

March 18, 2002

Arlyn A. Wilkening and Wanda J. Wilkening,
members of Bethany Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Oxford, PA, charge
Ruling Elder John O. Kinnaird

with teaching a doctrine of justification by faith and works,
contrary to the Word of God and the Westminster Standards.

References to the Word of God:

Romans 3:20 - “Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.”

Romans 3:28 - “ Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.” (See also Romans 3:19-28)

Galatians 2:16 - “Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.”

Philippians 3:8-9 - “Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:”

Further scripture citations are : Galatians 3:10-11; 3:21,22; Titus 3:5-7; Ephesians 2:8-9; I Thessalonians 1:10; Romans 4:5; Romans 8:30; Galatians 5:4.

References to the Confessional Standards:

Westminster Shorter Catechism, Question 33 - “What is justification?”
Answer: “Justification is an act of God’s free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone.”

Westminster Shorter Catechism Q. 37, 38

Westminster Larger Catechism Q. 70, 71, 72, 73, 77, 78

The Westminster Confession of Faith : Chapter XI: 1-4 - Justification;

Chapter XVI:5 - Good Works

The Serious Character of the Offense:

We believe that the doctrine of justification, by the righteousness of Christ alone, by faith alone, without works done by us, is essential to the purity of the Gospel.

Specifications : statements by Elder Kinnaird:

1). “It is not possible that any could be a brother to Jesus Christ and enjoy with Christ, in the Kingdom of Heaven, the presence of the God the Father except that one be fully conformed to the image of Christ in true and personal righteousness and holiness. Neither the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, which all Christians receive at justification, nor the infusion of the righteousness of Christ (a false and non-existent concept taught by the Roman Catholic Church) - can suffice for that purpose. Christ does not have an imputed righteousness; His righteousness is real and personal. If we are to be conformed to his image, we too must have a real and personal righteousness.” (page 4)

“It is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous on that Day of Judgement.” (page 6)

[Both quotations are from “A Proposal for the Session,” submitted by Elder Kinnaird to the session at Bethany OPC October 25, 2001. Present on this occasion were Elder Mark Whiteman and Pastor Clinton Foraker. The entire “Proposal” is provided.]

2). “Thus we rightly conclude that those inside the city are those who have kept the law of God and those only. So, a pretty simple answer to our last two questions. Inside the city are those who do righteousness and outside are those who do evil.”

(Transcript, page 5)

“Romans 2 puts it this way. "God will give to each person according to what he has done. To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. But for those who are self

seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil there will be wrath and anger." Now by this we know the decision, the judgement as to who enters the city and who stays outside for eternity will be made on that great day of judgement in accordance with what you have done in this life. In fact our scripture lesson says the very same thing at verse 12. Behold I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done." (Transcript, page 6)

[From a sermon, "Though the Waters Roar and the Mountains Quake," on Revelation 22 preached by Elder John Kinnaird at Bethany OPC on 9-22-2000. A tape recording of this message is provided as the primary evidence. Additionally a transcript of this sermon is provided.]

3). "These good works are a required condition if we would stand in the Day of Judgement and they are supplied by God to all His people.

Every description of the Judgement events speak of these good works. Without them, no one will see God. Our God is not unjust. His judgements are always righteous and in accordance with the facts of the case. On the past two Lord's Days I shared over 25 texts and passages of Scripture with my Sunday School class on just these two concepts. They were about evenly divided between the concept that our God's judgements are always righteous and in accord with the facts of the case and the concept that the final judgement will be in accord with what we have done in this life." (Page 2-3)

"Who are these people who thus benefit - who stand on the Day of Judgement? They are those who obey the law who will be declared righteous." (Page 3-4)

[Quotations from "justification" written by Elder John Kinnaird on the Presbyterians-opc Yahoo! group on 1-6-2002. The archive message number is: 8014. The original posting can be found in this archive at the following internet address :]

Arlyn A. Wilkening

Wanda J. Wilkening

