those Standards as "unorthodox" by

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- > definition, until such time as the church amends the Standards
- > consistent with the proposed modification, or have I misunderstood
- > the nature of being a confessional church?

Mostly. But I certainly don't consider "any" departure from the Standards as unorthodox. The W. standards are 17th century documents composed by committees. They were never designed to function as a once-for-all formulation of the faith. We must confess our faith afresh to our own generation. The Westminster Standards don't do that

every well anymore. Every new members class I teach reminds me of this.

We must stop living in the past.

But how can the church amend or correct her standards unless guys have the freedom to discuss possible corrections? If every time a PCA minister begins to wonder about the appropriateness of confessional language and categories, he is denounced as "unorthodox," then the church will be immune to continuing reformation.

I do think the latest scholarly work in biblical theology demands that we go back and redo a great deal of the Westminster standards. They were written when people still thought of the covenant as a contract and believed that "merit" had some role to play in our covenantal relations with God. The whole bi-polar covenant of works/grace schema has got to go. And if that goes, the whole "system" must be reworked.

> Grace and Peace,

>

> Jeff Hutchinson

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>

> P.S. By the way, I think both my brother and I were hoping to hear
> back from you on this list about one of your previous posts that
> seemed to us to be a bit intemperate. Any chance of hearing from you
> on that? Thanks.

Whoops. I honestly don't remember this, Jeff. Forgive me. What was
the subject line and I'll go back and check it out. Sorry.

JJM

[Reply](#)

#1634 **From:** Jeff Meyers <jeffmeyers@...>
Date: Thu Sep 4, 2003 6:52 am
Subject: [Re: Gathercole](#)

On Thursday, September 4, 2003, at 08:25 AM, Mark Horne wrote:

> For the record, I think Wright is mistaken (and Hays). I don't see
> the fact
> that no one can obey the law perfectly has any place in Paul's
> argument.
> None of Paul's Jewish/Judaizing opponants would have claimed to be
> without
> sin. Wright and Hays are both too traditional in my view.

Quite right, Mark. I would add this: once one takes "the law" as a
reference to the entire "instruction" (torah) of the Hebrew Bible,

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1 particularly the foundational five books, then one must come to grips with
2 the fact that the torah itself contains provision for the restoration of
3 sinners. And that drawing near by means of sacrifice was is
4 part of the "statutes" of the law. When one is said to be
5 "righteous" or "blameless" in accordance with all "the law" says (Luke
6 1:6), this certainly does not mean that one is "morally flawless"

7
8 Rather, it refers to covenant faithfulness with regard to everything, even
9 the "commandments and statues" that require confession of sin and
10 forgiveness.

11
12 The Lutheran law-gospel dichotomy has not served biblical theology very well
13 in this regard.

14
15
16 JJM

17
18
19 [Reply](#)

20
21