

## 2018 Research Week Proposal

Title – Christ’s Faith: the pattern Jesus set for the world

Program of Study – Pastoral Leadership

Presentation Type – PowerPoint

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Category – Textual or Investigative

### **Abstract:**

Over the past 50 years, there has been a ripple throughout the Christian community on how to interpret one of its most precious doctrines, the doctrine of justification by faith alone. Some may think that this issue was resolved during the Reformation or the Enlightenment, but thanks to the New Perspective on Paul movement, the controversy is once again as intensely passionate as ever. The questions range from the vicariousness of Christ’s death, to Paul’s view of the Law, and the fundamental meaning of saving faith. It is the attempt of this thesis to carefully unite the old perspective with the new, to demonstrate that Christ is both our substitute and our example, and that while His faithfulness formed the foundation for our justification, coalition with His faith is how we receive it.

### **Christian worldview integration:**

In researching for this paper I interacted with a plethora of texts, and therefore, a plethora of perspectives on the topic of justification and faith. Since justification is typically thought of as equivalent with salvation, and faith is how salvation is received, this topic is defended very passionately on every side. My research began by wrestling with what could be called an “either-or” dilemma: are we saved by faith or by works, declaration or participation, divine initiative or moral effort, etc. These questions have historically been factors that have distinguished

Protestant and Catholic theology, and more recently, distinguish the Old Perspective on Paul with the New Perspective. In this thesis I sought to integrate these two positions by retaining that justification is by faith alone, but we must clarify what that faith means. This led to a study on the faith and faithfulness of Christ and how that establishes and enables the Christian's faith in Christ.

The potential for further study and practical use of this research is nearly endless. In an academic sense, there is a great deal of debate revolving around the translation and theological significance of the Greek phrase "*pistis Christou*" as well as how to understand Paul's worldview and the impact that it had on his theology. In a pastoral setting, it is crucial to properly understand what faith is before instructing others to have it and this paper provides biblical depth as to how Christ's faith shapes our own. Finally, in a cross-cultural missions setting it may be most critical that a missionary be able to recognize what is Christian and what is cultural. The research behind this thesis could be expanded to provide a framework for sharing the gospel and articulating what faith is in cross-cultural settings using the basics of Jesus' life.