

Pastoral Advice Regarding Justification

Synod 2007 (Schererville)

Synod affirms that the Scriptures and confessions teach the doctrine of justification by grace alone, through faith alone, and that nothing that is taught under the rubric of covenant theology in our churches may contradict this fundamental doctrine. Therefore Synod 2007 rejects the errors of those:

1. who deny or modify the teaching that “God created man good and after His own image, that is, in true righteousness and holiness,” able to perform “the commandment of life” as the representative of mankind (HC 6, 9; BC 14);

2. who, in any way and for any reason, confuse the “commandment of life” given before the fall with the gospel announced after the fall (BC 14, 17; HC 19, 21, 56, 60);

3. who confuse the ground and instrument of acceptance with God before the fall (obedience to the commandment of life) with the ground (Christ who kept the commandment of life) and instrument (faith in Christ) of acceptance with God after the fall;

4. who deny that Christ earned acceptance with God and that all His merits have been imputed to believers (BC 19, 20, 22, 26; HC 11-19, 21, 36-37, 60, 84; CD I.7, RE I.3, RE II.1);

5. who teach that a person can be historically, conditionally elect, regenerated, savingly united to Christ, justified, and adopted by virtue of participation in the outward administration of the covenant of grace but may lose these benefits through lack of covenantal faithfulness (CD I, V);

6. who teach that all baptized persons are in the covenant of grace in precisely the same way such that there is no distinction between those who have only an outward relation to the covenant of grace by baptism and those who are united by grace alone through faith alone (HC 21, 60; BC 29);

7. who teach that Spirit-wrought sanctity, human works, or cooperation with grace is any part either of the ground of our righteousness before God or any part of faith, that is, the “instrument by which we embrace Christ, our righteousness” (BC 22-24; HC 21, 60, 86);

8. who define faith, in the act of justification, as being anything more than “leaning and resting on the sole obedience of Christ crucified” or “a certain knowledge” of and “a hearty trust” in Christ and His obedience and death for the elect (BC 23; HC 21);

9. who teach that there is a separate and final justification grounded partly upon righteousness or sanctity inherent in the Christian (HC 52; BC 37).” (*Acts of Synod Schererville 2007, Art. 72*)