

Think Tank 2009

New Covenant Baptist Fellowship Evans NY Joseph Krygier

The purpose of this exercise grew out of our discussions of Christ as Covenant presented by Chad and the Future of NCT by Ed, at last years meeting.

My assignment for this meeting, along with Reid, was to prepare some sample ideas and approaches to forming a NCT Confession/Concise Theology. Please notice I said A Confession not THE Confession.

We as a group, and those who also agree with us from many different places, and from the picture/ fulfillment perspective, which has been surnamed the 4<sup>th</sup> branch NCT, believe a cohesive Christological Confession would benefit the advance of NCT. And there are others in the orb of NCT who would agree.

The historic confessions such as the Belgic, The Heidelberg, The Savoy, The Westminster, the 1689 Baptist and others all have good things to say and most NCT adherents would agree with much of what is written in those documents especially concerning the attributes of God, the Doctrines of Grace and so on but we would largely disagree with their view of Covenant and the nature of the New Covenant, sanctification and the work Holy Spirit, what is Law or the nature of Law or ethics in the New Covenant.

Now let me read to you from the 2003 preface from Gary Long's *The First London Confession of Faith 1646 Edition*.

Since the earlier two prefaces were written, many Particular Baptists today distinguish themselves into two theological groups. The groups may or may not use such terms as "Reformed " or "Baptist" in their name.

*Although variations exist*, in general, the first group may be identified as "Reformed Baptists". It essentially agrees with much of Covenant Theology's teaching as expressed in the Westminster Confession of Faith that *all* of the 10 Commandments are "*external moral law*" and binding upon all believers as a rule of life under one overarching covenant of grace. For the most part, this group prefers the 1689 "Second London Baptist Confession of Faith," and its American version, The Philadelphia Confession of Faith" adopted in 1742.

The second group, which may be identified as "Sovereign Grace Baptists," prefers the 1646 edition of the "First London Confession and the 1646 Appendix. This group holds that God's "*absolute law*", such as expressed in the two greatest commandments upon which all the law and the prophets hang (Matt. 22"37-40), does not change. However, the administration of God's *covenantal law*, such as expressed in *the whole* Old Covenant Law, does change (Heb. 10:9, et al.,) This is the teaching of the Apostle Paul where he writes that New Covenant believers are not under the law , that is the Old Covenant Mosaic law; yet they are not without law to God, for they are *in-lawed* to Christ (I Cor. 9:20-21). Also this group does not agree with the one overarching covenant of grace – different administrations of teaching of Reformed Theology. Believing that it is a deduced theological system with little to no biblical warrant.

The present-day doctrinal issues arising within the “Reformed Baptist” group and the issues on the law of God, while not answered at length in the 1646 Baptist Confession, are embedded in this Confession held by the “Sovereign Grace Baptists”.<sup>1</sup>

We also believe that the 1646 London Baptist Confession, is by its structure and content, much more in agreement with NCT as a Christ centered theology as defined by NCT, historically, as a whole than the other confessions, not disregarding the fact that some like Tom Renihan claim that there is really no difference between the 1644/46 and the 1689 in purpose or intent

<http://www.reformedreader.org/ctf.htm>

That statement just does not hold merit and in part may be influenced by the fact that Dr. Renihan is a Covenantal Baptist and is doing just what he claims others do: ie .

Renihan says:

“Like good postmodernists, they read into the Confessions the type of theology that they hope to find there, without any serious investigation into the theological thinking of the men who wrote the Confessions.”

That is a rather inflammatory remark IMHO, and implies that adherents of NCT, of whatever branch or group, are not students of church history and I certainly for example, would not be able to associate

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<sup>1</sup> Sovereign Grace Ministries, The First London Confession of Faith (2003), ii-iii

someone like Tom Wells, Fred Zaspel, John Reisinger, or Steve and Kirk Wellum as being void or negligent of understanding church history and particularly the historic confessions.

Tom, for example, has been published by Banner of Truth concerning credobaptism. Monergism has recently listed JGR as a hero of the modern reformation, at least concerning his Doctrines of Grace articles.

Renihan states:

1. There is no substantial theological difference between the First and Second London Confessions. I get very much bothered when I read statements asserting or inferring that there is some kind of theological difference between these two great confessions. Some seem to think that the 1644/46 Confession is more authentically Baptist, while the second is less so. Most often, this is asserted by those who dislike the Covenant theology that is more explicit in the Second Confession, than in the first. It is especially true of those who espouse the so-called "New Covenant" theology. But the question that I would like to ask those who assert this difference is this: On what basis do you make this assertion?

He continues:

“When one considers the theological writings of the men who subscribed the 1644/46 London Confession, one finds that they believed the same things articulated more clearly in the 1689 London Confession. The difference is not one of belief, simply of expression.” Did they ascribe to “all “ of the same things? Law, Moses, Sabbath etc?

He writes:

“Both the 1644/46 and the 1677/89 Confessions, as understood by their original authors, teach covenant theology, the abiding validity of the law of God and, by implication, the obligation of the 1st day Sabbath. Anything less is at best a misunderstanding, and at worst a misrepresentation, of 17th century Calvinistic Baptist theology. The 1644/46 Confession gives no support to those who would undermine the essentially Reformed and covenantal identity of Baptist theology.”

Here again I will refer to Gary Long.

“ In examination of the Westminster Confession of 1647-1649 (including its Larger and Shorter Catechisms), one will find stress placed upon the law of God summarily comprehended in the Mosaic Decalogue as a rule of life for the believer. Conversely, the stress of the 1646 edition of the First London Confession is upon the New Covenant commands of the law of Christ. In sum, **there is a distinctive New Covenant emphasis concerning biblical law in the 1644 and 1646 editions of the First London Confession that is distinctly lacking in the Old Covenant emphasis of the Westminster and 1689 London Confessions.** This distinction in the 1646 Confession has important theological implication for understanding both the role of the law of Christ as God’s ethical standard or rule of life for the believer’s life under the New Covenant, and for understanding the relationship of the law of God to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Hence, a major reason for reprinting the 1646 edition of the First London Confession.”<sup>2</sup>

Then Dr. Long goes to give some historical reasons for adopting the 1689 with references to William Lumpkin, the Baptist historian

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<sup>2</sup> *ibid.* viii

Renihan unequivocally says:

“Fifthly, we need to remember that the 1644/46 Confession was publicly examined and criticized by some of the most cautious opposing theologians of the day. Gangreana Edwards, Robert Baylie and Dr. Daniel Featley justify no stone unturned in seeking to prove that the Particular Baptists were heretical. And yet they never give indication that the Baptists or their Confession were unorthodox in terms of Covenant theology, the perpetuity of the moral law, or the abiding validity of the Lord’s day Sabbath. There can be no doubt that they would have made much of these things if they had been present, but they weren’t. If the best heresy-hunters of the day did not find differences on these issues, how can we?”

I would respond, “If I am a Covenantal Baptist, I am glad to be in the company of the Westminster men as kissing cousins concerning these major points of agreement.”

Here I might give pause for some comment, particularly from Chad, who has engaged Renihan regarding this discussion.

“Before anybody rushes out into the public arena touting the 1646 (and yes, there's a distinction between the 1644 and 1646) as an NCT-friendly doc (which I happen to agree with), please beware that much ink has been spilled by our RB brethren trying to build a moat around that document. At least 2 major journal entries have been published in the RB journal trying to knock down the notion that the 1646 is anything other than a CT (Sabbatarian/third use) document. In spite of the lack

of evidence in the confession itself, RB's have tried to monopolize it via scholarship.

“Having read the publications I haven't been convinced. The only thing they have proven is that the 1644 and 1689 documents involved some of the same people and certainly the same circle of churches. But they cannot answer \*why\* some language was changed in the 1646 from the 1644, nor can they answer \*why\*, despite the fact that CTers helped produce the 1646, the CT language is strangely absent. In fact, an appendix that the RB's point to as "proof" that the 1646 must be read as a CT document, IMHO, could also be proof that some of the Particular Baptist's in London weren't all that happy with the 1646 and felt compelled to make up for its "deficiencies" by including all those things that weren't included.”

“Long story short.... RB's try to gloss over the fact that Sabbatarianism was \*not\* monolithic among the Particular Baptists in London at that time. I'm guessing that the crowd that drafted the 1646 was more like F.I.R.E. and by 1689 it was more like ARBCA.”

If we were to use the 1646 as a template from which to build a new confession it would be because of the Christocentric - New Covenant focus that is inherent through the document.

There is a clear difference in the language and or references or lack thereof concerning Mosaic Covenant, Law, Moses, etc. in the 1646 Confession.

It is absolutely evident that the priority of the 1646 Confession is a Christological framework for understanding the New Covenant. The priority of focus of each section is in relation to Christ.

And that is what a NCT Confession/Concise Theology should attempt to do.

I would posit, that every major doctrine listed in every Systematic Theology can be put in the context of a Christological framework/context as I believe the 1646 Confession did to some extent and it can be done even further.

This confession we would like to give birth to is not meant to supplant or subsume or disregard the benefits of any other confession but its purpose is to deliberately and specifically focus on the Christological and historic-redemptive thrust of Scripture with Christ as the Hermeneutic and approaching all biblical doctrine from a Christological foundation which I believe the 1644/46 Confessions were the only two to even get close to such an emphasis on Christ and the New Covenant. We would add sections, rearrange some of the sections and obviously make more specific comments in any section used or modified.

So where would we begin?

#### Making the point for a stronger NCT confession.

(Here in the video I make reference to the fact that practically every section of the 1646 makes some reference to Christ in one way or another I briefly read from those sections.)



In the entire first chapter of the 1689, not one mention of Christ is made in relation to the Word, He being the Word and so on. Yet, the Scripture, in the NT makes certain that the locus of understanding the Word= the Scriptures is the Living WORD

The first mention of Christ is in chapter 3 under the decrees of God: “some men and angels are predestined, or foreordained to eternal life through Jesus Christ”

Christ is next mentioned in chapter 6 part 5 in relation to pardon of sin. 15 part 5 what do they mean by covenant of Grace.

Chapter 19 The Law: This is a big one for us.

So in this presentation I am offering for discussion a few sample sections of what a document might, could or should look like.

Our first section might begin with something like:

In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God.  
(the eternity of Christ as member of the Godhead; centrality of Christ throughout all of Scripture, the significance of the Living Word, what it meant to Jews as Living Torah and to Gentiles as Logos. Using this as a means of establishing Jesus as the hermeneutic of Scripture in a historic-redemptive view.)

First, there would be the “typical” confessional summary/scriptural statements then a subsection or an appendix with more theological significance therefore combining Confessional element with Concise Theology. The Concise Theology might be done more thoroughly as end notes or a supplemental document.

*Note: I don't believe we need to be particularly concerned with over articulating some doctrinal truths that are compatible with various confessions and Systematics that are normally accepted by any who are of a Reformed or Doctrines of Grace persuasion. The difference would be in the "language", "the voice" we are communicating with. The goal is a doxological and pastoral voice and a modern one - not an academic or catechismic stating of mere facts. We are not wanting to use bible speak of a bygone era. More on this later.*

Note: including "scholarly" quotes from Mcomisky, Carson, Moo, Voss, Kline, Beale, Goldsworthy etc. contextually would be a good idea and makes for a different kind of document,

This is a key for where inserts, footnotes, quotes etc. are used in my sample document.

\* is for a place for a Scripture Reference

+ + is a place for a footnote ,endnote or quote from another source

{ } authors editorial comment or emphasis

\_\_\_\_\_ is a change in the 1646 text when using close to verbatim.

*A NCT Confession, the purpose of which is to establish the priority of relationship of the Godhead with the new covenant believer as seen in the relationship of the New Covenant person Jesus Christ and his New Covenant people.*

**Preamble** ( needs to be added here)

I. (following the 1646 format for this part)

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.<sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God.<sup>3</sup> All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.<sup>4</sup> In him was life, and the life was the light of men.<sup>5</sup> The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. Jn 1:1-5*

1 In the beginning God the Father, God the Spirit and God the Word (Son) made all things very good, created man after His own<sup>2</sup> image and likeness and free from all sin. 3, He did not live like this for long but by the 4 subtlety of the Serpent, which Satan used as his instrument, he and his angels having sinned before and 5 leaving their first habitation; first 6 Eve, then Adam being seduced did by her choice fall into disobedience and transgression of the Commandment of their great Creator, for which death came upon all, and reigned over all, so that all since the Fall are born in sin and are by nature children of wrath, and servants of sin, subjects of 7 death, and all other consequences because of sin in this world and are forever without hope and help 8 and without relation to Christ.

1) Gen. 1; Col. 1:16; Heb. 11:3; Isa. 45:12

2) Gen. 1:26; 1 Cor. 15:45-46; Ecc. 7:31

3) Psa. 49:20

4) Gen. 3:1, 4, 5; 2 Cor. 11:3

5) 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6; John 8:44

6) Gen. 3:1, 2, 6; 1 Tim. 2:14; Ecc. 7:31; Gal. 3:32

7) Rom. 5:12, 18, 19; 6:23; Eph. 2:3

8) add Eph 2:11

## 2. The nature of the WORD

This WORD is Christ. He is Logos, He is Living Torah in A Jewish context.

"If the fourth Gospel begins with the logos, the Word, it begins equally with God. God was always with his self-expression (logos), and this self-expression was God." D.A.Carson

God has revealed His son, Logos, Word, through a progression of His covenants (the covenants are addressed in a later section) with each revelation a more clear picture until in these last days He has revealed all and fulfilled all with the New Covenant Person, Christ. \* God is immutable,\* but what He has revealed of Himself has become more detailed over time, culminating at Calvary and explained by the apostolic writings.\*

## 3. In Him was life and the life is the light of men.

Not only was He co-creator and participant in giving life to mankind, but as the second Adam,\* life eternal comes from him\* and a new way of living comes from him.\*

The new life is the blessedness of the New Covenant.\* This is not to say that men under the Old Covenant were never regenerated or had life with God. \* But the New Covenant Person, Christ is the fulfillment, the filling up of all of God's covenantal intentions and purpose\* as revealed in the Law and the Prophets and life as a New Covenant believer, participant

and image bearer is markedly different\* from that of a believer under the Old Covenant because the very nature of the Covenants are different\*.

There is newness concerning the New Covenant.

(Note wherever added: here we would be in a disagreement with Covenantal and some Dispensational theologians who either hold to one Covenant of Grace with one everlasting moral Law/Code/Ethic or that the New Covenant is not for the church but for ethnic Israel only.)

God's ultimate standard of morality and righteousness is and always has been His Son \*, the Living WORD.

“This was expressed first in simple commands to Adam via that original Christophany -- the first Christ as Torah (1) God walking in the garden; again in First Person to Noah and to Abraham; spoken to Moses and then in written Torah via Moses; in more written word via the prophets; and finally in Living Word/Torah/Nomos/Logos in His Incarnate Son. This is a Gospel-centered hermeneutic. Christ is God's ultimate revelation of and loving reflection of Himself. “ E. Trefzger

Considering that Moses/Israel considered their Scripture the Pentatuch to be TORAH (Law), as nomenclature, this is a historically accurate way of speaking. ++

“Paul understands these and the following words to refer to Christ. The commandment of the law.{ Torah}..has now become incarnate in Christ. Now he is here; he is himself present in the word about him; one could say that Christ is the commandment, in it fulfilled and revealed

form. Christ is himself the law of God {Torah} and the command of God..."<sup>3</sup> Note: The context is Paul's use of Dt. 30:12-14 in Rom. 10:5-8.]

"Christ himself both subsumes and FILLS UP the content of those eternal laws and commandments in his obedient life and death. In his obedience, Christ becomes the embodiment of those eternal principles. The "law" is eternal, as the Psalmist says, not as code, but as Person. The "law" is eternal because Christ is the I AM. Decalogueian \*principles\* are embedded in the NC ethic and imperatives. The problem is when we fail to recognize the form is no longer a code but a Person, a Person who has embedded himself in us through His Spirit. There is an eternality to what we find in the Decalogue... but that eternality does not extend to the form." C. Bresson

God's written word is then all the more precious because the living WORD has brought life to us. The Word is a product of THE WORD. Through his written Word it is testified that this new and radical experience of the work of the Spirit of God in our inner man is true. Christ incarnate and Christ in us is not a product of codified laws.

The Word points to HIM...He existed first. All of the written Word is objective truth that testifies of the inward subjective reality of who, what and why we are New Covenant people. It shows us what Christ is doing in us.

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<sup>3</sup> R. Bring, "Paul and the Old Testament", *Studia Theologica* 25 (1971):21-60; s.v. pp. 49-50. Cited in *The Covenants of Promise: A Theology of the Old Testament Covenants*, by Thomas Edward McComiskey (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1985), 259 pp.; s.v. pg. 124, note 86.

He is the incarnate standard of righteousness who now indwells us, not the text that points to him as that standard. The text is not the final revelation of the perfect God. Christ is. The text points to him. As such, the text is never wrong about Him and is a vital pointer to Him – but if the text is taken as Law over a NC believer, it makes the signpost the ultimate standard rather than the person it points to. We obey his words because we obey him, but he is over us, not his words turned into a codified law like the 10 commandments.

The standard of his commands are precious because they testify that I am a child of God and they remind me that I still am made of the dust of the earth and Christ and his spirit are not finished with me yet. His words are inseparably bound to and enlightened by Him who lives within us.

The Spirit is not merely a confirmation to us that the Word is true. He is the one who makes the Word alive and precious to us and proves it to be true.

He speaks to us through the Word, but the written Word without THE WORD indwelling us is a stumbling stone.

4. As the life of men, Christ is that literally\* once we have experienced the new birth, the circumcision of the heart, that causes us to become incurable lovers of Jesus Christ our God and Savior.

5. Concerning Christ as our life he is a number of things.

A) He is our New Covenant\*: (not filling this in for now. We already have plenty to summarize from and then refer to in the Concise Theology part.

B) As our New Covenant He is our NC lawgiver ( in that he has brought and given himself to us and for us, law - our ethic-our standard of righteousness.\* (discussion about the law of Christ)

There is no distinction made in Scripture as law being separate from Covenant when the Covenants purpose is to reveal or impose law. The Mosaic Covenant was Law. The New Covenant, Christ, is our law albeit a different nature as law - the rule of law personified as well as ruler of all.

C) The Newness of the New Covenant\*

1. The superiority of Christ's sacrifice over all other sacrifices\* 2. The superiority of Christ's priesthood over all other priesthood's\* 3. The superiority of the New Covenant, in total, over the Old Covenant.\*

Circumcision, for example, is not replaced by baptism as a sign to others of belonging to God. Baptism of believers is a unique ordinance of the NT church. Although adultery is still a sin, within the community of Christ we no longer stone adulterers or homosexuals to death, yet God decrees that those who habitually live these lifestyles are condemned:\*

1) **1 Corinthians 6:9,10**

Jesus takes the law concerning adultery and adds another dimension to it, the real problem is the heart.

1) **Matthew 5:28**

Therefore in this example, as well as many others, Jesus' ethic-law is even more demanding than the Law of Moses because Christ's ethic-law does not just demand an external obedience to a clearly written moral code, it goes directly to the heart of the matter of where sin is rooted

1) **Matthew 15:19**



Christ demands an ethical and moral response to His ethic-law that is rooted in the heart. Yet, the heart has been known to be the cause of sin all through the days of the Old Testament period before and after the Mosaic Covenant was given.\* Christ demands an ethical and moral response to His law that is rooted in the heart.

1)Ge 6:5; Ge 8:21; Pr 4:23; Pr 6:14; Pr 22:15; Jer 17:9

Jesus fulfills all the law\* and then as our New Covenant Lawgiver He discards some of it as it was once practiced- (the Old Covenant Sabbath), he reprioritizes parts of it- adultery in the heart/mind comes into the foreground and the act in the background, but at all times interprets Old Covenant Law/Revelation that will continue in the New Covenant in light of Himself to bring out its truest and complete meaning and application by fulfilling it in us. He did not come to abolish the law but to fulfill it\* and then to illustrate its substance and depth according to Him, according to what the Old Covenant always, as it was revealed part by part to the patriarchs, was meant to be. All the types and shadows and things that were, but not then seen as clearly as God would have them to be, in His time, and for His purpose and for His glory, were revealed when Christ came.\* (expanded in the concise theology section)

If Christ is Law, it's Christ we preach. If Christ is Law, it's Christ we depend upon for everything. Forgiveness. Atonement. Justification. Sanctification. Transformation. Re-creation. Perfection. Blessing. and more. If we turn to the written Law for any of those things, we cannot please God. We run ignorantly back to a ministry of sin and death.

(Note: There are some Theonomists for example with whom we would categorically disagree, who advocate walking in the Law of Moses by means of the flesh, and proselytizing the world with the Law rather than Christ because of a false understanding of a dominion mandate given in the Garden.)

For some, Christ is good for forgiveness, but sanctification and resultant blessing, all come by way of law keeping in the flesh. Preaching the Law is the great commission for some. In the code Law one finds reward. Christ is set aside except for forgiveness and final crushing of rebels. He has no visible part in sanctification, or in being the blessing. His indwelling Spirit has even less of a part

1) **Matthew 5:17-20**

1) **Matthew 22:37-40**

(add all the but I say unto you verses)

We must rely on the living Law/Spirit/Covenant for all things\*.

We are to follow Christ's lead and interpret properly what the Old Covenant scripture says in light of Him and about Him and the New Covenant in the course of redemptive history.

The Old Covenant, The Tables of Stone The Ten Words, as a Covenant document -,\* as it was given to Israel, is of no meaning to us as far as practicing our faith. It is of great value as revelation\*. We need to know what it meant to Israel and especially Old Covenant believers, as far as how it related to their understanding of the nature, the character and the attributes of God and how He would be glorified through the ceremonial, civil and moral codes, which could never be separated from each other (they were facets of one Law). Nor could they be today to be

true to the Scripture. He gave them for His pleasure, for His purpose and for the praise of His glory because they pointed to Christ. We do not believe that The Old Covenant was a covenant of grace, it was a covenant of works but it had a gracious purpose. It was meant to bring them to helplessness under its burden so they could see that salvation came from God by grace and not works.

- 1) **John 15:**
- 2) **2 Cor. 3:7-11**
- 3) **2Tim. 3:16-18**

D.) What continuity exists between the covenants?

The continuity is that the old pointed to what is fulfilled in the new, in Christ. Christ's salvation was revealed in the Old Covenant to those who were chosen by God for salvation.\*

- 1) **Luke 24:24-27**

Jeremiah's prophecy that God will remember sins no more had been foreshadowed in the Old Covenant and found its fulfillment in the new.

- 1) **Jeremiah 31:31-34**

E.) What is different, new or what discontinuity is there?

Some examples of newness include: the unprecedented power to transform hearts; the actual forgiveness of sins, in contrast to a constant reminding of sin under the Old Covenant sacrificial system; the merging of Israel and Judah representing the true Israel of the New Covenant, Jews and Gentiles as one new people and an eschatological dimension/the final fulfillment of all things, in which the New Covenant is seen as the final covenant to end all covenants.

(sample of extended note for the concise theology or an endnote )One frequently cited argument in favor of strong continuity between the covenants is that since there was no fault with the old covenant, a totally new covenant was therefore not needed. But the fact that Jeremiah didn't mention a fault with the old covenant doesn't mean that fault did not exist, as the writer of Hebrews points out when he quotes the Jeremiah 31 passage in Heb. 8:8-12.

#### E. Blessedness of The New Covenant\*

We, not the high priest of the temple in Jerusalem or the high priest during the wilderness wanderings, but we, the redeemed of the Lord, not one who by human lineage like the Aaronic or Levitical priest holds a ceremonial position but we who have a direct lineage in the Holy One of God our Savior, our Lord, in Him by an unchangeable and eternal decree, from before the foundation of the world, we, have the confidence to enter the holy place; not with the blood of a sacrificial lamb but we enter with confidence because of the blood of the lamb of God who takes away our sins. It does not just cover them temporarily and symbolically but Christ's blood actually and particularly and definitely takes away the sin of those who believe in Christ and are the adopted sons of God by His specific calling and election - by the grace of God.

We have confidence, boldness, literally - freedom of speech, to enter God's presence and to be in holy conversation with the God of all creation, Who in His wisdom and for His glory saw fit to include us, if we are the redeemed of Christ, in his eternal plan to be those who can enter into His presence and call Him Abba, Father, God, King, Savior, and Lord. This is a privilege of the New Covenant. This is the dominant note all through Hebrews (3:6; 4:16; 10:19,35). They were tempted to give up

Christ . Boldness (courage) is the needed to come into the holy place, That is the heavenly sanctuary where Jesus is. This is the better sanctuary. By the blood of Jesus this is the better sacrifice.

Not that those who were the redeemed under the Old Covenant could not pray or commune with God, but we are ushered into His presence in a different way, directly to heaven, because Christ, risen in His glory is at the throne of God and we are in Him and He represents us before God as our advocate and as the first born from among the dead.

And with this freedom of speech comes the responsibility to come humbly and with submission and with awe and with amazement that God would allow such wicked people as we are to be able to know Him and to love Him and to commune with Him because of His magnificent and amazing grace because we love Him only because He first loved us. And as we are in his presence not only do we worship and adore him, but we are able to seek His truth and wisdom and counsel because He has told us to do so.

This is all possible because He has inaugurated, consecrated for us the New Covenant people, a new and a living way.

The new and the living way, the new and the living approach to the sanctuary of God is Christ our Lord, who is our New Covenant, the Living Torah, the Inscribed Word and He as the New Covenant is the fulfilling of Jeremiah's prophecy.

In closing, the language of the document is crucial to me.

We would desire readers to be nourished, exhilarated, and moved to love Christ. We want it to be doxological, to cause worship and be devotional in nature and yet as direct and explicit as any catechism.