
A Summary Analysis of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church's Report on Republication

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The goal of this paper is twofold. First, it seeks to trace the history of debate within the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) over the issue of the republication of the covenant of works. Second, it seeks to summarize the recent report of the OPC committee to study republication.¹

A Contentious Debate

All substantive theological debates have a traceable history. The historical roots of the report of the OPC on republication in the covenant of works are found in the early days of Westminster Seminary (Philadelphia). Two OPC professors at the seminary – John Murray (1898-1975) and Meredith Kline (1922-2007) – did not see eye-to-eye on the nature of Old Testament covenants.² Eventually, the more junior professor, Kline, left Westminster in 1965 to teach at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. He flourished while there and subsequent to his retirement from Gordon-Conwell he brought his mature teaching to Westminster Seminary (Escondido), where he taught for another twenty years. His book-length publications spanned four decades.

Kline was a controversial figure during his lifetime. His approach to the Old Testament covenants generated much discussion. No small part of this controversy stemmed from his strong objections to Greg Bahnsen's teachings on theonomy, an issue closely related to one's understanding of the covenant.³ Controversy over Kline's theology escalated in 2004 when D. Patrick Ramsey wrote an article for the *Westminster Theological Journal* critiquing Kline's view of the relationship between the Adamic covenant of works and the Mosaic covenant.⁴

¹ "Report of The Committee to Study Republication of the General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church" in Minutes of the Eighty-Third General Assembly Meeting at the Sandy Cove Conference Center June 8-14, 2016 and Yearbook of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (Willow Grove, PA: The Orthodox Presbyterian Church, [2016?]), 332-455.

² A discussion of the development of differences between Murray and Kline on the covenants may be found in Andrew M. Elam, Robert C. Van Kooten, and Randall A. Bergquist, *Merit and Moses: A Critique of the Klinean Doctrine of Republication* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2014). Another helpful treatment of some of the issues and distinctions between Kline and Murray may be found here: Jeong Koo Jeon, *Covenant Theology: John Murray's and Meredith G. Kline's Response to the Historical Development of Federal Theology in Reformed Thought* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1999).

³ See "Republication," 402: "At least two controversies helped Kline sharpen his conception of the unique typological function of Abraham and national Israel ... the covenant theology of Norman Shepherd, on the one hand, and the theonomic ethics of Greg Bahnsen, on the other." "Republication," 424: "He adds nuance and clarity to his views based in part on his polemical engagement with the theology of Norman Shepherd and theonomic ethics of Greg Bahnsen, even if those figures are not always identified."

⁴ D. Patrick Ramsey, "In Defense of Moses: A Confessional Critique of Kline and Karlberg," *Westminster Theological Journal* 66 (2004): 373-400.

Subsequent to Ramsey's article, Kline's students at Escondido, as well as others influenced by his writings, began to come into their own relative to understanding the relationship between the Adamic and Mosaic covenants. In 2009, three Westminster California faculty members published a collection of essays on the topic, *The Law is Not of Faith*.⁵ That volume argued in favor of the Mosaic covenant as "in some sense" a republication of the Adamic covenant of works.⁶ Thus, they advocate the position that the covenant of works is, in some sense, echoed or "republished" in the Mosaic covenant given at Sinai.⁷

This volume revealed that the disconnect between Kline and Murray on the covenants would continue long after their deaths. Murray's position on the covenant was attacked in *The Law is Not of Faith*. Murray had argued that it was a "grave misconception" to view the Mosaic covenant as a repetition of the covenant of works.⁸ In response, republication advocates argue that Murray proposed an unbiblical, *monocovenantal* covenant framework.⁹ They argue, for example, that given his view of the Adamic and Mosaic covenants, Murray could not understand the theology of Galatians.¹⁰ In contrast to Murray's supposed *monocovenantalism*, Brian Lee recalls that Kline taught the interwoven nature of works and grace in the Mosaic economy.¹¹ Other books soon argued for a construct similar to that found in *The Law is Not of Faith*. In 2011, OPC minister and Westminster Seminary (Philadelphia) professor Gregory Beale produced *A New Testament Biblical Theology*¹². Here, Beale also observed a republication of the covenant of works in the Mosaic covenant that furthers the postlapsarian covenant of

⁵ *The Law is Not of Faith: Essays on Works and Grace in the Mosaic Covenant*, eds., Bryan D. Estelle, J. V. Fesko, and David VanDrunen (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2009).

⁶ *The Law is Not of Faith*, 6. In a review, Brian Lee ("Reconciling the Two Covenants in the Old Testament: A Review Article," *Ordained Servant Online* [April 2010], Accessed February 14, 2018, http://www.opc.org/os.html?article_id=200) argued: "The authors of this book...all share the conviction that at Sinai the Lord in some sense reestablished the merit-based probation of the Garden of Eden, as a grand and conclusive demonstration of sinful humanity's plight under the curse of the law. All this, while simultaneously holding forth in shadowy form the gracious Abrahamic promise of the coming Messiah who would deliver from the curse of the law. Furthermore, they all believe that this view of works and grace in the Mosaic economy is crucial for a right understanding of the work of Christ and the gospel, and is the mainstream historic view of those that have subscribed to the Reformed confessions."

⁷ "Republication", 333 fn 2.

⁸ "Republication", 334 fn 5.

⁹ *The Law is not of Faith*, 16-17.

¹⁰ In "Reconciling the Two Covenants in the Old Testament," Brian Lee comments on T. David Gordon who, "identifies his opposition early on as John Murray, and engages him in direct argument." Lee later writes, "He articulates the Pauline counter-argument in Galatians against Murray's claim that 'the Mosaic covenant in respect of the condition of obedience is not in a different category from the Abrahamic.'" Speaking of Murray, Gordon writes, "I raise these questions gratefully, rhetorically, and instructively ... grateful that John Murray, to my knowledge, never wrote so much as a paragraph about the Galatian letter. He could have made no sense of the letter, and anything he might have written about it would therefore have been obfuscatory in the highest degree." See T. David Gordon, "Abraham and Sinai Contrasted in Galatians 3:6-14," in *The Law is Not of Faith*, 240-258. This quotation comes from page 253.

¹¹ Lee mentions this in "Reconciling the Two Covenants in the Old Testament," while discussing Bryan D. Estelle, "Leviticus 18:5 and Deuteronomy 30:1-4 in Biblical Theological Development: Entitlement to Heaven Foreclosed and Proffered," in *The Law is Not of Faith*, 109-146.

¹² (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011).

grace.¹³ The following year yet another book appeared that furthered the debate on the relationship between the Adamic and Mosaic covenants: Michael G. Brown and Zach Keele's *Sacred Bond: Covenant Theology Explored*.¹⁴ They, too, argued for a republication of the covenant of works in the Mosaic economy.¹⁵

At Westminster Seminary California, David VanDrunen, an editor and contributor to *The Law is Not of Faith*, published a large volume entitled *Divine Covenants and Moral Order: A Biblical Theology of Natural Law*.¹⁶ In a review, fellow OPC minister and Westminster Seminary (Philadelphia) professor Carl Trueman argued that VanDrunen's understanding of the Mosaic covenant is a republication of the covenant of creation. In other words, Sinai is reduced to a republication.¹⁷ However, VanDrunen subsequently replied that he heartily rejected the position that Trueman posited that he espoused. In response, Trueman simply conceded that his published analysis of VanDrunen was wrong on those points.¹⁸

Thus, in the fall of 2015, the OPC had two seminary professors who either did not understand each other or did not comprehend the full depth of the nuances of the various arguments on the nature of these covenants. Such a situation called for a thorough and serious study paper on the issue of the republication of the covenant of works. The OPC appointed a study committee to consider the topic, which resulted in a published paper in October 2016.

A Thorough Analysis

The mandate for the study on republication was to advise “whether and in what particular senses the concept of the Mosaic Covenant as a republication of the Adamic Covenant is consistent with the doctrinal system taught” in the Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF).¹⁹ The paper is divided into three sections: first, on covenant theology in the WCF; second, on views of republication; and finally, a conclusion.

Covenant Theology and the Westminster Confession

¹³ See analysis in Wayne Forkner, “Biblical Theology,” *Ordained Servant Online* (August/September 2012), Accessed February 14, 2018, https://opc.org/os.html?issue_id=77

¹⁴ (Grandville MI: Reformed Fellowship, 2012).

¹⁵ Andy Wilson, “Sacred Bond: Covenant Theology Explored,” *Ordained Servant Online* (May 2013), accessed February 14, 2018, http://opc.org/os.html?article_id=364. See also Mark A. Collingridge and Brett A. McNeill, “Republication: A Biblical, Confessional and Historical Defense,” Report to the Presbytery of the NorthWest of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, <http://pnwopc.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Republication-Paper-Final-Draft.pdf>, accessed February 14, 2018.

¹⁶ (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 2014).

¹⁷ Carl Trueman, “Divine Covenants and Moral Order by David VanDrunen,” *Ordained Servant Online* (November 2015), http://opc.org/os.html?article_id=518&issue_id=109, accessed February 15, 2018.

¹⁸ “A Clarification of the Review of *Divine Covenants and Moral Order* by David VanDrunen,” *Ordained Servant Online* (November 2015), http://opc.org/os.html?article_id=519&issue_id=109, accessed February 15, 2018.

¹⁹ “Republication,” 332. Authors of the paper include B. Estelle, B. W. Swinburnson, L. G. Tipton, A. C. Troxel, and C. B. Van Dixhoorn.

In this opening section on covenant theology in the Westminster Standards, the authors examined many important terms. The first term was that of a “works principle”. The works principle is different from “retribution”, which is the notion that God rewards the good and punishes the evil. Rather, a works principle, broadly conceived, connotes the idea of communicating obligations with accompanying sanctions – a principle clearly articulated in the Adamic covenant of works. As so defined, a “works principle”, per the authors, can also be observed in the Mosaic covenant.²⁰ Furthermore, this works principle in the Mosaic law relates to Christ’s work as second Adam, who fulfilled the righteousness of the law.²¹ Thus, “the Apostle Paul sees the obedience of Christ in terms of the fulfillment of the works principle introduced in the Mosaic law.”²²

The authors also defined the idea of the “substance” of the covenant. According to WCF 7.6, the “substance” of the covenant of grace is Christ. That substance was the same in the Old Testament as it is in the New Testament. However, some Protestant theologians (for example, Lutherans) have argued that while the Mosaic covenant is different in substance than the covenant of grace, it does not institute a new way of salvation.²³ The paper will later investigate whether one can hold to this position on the substance of the Mosaic covenant and remain within the system of doctrine taught in the WCF.

Having defined terms, the authors then dug into the heart of the question – whether the WCF and its individual authors held to, tolerated, or rejected views of republication. Their first observation was that the WCF heartily rejected the “substantial” republication views of Tobias Crisp.²⁴ A “substantial” republication occurs “when God is said to institute at Sinai a covenant

²⁰ “Republication,” 339: “[S]uch a broadly defined works principle is introduced in many places in the law, in many of the cultic rituals, and in the cultic precepts that God gave Israel to perform.”

²¹ “Republication,” 340 fn 22: “Paul’s point ... teach [*sic*] that our Savior fulfills the conditions introduced through the law in order to merit blessings on behalf of his elect.”

²² “Republication,” 341. There is also a more narrowly considered definition of the works principle, that “in some sense God gave the Mosaic law in part to take Israel through a recapitulation of Adam’s experience under a covenant of works.” This position is included in the paper’s later analysis of Kline.

²³ “Republication,” 369: “It is basic to our confession’s presentation of covenant theology to distinguish between the substance and administration of the covenant of grace – that the accidents of the covenant of grace change while the substance remains the same.”

²⁴ “Republication,” 349. At this place (349-350) the authors questioned John Fesko’s analysis in *The Theology of the Westminster Standards* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014) 155, 158 that by rejecting Crisp the Divines only rejected Crisp’s particular view of republication. Later in the paper the authors touched on this topic again. “Republication,” 389: “It is fairly clear that although the divines do seem to have Tobias Crisp’s unique position in view, it is also the case that divines of the period understood the Confession to reject other positions that made the Mosaic covenant to differ in substance from the covenant of grace. David Dickson’s analysis of the chapter 7 may be helpful here. He argues that the affirmations in WCF 7 constitute a rejection of the Socinian view of the Mosaic covenant as differing in substance from the new covenant: “*ARE there two Covenants of Grace, differing in substance; or but one and the same under various dispensations? ... Well then, do not the Socinians err; who maintain; a Substantial; and not an Accidental difference between the old Covenant and the new?*” David Dickson, *Truth’s Victory Over Error* (1684), 54. The principle undergirding the Confession’s rejection of Crisp’s view is applicable to other positions which also make a substantial and not merely an accidental difference between the Mosaic covenant and the new. Thus, any view that makes the Mosaic covenant

that is essentially characterized as a covenant of works (as in the Garden of Eden) in terms of its principle or constitutive condition.”²⁵

The authors then wrestled with the possibility that Westminster Larger Catechism (WLC) 93 (which address the moral law in the language of “life upon the fulfilling... death upon the breach of it”) may indicate a tolerant attitude toward some variety of a substantial republication in the moral law.²⁶ Added to that possibility is the question of the proof texts appended to WCF 7.2 (Gal. 3:10, 12, Rom. 10:5), which describe the Mosaic covenant in order to explain the prelapsarian covenant of works.²⁷

The authors’ analysis demonstrates a vast knowledge of the theological method and exegetical work of 17th-century divines.²⁸ They pointed out that those writers “commonly qualified their positions with oppositional statements, a practice requiring careful listening and reading” both for their contemporaries and those living today.²⁹ Thus, the Westminster Divines can simply call the Mosaic economy a “covenant of works” but not mean that it is such in substance – but in administration exclusively.³⁰

The authors returned to the proof texts of WCF 7.2 later in the paper and argued that proponents of republication have failed to prove a substantial republication in the Assembly’s use of those texts.³¹ Proponents of republication have also failed to note that the Divines “routinely refer to the ‘covenant of works’ in their writings as though it were a term interchangeable with the ‘moral law’ and the ‘covenant of grace’ as though it were synonymous

differ in substance from the covenant of grace compromises this principle, and thus introduces an element that is inconsistent with the standards’ formulations.”

²⁵ Although the term was not defined early in the paper, Crisp held to a “substantial” republication of a covenant of works. A substantial republication is a covenant of works in the Mosaic economy. “Republication,” 372: “Administrative republication occurs when the covenant of works is declared, materially presented, or redemptively reenacted in the Mosaic administration of the covenant of grace.”

²⁶ “Republication,” 358-359 fn. 61. Addressing whether citations of Lev. 18:5 and Deut. 27:26 connect to the Adamic covenant of works, the authors conclude that citations could mean a covenant of works in some sense while the Mosaic economy is clearly part of the covenant of grace.

²⁷ “Republication,” 363.

²⁸ “Republication,” 352, 359, 3822. For example, their massive study included the works of Cornelius Burges, Cambridge University Library, Additional Manuscript 6164; Anthony Burgess, *CXLV Expository Sermons* (London, 1656); *The True Doctrine of Justification* (London, 1651); Edward Reynolds, *An Explication of the Hundred and Tenth Psalme* (London, 1632); Obadiah Sedgwick, *Bowells of Tender Mercy* (London, 1661); Thomas Gataker, *God’s Eye on His Israel* (London, 1645); Thomas Goodwin, *Aggravation of Sinne and Sinning against Knowledge* (London, 1637); Edward Reynolds, *Three Treatises on the Vanity of the Creature* (London, 1631); *Israel’s Prayer in Time of Trouble* (London, 1649); Samuel Rutherford, *Christ Dying and Drawing Sinners to Himself* (London, 1647). The authors also analyzed Robert Baillie’s 1647 *Anabaptism the True Fountaine of Independency, Brownisme, Antinomy, Familisme, and the Most of the Other Errours, Which for the Time Doe Trouble the Church of England, Unsealed*.

²⁹ “Republication,” 351.

³⁰ “Republication,” 350-353.

³¹ “Republication,” 357-362.

with the ‘gospel’.”³² There is no proof for substantive republication relative to the exegesis of these texts.³³ Furthermore, even if a substantial republication interpretation of these texts were viable, the overall theology of WCF 7.3, 5-6; 19.6 and WLC 32, 34 demonstrates the Mosaic economy and all postlapsarian covenants to all be aspects of the one covenant of grace.³⁴

Their second set of questions dealt with WCF 19.1.2, which is considered by some to be the most significant chapter with respect to republication. For example, when read together a question arises as to whether WCF 19.1-2³⁵ teaches that after the fall the Mosaic law was both a covenant of works and a rule of righteousness. The presence of this teaching in WCF 19.1-2 would provide a republication-friendly reading. In reply to this suggestion, the authors argue that WCF 19.3 precludes such a reading by presenting God’s law delivered at Sinai as a rule of life, the moral law, and not as a form of the covenant of works.³⁶

As the authors concluded their analysis of the WCF position relative to republication, they argued that the WCF allows for an *administrative* republication of the covenant of works in the Mosaic covenant. Further, they argued that the divines excluded republication in some senses, even though they did not exert much effort to exclude it in every sense. To be clear, the authors assert that the WCF, “does not explicitly teach the doctrine nor is it obvious that its system of doctrine welcomes such a [works in substance] principle in the Mosaic economy.”³⁷

A Taxonomy of Republication Views

The second part of the report addressed various views of republication by developing a taxonomy of four views. The first views the Mosaic covenant as a covenant of works that promises eternal life upon condition of perfect obedience.³⁸ The second approach is to view the Mosaic covenant as mixed, containing elements of *both* a covenant of works and of grace.³⁹ Third, the Mosaic covenant in substance “is a subservient covenant, promising temporal life in

³² “Republication,” 362. At the end of their analysis the authors admitted, “no example of a substantial ‘republication’ of a covenant of works or works principle in the Mosaic economy has knowingly been omitted.”

³³ “Republication,” 362: “assembly members do not write as though these texts suggest a works-principle for old covenant believers, or a principle of inheritance for national Israel that is distinct from the principle of inheritance that operates in the covenant of grace, or as if these texts supported the attainment of temporal blessings, or the avoidance of temporal curses, by means of works rather than faith.”

³⁴ “Republication,” 362-363.

³⁵ WCF 19.2: “This law, after his fall, continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness, and as such, was delivered by God upon Mount Sinai, in ten commandments...”

³⁶ WCF 19.3: “Besides this law, commonly called moral...”

³⁷ “Republication,” 369.

³⁸ A view held by scholastic Lutheranism, John Owen, perhaps Amandus Polanus, John Preston and Westminster Divine George Walker. See “Republication,” 375-376. For a full repudiation of this position, see “Republication,” 388-392.

³⁹ “Republication,” 376-379, the authors found no historical figure who held this view. For a description and refutation of this view, see “Republication,” 393.

Canaan upon condition of perfect obedience to the moral, ceremonial, and judicial laws.”⁴⁰ This is labeled as the “subservient covenant” view.⁴¹ The final view was as a covenant of grace, although administered appropriately to Israel’s historical situation.

The authors rightly argue that the first three views, all of which hold to a substantial republication, should be rejected.⁴² The fourth position, which holds to an “administrative” republication of the covenant of works in the Mosaic covenant, is the one most commonly advocated among the Reformed and is the view of the WCF.⁴³ In this view, the administrative function is not of the covenant’s essence and never operates in a fashion that is contradictory to a covenant of grace. In spite of this view’s wide acceptance, it is strongly criticized by Lutheran divines as well as by the famous English theologian John Owen (1616-1683).⁴⁴ Advocates of this view make six important distinctions concerning the law.⁴⁵

After analysis of strengths and weaknesses of the four different views, the authors analyzed Kline as an advocate of a version of substantial republication.⁴⁶ They found four lines of argument that would classify his views as “substantial” republication.⁴⁷ However, they examined Kline a second time and found a way to interpret him that does not classify him as holding to substantial republication, but instead offering “a nuanced advancement of covenant theology within the tradition of the Reformed biblical theology movement pioneered by Geerhardus

⁴⁰ “Republication,” 379-381. For a rejection of this position see “Republication,” 394-396.

⁴¹ “Republication,” 394. This position was defended by John Cameron, Moise Amyraut, Samuel Bolton, and perhaps by Jeremiah Burroughs and Thomas Goodwin.

⁴² “Republication,” 376: the first view “seizes upon those portions of Scripture which emphasize some form of antithesis between the Mosaic and new covenant”. However, “such an understanding fails to account for the Scriptural data ascribing gracious elements to the Mosaic covenant.” The second view was not defended by any Reformed theologians and lacks exegetical and theological coherence. The view was already rejected by Anthony Burgess and Thomas Blake. See “Republication,” 378. The third view is indistinct, it claims that the “subservient covenant” is distinct in kind (Cameron listed thirteen distinctions) but its essential component does not really differ from the covenant of works. See “Republication,” 380-381.

⁴³ “Republication,” 381. Besides the WCF, the view was advanced by John Ball, Anthony Burgess, Samuel Rutherford, Thomas Blake, Obadiah Sedgwick, and Francis Turretin.

⁴⁴ “Republication,” 382.

⁴⁵ “Republication,” 383-387. First, they distinguish between broad and strict considerations of the law. Secondly, they distinguish between the form and the matter of the moral law. Thirdly, they distinguish different uses or purposes of the law as it was given at different times. Fourthly, they distinguish between “making” the covenant of works with Israel and the “declaration” of that covenant. Fifthly, they distinguish between God’s intention in giving the law and Israel’s intent in using the law. Finally, they distinguish between the Mosaic covenant in itself and the law abstracted from it.

⁴⁶ For analysis of the strengths and weaknesses, see “Republication,” 388-397.

⁴⁷ First, Kline describes the nature of the Mosaic covenant in itself as something other than a covenant of grace -it is opposite of promise and faith. Second, he contrasted the Mosaic covenant, as a re-enactment of the original covenant of works with Adam, as antithetical to the covenant of grace. Third, the ratification oath of the Mosaic covenant, sworn by the human party, made it a law covenant in contrast to a promise covenant. Finally, there was a meritorious conditionality to the Sinai covenant similar to the Adamic and not similar to a gracious covenant. See “Republication,” 397-401.

Vos.”⁴⁸ With that positive assessment in mind, the authors then addressed objections to Kline’s theology.⁴⁹ Recognizing that other interpreters would suggest that Kline endorses substantial republication, the authors’ interpretation of him “suggests otherwise.”⁵⁰

Following their extensive analysis of Kline, the authors composed an addendum on John Murray and Geerhardus Vos on the Mosaic covenant.⁵¹ After that background analysis, the authors again turned to Kline’s thought, this time focusing on strengths and weaknesses of interpreting him as holding to administrative republication. They outlined certain strengths, including viewing Abraham and Israel’s “merit” as a typical and prophetic sign of Christ’s meritorious obedience.⁵² However, there are also a number of weaknesses to Kline’s view of administrative republication, including his application of merit language to sinners who are not federal heads.⁵³

When they turned to strengths and weakness of reading Kline through the lens of a substantial republication interpretation, the only noted strength was that Kline did not imply that salvation was by works in the Old Testament.⁵⁴ Among their numerous critiques of Kline here, they insisted that this view cannot account for the Scripture’s teaching that the Sinai covenant was itself gracious; that this view requires a meritorious works principle in a covenant that is non-gracious; and that it proposes a definition of merit that is different from the WCF.⁵⁵ However, the authors focused particularly on significant weaknesses related to the covenant of works, the administration of the covenant of grace, and the use of the law.⁵⁶ In regard to the law, at the time of the WCF, the antinomians had already argued that the Sinai covenant was a covenant of works. If that covenant is of works, then it cannot also be a rule of life.⁵⁷

⁴⁸ “Republication,” 503; See their presentation and analysis of Kline in 401-421.

⁴⁹ They addressed oath swearing relative to national Israel and the Mosaic covenant, and Kline’s confusing use of merit terminology. See “Republication,” 421-425.

⁵⁰ “Republication,” 425.

⁵¹ “Republication,” 425-431.

⁵² “Republication,” 431: “The obedience of Israel as a typological Son stands in organic continuity with the nature of Abraham’s obedience. Both Abraham and Israel exhibit a redemptively recalibrated works principle that is tethered to the typological land inheritance of Canaan. Particular emphasis is placed upon the common character of both Abraham and Israel’s works as being the Spirit-wrought fruit of faith, and as such, not intrinsically meritorious before God.”

⁵³ “Republication,” 433: “Kline, in order to explain complex biblical phenomena, chose language that is rigorously defined within the historic Reformed tradition to explain the nature of the obedience of sinless federal heads, and he applied it analogically to typological instances of Spirit-wrought obedience within redemptive history.” The authors note that Kline gave sufficient qualifications to stave off the charge of heterodoxy. See “Republication,” 434.

⁵⁴ “Republication,” 434-435.

⁵⁵ “Republication,” 435-438.

⁵⁶ “Republication,” 438-443. The WCF defines the covenant of works as requiring perfect, personal, entire, and exact obedience but that Kline modified that definition and thus compromised its essential character. To say that the “administration” of a covenant of grace does not actually administer grace makes it difficult to call such a covenant one of grace.

⁵⁷ “Republication,” 441-443.

Concerning these many issues, the authors use phrases like “a *bona fide* theological problem”; “this way of speaking is not consistent with our standards”; and that Kline’s linguistic inconsistency in an “administrative” republication interpretation “becomes more theological and substantive in character” in a substantial reading.⁵⁸

Conclusion

With this extensive analysis behind them, the authors drew some unsurprising conclusions.⁵⁹ For the OPC, what they have termed *administrative republication* is consistent with the WCF.⁶⁰ Substantial republication, in its various configurations, is, however, inconsistent with the WCF.⁶¹ Substantial republication is inconsistent with the standards because fallen man cannot fulfill the conditions of a covenant of works and is unable to merit a reward from God of any kind. This report is a carefully crafted body of work that will be of great value to all the NAPARC denominations and is thus worthy of a careful read.

⁵⁸ “Republication,” 438-443.

⁵⁹ “Republication,” 44. To make sure that the reader knew the theological question that they were tasked to answer, they reiterated the task given to the committee: “[W]hether and in what particular senses the Mosaic covenant can be considered as a republication of the Adamic covenant in a manner that is consistent with the system of doctrine contained in our standards.”

⁶⁰ “Republication,” 444. Administrative republication includes “declarative, material, and misinterpretive republications, as well as an indirect, redemptive reenactment of Adam’s sin and exile.” Terms included in this definition are *declarative republication*, defined (“Republication,” 448-449) as the “covenant of works broken with Adam is declared at Mt. Sinai to communicate the grace of conviction of sin, and function antecedently as a schoolmaster to lead Israel to Christ”; *material republication* (“Republication,” 450) as “a second promulgation of a works principle that operates without reference to redemptive grace at any point or any level”; *misinterpretive republication* (“Republication,” 451) as “the idea that the covenant of works is not actually republished in a substantial sense in the Mosaic covenant but is present only in the misunderstanding of those who opposed Paul’s teaching of a substantially gracious Mosaic covenant. Hence, the language of contrast between the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants rests in the minds of Paul’s opponents, but not in Paul’s actual theology”; and reenactment, given the following definition (“Republication,” 453): “While not seeking to undermine the unique role of Adam as a sinless federal head, reenactment claims there are theologically significant parallels between 1. The sin and exile of Adam as protological son of God and 2. Israel as typological son of God, particularly the way that disobedience results in the loss of holy theocratic realms (i.e., Eden and Canaan, respectively).”

⁶¹ According to “Republication,” 445, *substantial republication* includes “pure and simple republications, subservient republications, mixed republications and a direct, non-redemptive reenactment of Adam’s pre-fall covenantal probation.” They define *subservient covenant* (“Republication,” 453) as “the view that the Mosaic covenant in substance, and at the national level as opposed to the individual level, promises temporal life in Canaan upon condition of perfect obedience to the moral, ceremonial, and judicial laws.” They offer the following definition for *mixed covenant* (“Republication,” 451): “The Mosaic covenant contains both the substance of the covenant of works and the substance of the covenant of grace, without relegating the former to a typological sphere (as does the subservient view). The covenant of works and covenant of grace are “partly” present together in the Mosaic covenant. Precisely how one covenant can contain both the substance of the covenant of works and the covenant of grace remains a key problem for the coherence of this position.”