

# Contribution and Challenge: The Impact of Biblical Studies on Evangelical Faith with the New Perspective on Paul as a Showcase

(An abstract)

**Wai-yee Ng**

Associate Professor

(Biblical Studies)

China Graduate School of Theology

Hong Kong

To renew our evangelical tradition and to make progress on the basis of it, there should be dialogue between biblical scholars and theologians. The reformers proved this case as Luther interpreted Romans and Galatians, so that later theologians reckoned “justification by faith” “the article which the church stands or falls.” The same sort of dialogue is now being called for, because “the New Perspective on Paul” has brought in a divisive discussion on the issue of the center of Pauline theology. Here in this paper Sander’s work is reported as a replacement of former authorities on the Jewish religion in the first century, but his method of interpretation of Paul is criticized as being too deliberately exclusive of Paul’s distinctiveness on the ground of an overall Judaism, “covenantal nomism.” On the other hand, Dunn’s deliberately restrictive definition of “works of the law” is criticized as being given too dominant a place in the overall reconstruction of Paul. On differentiating the New and the Old perspectives, the author concludes that the prospective shift involves not just a center for Paul but a

set of various emphases interpreted from Paul: from the emphasis on personal experience to communal participation, from conscientiousness to identity, from soteriology to Christology, etc. However, both sets of emphases are actually embraced by the evangelical faith contemporarily defined. It is time now for both biblical scholars and theologians to work together again, to enrich our faith tradition with the challenge which the New Perspective on Paul brings, as well as to scrutinize the later on exegetical ground.