

# NEW HORIZONS

≡ *in the* ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ≡

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JULY 2016

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# EVANGELISM IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

BY JOHN S. SHAW // 3



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## New Horizons

in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church

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On May 27-30, the Sierra Christian Conference of the Presbytery of Northern California and Nevada held its fiftieth anniversary conference, with Danny Olinger preaching and Mark Richline leading the worship services. Over 140 campers attended the conference at the beautiful campgrounds seven miles east of Groveland, California.

Fred and Annie Vander Plaats donated the property (20 acres) to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in the 1960s. Recent speakers at the conference have included Sal Solis, Roger Wagner, Mike Dengerink, Jeff Landis, Daniel Patterson, Alan Strange, Dale Van Dyke, Terry Johnson, Dennis Johnson, and David Crum.



# EVANGELISM IN THE LOCAL CHURCH



**JOHN S. SHAW // People expect certain things from a church. It's the place they go to worship. It's the place for the whole family to learn about the Bible. It's the place to build relationships with like-minded people.**

**Our expectations for the church should not end there, though.**

What about bringing others into the community of faith? What about educating people who do not yet know the Bible, so they can worship God? What about evangelism? Christ gave this responsibility especially to the church.

This article has a very specific aim: to describe the primary role of the local church in the ministry of evangelism.

Perhaps the connection seems obvious, but we need to remember the unique, powerful role of the church as God's primary agent of evangelism. A high view of the local church and a commitment to biblical evangelism go hand in hand. In the words of Mack Stiles, the Lord "has a wonderful plan for evangelism: his church" (*Evangelism*, p. 19).

## **Evangelism: The Task of the Church**

Before considering the hows and the whats of evangelism, it is important to consider the unique role of the church in evangelism. Paul writes instructions to Timothy concerning his ministry, and in those instructions he describes the church: "I hope to come to

you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that, if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:14–15).

Notice in particular the last image that Paul utilizes: a pillar and buttress of the truth. We all know the purpose of pillars: to hold up the weight of a building. While buttresses may be less familiar, they serve a similar purpose. In Gothic cathedrals, flying buttresses held up the horizontal weight of the walls, making it possible to design buildings with higher ceilings and larger stained glass windows. Those buttresses may look like decorative stonework, but they bear a tremendous amount of weight and pressure to protect against collapse. The result is a larger space, greater light, and glorious beauty.

What does it mean that the church is the pillar and buttress of the truth? The church as an institution is uniquely given the responsibility to hold up the glory, weight, and beauty of the truth of the gospel for the world to see. The

apostle even describes the truth that the church is to proclaim, which is Jesus Christ—the crucified, risen, and ascended Savior—through whom all who believe are saved (v. 16). God appointed the church as his agent for evangelism (see R. B. Kuiper, *God-Centered Evangelism*, p. 118).

The New Testament tells the story of the expansion of the kingdom, beginning at Pentecost, as many converts are gathered through the proclamation of the gospel. The church in its local expression stands at the center of this expanding ministry. People are gathered, through the ministry of local churches, into those local churches. The epistles are written to various local congregations that are engaged in that evangelistic mission.

There is a temptation to see local congregations as incidental or even detrimental to the work of evangelism. The argument goes something like this: Churches have their own language and culture, which are completely foreign to the unbelieving world. Churches use outdated methods like public preaching



Child evangelism

and formal worship. Churches have their place in the lives of those who already believe, but they can never reach the lost effectively.

This argument, however, stands in conflict with the testimony of the Bible. As Paul reminds the Corinthians, “It pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe” (1 Cor. 1:21; cf. 1:18–2:4). The apostle goes so far as to suggest that we cannot expect sinners to be saved unless the church sends preachers, because faith comes from hearing the word of Christ preached (Rom. 10:14–17). Paul argues that God appoints preachers and preaching as the primary channel for the world to know Christ.

The Lord Jesus has promised his church that through her regular life and ministry, many will be saved. The local church is neither incidental nor detrimental to the work of evangelism, but rather a necessary agent in the spread of the good news.

But how does the local church exercise her role in evangelism? She does so, quite simply, by being the church that Jesus designed her to be. The Lord gave specific responsibilities to the church: to maintain the apostolic teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread, and prayer (Acts 2:42). That sounds very much like the regular ministry of Word, sacrament, and prayer. The Lord also called his church to live together in

a particular way, characterized by love, fellowship, worship, and care for others (2:44–46). As they did this, the Lord added to their number each day those who were being saved (2:47).

We need local churches that function as the Lord directed, because Jesus designed the church with the gospel in mind (see Stiles, *Evangelism*, p. 64). He uses such congregations to spread the gospel and gather the lost.

We also need local congregations that have a zeal for evangelism and a love for the lost. We need local congregations filled with people who love the gospel and love the lost in such a way



Meeting people along a parade route

that they will invite them to church and warmly welcome visitors.

Do we believe that the church uniquely carries the message of salvation that people need to hear? Then we should invite and welcome people into our local congregations, trusting that God will work through the church he designed and called. We need congregations filled with people who understand that the local church “is the chosen and best method of evangelism” (Stiles, *Evangelism*, p. 60).

So far, we have considered the central role of the local church in evangelism. When local congregations fulfill the responsibilities given by the Lord, they have the opportunity to participate in the spread of the gospel. Now we can consider the hows and whats of evangelism. What tasks has the Lord given to local congregations for the spread of the gospel? Let’s consider those tasks in two parts: the character of church life and the character of pastoral ministry.

## The Character of Church Life

The pastor, along with the elders and deacons, has a particular responsibility for evangelism. His role is unique in the life of the church, and that distinction is essential. Members are not called to preach or even to do the work of an evangelist, yet they are still called to participate in the evangelistic endeavors of the church. When the people of a local congregation faithfully participate in the life of the church, and when the church lives as Christ commanded, the expectation is that typically the Lord will grow and build his church in that location.

So what does that mean? Let’s consider the basic, God-ordained activities of the local church and how those activities serve the ministry of evangelism.

### 1. Committed to Corporate Worship

The life of the church begins with a commitment to worship.

In one sense, the Christian life calls us to worship and glorify God in everything we do (1 Cor. 6:20; 10:31; Rev. 4:11). Yet formal worship that includes,

at a minimum, the reading of the Word and prayer, plays a significant part in the Christian life.

The Westminster Confession of Faith teaches that there is something distinct about formalized worship, done both in private and in families. (It is amazing how family worship opens opportunities to speak the gospel—to dinner guests, to neighbors, to friends of your children.) Most significant, though, is the regular public worship of the local church gathered together. Christians must not neglect regular corporate worship on the first day of the week, because God commands it (WCF, 21.6).

Worship is the first priority for the believer, and public, corporate worship is the first priority for the local church. The priority of corporate worship provides the primary motivation for evangelism. The Lord seeks worshippers, and worshippers are gathered through the ministry of evangelism. Paul suggests as much by writing, “For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God” (2 Cor. 4:15).

Worship provides motivation for evangelism, but it is also wonderful to know that public and corporate worship fuels evangelism. People believe as they hear the gospel from preachers who are sent (Rom. 10:14–17), and that preaching takes place primarily in corporate worship services. This means that believers should invite others (friends, neighbors, coworkers, acquaintances) to public worship.

Worship provides both motivation and fuel for evangelism. That is the ongoing pattern of the book of Acts. Preachers proclaim the good news, and then people are saved and added to the number of the church. As more people are added, the church expands and the gospel witness expands. Worship and evangelism are directly connected.

## **2. Committed to Word and Sacrament**

The life of the church includes a commitment to the ordinary ministry

of Word and sacrament.

We call these “the means of grace.” Why? Ephesians 2:8–9 describes the power of God’s grace: “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.” God communicates that grace through the preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments. When the Spirit works through these tools, the saving power of God is at work.

If this is true, then we should be committed as local congregations to participate regularly and faithfully in the use of these means. We should expect God to work powerfully through them. Therefore, we should sit under the ministry of these means as individuals and families, expecting God to do a great work in us and in our families.

Also, we should invite others (friends, neighbors, coworkers, acquaintances) to sit under the ministry of these means. One of the primary opportunities to participate in the ministry of evangelism is simply to invite others into the life of your local congregation. As they participate in the worship, fellowship, and life of the church, they see God at work in the world. They are introduced to the whole counsel of God in the ministry of word and deed.

## **3. Committed to Prayer**

The life of the church includes a commitment to the ordinary ministry of prayer.

Our heavenly Father gives tremendous promises concerning the power of prayer and his willingness to answer the prayers of his children (Matt. 7:7–11; James 5:16). He also gives wonderful examples of the effectiveness of prayer for the preaching and evangelistic ministry of the church (e.g., Acts 4:23–31).

The Lord gives us great reasons for confidence in the task of evangelism. The Lord God, who created all things and sustains them, is the Lord of the harvest. He promised, through his Son, a fruitful and plentiful harvest. And he promises to bless our participation

in that endeavor. Therefore, we should pray for a great harvest in our communities, for that is a request that echoes the Scriptures.

Many Christians think that they lack the gifts for active involvement in evangelism. Let me suggest that one important opportunity for active involvement in evangelistic ministry is simply to pray to the Lord of the harvest to grant a bountiful harvest—for a great harvest in general, but also for specific people by name. That is a task simple enough for any believer, and yet a task with great promise of results.

## **4. Committed to Fellowship, Hospitality, and Mercy**

The life of the church includes a commitment to fellowship, hospitality, and mercy.

The church in Jerusalem, immediately following Pentecost, is described at the end of Acts 2. Their church life included a commitment to Word, sacrament, prayer, and *fellowship*. Luke chooses to focus most specifically in these verses on the love and hospitality within the community of new believers. But he also gives a hint of their love and respect for those outside the church: “praising God and having favor with all the people” (v. 47).

The church should be characterized by love for one another, but also by love for neighbors. Outsiders should be overwhelmed by the kindness and compassion that exists within the church, but they should also be shocked by the kindness and compassion extended from believers to those outside the church. Christians should be the best neighbors, the best coworkers, the best relatives—those who go out of their way to elevate the interest of others above their own interests.

Sacrificial kindness looks strange in the eyes of the world. For that very reason, it opens doors to share the gospel, and it opens doors to invite others into the life of your family and your church.

## **5. Committed to Testimony**

The life of the church includes a

commitment to testimony.

The Lord calls certain men as pastors, with a special responsibility to preach and teach. Yet we should be careful to recognize the responsibility of every believer to know and even to articulate the gospel.

Believers who live in obedience to God's law stand out. Sometimes our obedience frustrates unbelievers, but often our obedience leads to questions (1 Peter 3:15). Ultimately, the answer to those questions has roots in the gospel—an answer that we must be ready to give.

So what does Peter teach us in 1 Peter 3:8–17?

First, we should strive to live in always increasing obedience to God, no matter the circumstance. Second, we should expect our obedience to generate a response from unbelieving friends. Third, we should study and grow in our understanding of the gospel. (To facilitate this, pastors and elders should train their congregations in the gospel, so that they learn the gospel and learn how to articulate it on some level.) Fourth, we should ask ourselves lots of questions about what the truth of the gospel and the person and work of Christ have to do with our life. The answers to those questions should help us be ready to answer others.

Let me share one short example. I worked with a new believer, “John,” who was raised without a Christian background. Before his conversion, John was communicating with “Dan” on the Internet. When the conversation turned to movies, it became clear that Dan had standards that kept him from watching certain movies. Out of curiosity, John asked, “What is your standard?” Dan explained that because he served God, the Bible helped him determine which movies were acceptable. John ended that conversation out of frustration. Later, though, he began to ask more questions. Those questions eventually led to Bible studies, prayer, a study of the Westminster Confession of Faith, and eventually, by the grace of God, conversion, baptism, and church

membership. John asked a simple question. Dan gave an answer and a reason. And the Lord used that interaction as one step toward John's conversion.

## The Character of Pastoral Ministry

The ordained minister, along with the elders of the church, has a particular responsibility for the work of evangelism. When Paul describes the spread of the message of salvation to the nations, he writes about the need for preachers to be sent (Rom. 10:14–17). Read within the context of the rest of the New Testament, the apostle refers to ministers ordained and sent by the church. He also instructs Timothy to be prepared to preach the word and do the work of an evangelist (2 Tim. 4:1–5). This is the particular responsibility of those men ordained to the gospel ministry.

Doing the work of an evangelist—preaching the gospel, teaching the gospel, and seeking the lost—is the first task of pastoral ministry (see Martin Bucer, *Concerning the True Care of Souls*, p. 90). As the apostle Paul proclaims, “Necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!” (1 Cor. 9:16).

What should characterize this gospel ministry?

### 1. Confidence

This ministry requires confidence in the promises of God.

Jesus described an evangelistic harvest that is plentiful and ready to be gathered (Matt. 9:37–38; John 4:34–38). What is the greatest need? The Lord needs laborers to gather the harvest. The Lord needs faithful ministers and evangelists. He sends out those laborers with commands and attached promises:

- Go and make disciples, knowing that all authority has been given to Christ and that he promises to be with you always, even to the end of the age (Matt. 28:18–20).
- Go on speaking and do not be silent, for you know the sovereign

protection and the sovereign election of the Lord (Acts 18:9–10).

- Labor in the harvest through suffering and tears, for the Lord promises joyful reaping (Ps. 126).

The ministry of the Word, which includes the ministry of evangelism, requires a man of faith. He knows God to be faithful. He recognizes the Lord to be someone who not only speaks, but always does what he says he will do. Therefore, in obedience to God, the minister of the Word obeys the Lord's commands (to go, speak, teach, preach, and pray) with full expectation of the Lord's blessing (a plentiful harvest, times of joyful reaping).

### 2. Courage

This ministry requires courage in the face of opposition and difficulty.

The minister possesses courage because the Lord makes promises. He is the Lord of the harvest. He guarantees a plentiful harvest. He chooses people before the foundation of the world. He saves all those he chooses and calls. And the Lord always delivers on those promises.

Although the minister knows that the church faces opposition in this world, he understands that the opposition of the world has limits because of God's care (2 Cor. 4:7–12). In particular, he knows that the eternal weight of glory far outweighs any suffering in this life (2 Cor. 4:16–18).

Because of the promises and providences of the Lord, the minister of the gospel must boldly proclaim the truth of the gospel. And when such courage is lacking, the minister may follow the example of the apostles, praying for courage (Acts 4:29–31) and asking the church to join in those prayers (Eph. 6:18–20).

### 3. Conviction

This ministry requires conviction of the glory of God and the truth of the gospel.

A minister who believes these things will preach differently. Rather

than looking for clever ideas or worldly wisdom, he will simply preach Jesus Christ and his salvation. And he will expect amazing results (conversions and transformations) because this is the power of God unto salvation, a demonstration of the Spirit and of power (1 Cor. 1:18–25; 2:1–4).

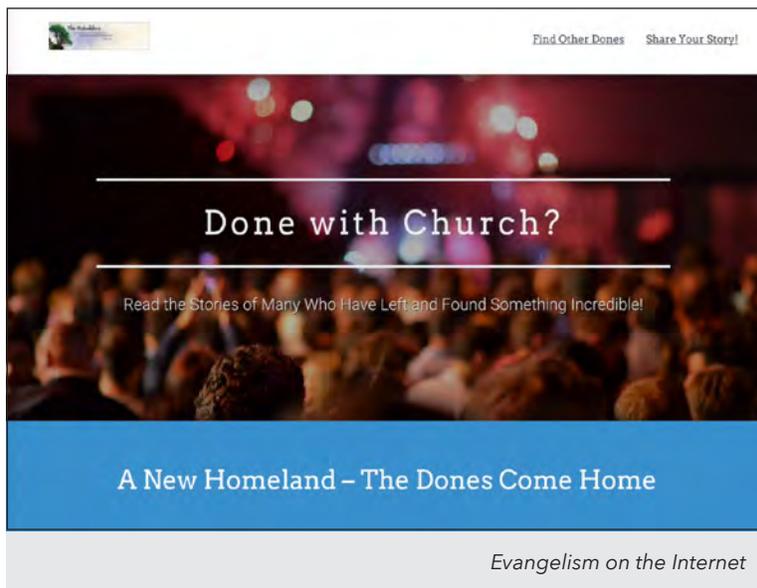
A minister of conviction will be different in his message, but also in his demeanor. He will teach and preach with passion, because he is personally convicted of the truth of the gospel and the glory of his God.

If the gospel has truly gripped your soul, shouldn't that be obvious in how you proclaim it? Can you imagine the apostle Paul preaching in Athens—"The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness" (Acts 17:30–31)—without evident passion and personal pleading? Passion that flows from conviction of gospel truth should characterize the preaching and teaching of ministers of the gospel. We have a glorious message to proclaim. Let us do so with all the conviction and passion that the message demands.

#### 4. Clarity

This ministry requires clear communication.

In his second letter to the church in Corinth, Paul describes his ministry in this way: "But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God" (2 Cor. 4:2). He asks the Colossians to pray for him, "that I may make it [the word, the mystery of Christ] clear, which is how I ought to speak" (Col. 4:4).



Ministers of the gospel have received a message to preach—the truth of the gospel—and they must stick to that message. That is the point of 1 Corinthians 1 and 2. But because the message is the truth, and because the message carries the only promise of salvation for a dying world, ministers have a responsibility to speak the truth of that gospel plainly and openly. Simply put, ministers must speak clearly.

This has several implications. First of all, it is quite natural that communication is easiest with people who are like us. Based on race, culture, and education, we adopt our own language and vocabulary. We typically communicate within the confines of that cultural vocabulary. But the gospel is a message for *everyone*, both those who are like us and those who are very much unlike us. This means that ministers must work diligently to communicate with people who are unlike them.

Second, the study of theology has produced its own language and vocabulary. The temptation for every preacher is to use that language, and therefore to communicate only with those who have learned theological speech. But again, the gospel is a message for everyone, even those who haven't learned theological speech. This means that ministers must labor diligently to communicate with people who are unlike them. (For more on this, see the articles by

Jeremiah Montgomery in *New Horizons*, March and April, 2015.)

The kind of clarity that the ministry demands—the open statement of the truth in order to make the gospel clear—requires hard work to achieve. This is a struggle for us, and an ongoing struggle for the church. We must renew our efforts to speak the gospel clearly, even to those who have no background in biblical language or knowledge.

They need what we have—the gospel. It would be ministerial malpractice to speak in a way that they cannot possibly understand.

#### 5. Compassion

This ministry requires compassion for the lost and dying.

Matthew 9:37–38 is one of the most familiar passages concerning the evangelistic ministry of the church. The Lord promises a plentiful harvest and expresses the need for many harvesters.

It is also important, though, to notice the posture of the Lord Jesus that provides the context for these words. "When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd" (v. 36).

We know the compassion of the Lord because we have experienced it. "God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8).

Ministers of the gospel should display a similar compassion for the lost, who are harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. The gospel witness of the church in our age needs such compassion. Let's be honest: the behavior of many Christians on social media does not typically portray compassion for the lost, but rather frustration and anger.

Ministers of the gospel must lead

the way in modeling compassion for the lost: in our speech, in our behavior, in the way we welcome newcomers, and in the way we love our neighbors. This involves not only our formal communication in public teaching and preaching ministry, but even how we communicate on venues like Facebook or Twitter.

My wife and I train our children to ask the following question about what they say: is it true, necessary, and kind? Ministers should hold themselves to the same standard, whether in the pulpit, around a table, or on social media.

We must never compromise the truth of the gospel, and yet we should give clear evidence of compassion in our communication and our face-to-face ministry. In fact, we must display a clear commitment to the house-to-house ministry that Paul describes in his instruction to the Ephesian elders. It included shedding tears and enduring trials for the sake of others (Acts 20:18–21). We suffer with others in their pain—even in their self-inflicted pain as the result of sin—for the sake of the gospel.

## Conclusion

God sends his people into the evangelistic endeavor with clear responsibilities and great promises. The Lord promises a great harvest, and we can believe that promise because he is the faithful Lord of the harvest. He sends local churches into that harvest with all the tools necessary for the task. What does he ask of his church? Faithfulness. Faithful congregations are committed to corporate worship, Word and sacrament ministry, prayer, fellowship, hospitality, mercy, and testimony. Faithful ministers are emboldened by faith to speak the gospel with courage, conviction, clarity, and compassion.

May the Lord raise up such churches in the OPC. And may we marvel as



*The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.*

the Lord exceeds our expectations by granting us a wonderful portion of that great harvest. □

*The author is the general secretary for the*

*Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension. In order to obtain this article in booklet form, email CCEsec@opc.org, call 215-935-1023, or order online at store.opc.org.*

## Recommended Resources

**J. Mack Stiles, *Evangelism: How the Whole Church Speaks of Jesus* (Crossway).**

Stiles puts evangelism where it belongs: within the context and ministry of the local church.

**R. B. Kuiper, *God-Centered Evangelism (Banner of Truth)*.**

In this classic within the history of the OPC, Kuiper sets out the theology of evangelism and reminds us that God appoints the local church as the agent of evangelism.

**Will Metzger, *Tell the Truth: The Whole Gospel to the Whole Person by Whole People* (InterVarsity Press).**

Metzger provides helpful instruction on useful methods for evangelism, but he is most helpful in rehearsing the whole message of the gospel. We can't proclaim what we don't know.

**J. I. Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* (InterVarsity Press).**

Packer reminds us that the sovereignty of God in election guarantees the fruitfulness of evangelism. Therefore, belief in divine sovereignty should make us zealous and bold evangelists.

**Horatius Bonar, *Words to Winners of Souls* (P&R Publishing).**

Ministers are tempted for many reasons to ignore their evangelistic task. In this classic, Bonar provides encouragement to those who are called to win souls.

**Geerhardus Vos, "Seeking and Saving the Lost," in his *Grace and Glory* (Solid Ground).**

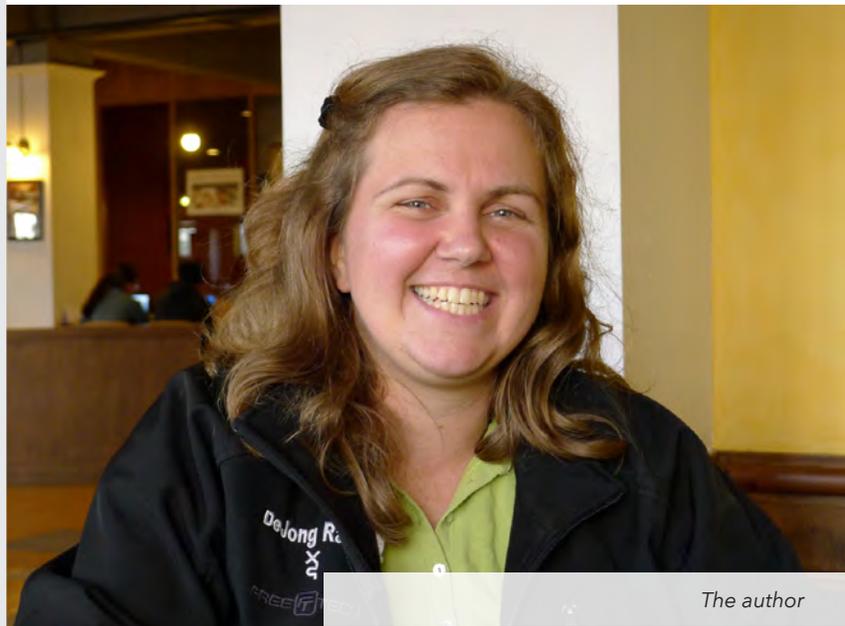
In this sermon, Vos challenges ministers to fulfill their responsibility "to bring Christ to men and men to Christ."

***Planting an Orthodox Presbyterian Church*, by the Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension (OPC).**

This manual has helpful sections on outreach and evangelism.

# FROM SOUTH DAKOTA TO THE FOREIGN MISSION FIELD

// T. D.



The author

It is amazing to me how God can use the smallest person from what many would consider the “middle of nowhere,” develop a love for nature and animals in her, and then show her that she is now ready to be used by him in a city of eleven million people. If anyone had asked me eight years ago if I would ever see myself living in Asia, I would have chuckled a little and said, “No, I don’t think so. I love teaching in South Dakota and working on the ranch; I don’t ever want to leave.” However, anything is possible with God, and when he wants us to be in a deeper relationship with himself and wants to use us to show his power and glory, he can move mountains.

Growing up on a cattle ranch in south-central South Dakota as a part of the third generation, on both my dad’s and my mom’s sides, not only in farming/ranching, but also as members of Westminster OPC in Hamill, I was shown and taught the Truth from the beginning of my life. I loved being outside, helping my dad by driving tractors, riding horses, and working cattle. *Pakka* (Dutch for grandpa) took me on my first horse ride when I was only three months old, and as I got older I knew I could count on him to help me saddle and ride anytime I wanted. After he went to be with the Lord when I was in first grade, I learned how to do more things for my dad, including running the drill to plant alfalfa and checking the cows. Since I really enjoyed being outside, I was often a hand-ful for my mom when she wanted me to do my schoolwork or housework. Thankfully, she is a wonderful, God-fearing woman who prayerfully, patiently, and consistently disciplined me. When I was younger, I was not very thankful that my parents worked together to support one another in training me in the Lord (my hind end especially felt the brunt of it), but through them God showed me what sin is and how it is only Christ’s blood that can save us from the wrath God uses to punish sin.

After being homeschooled through eighth grade, I went to the public high school, where my eyes were opened to see

much of the pain that is in the world. There are many kids who do not grow up in safe homes, where discipline is not done or is done out of anger instead of love, and who are not shown what God’s love is. I knew then that I wanted to share the love that God had shown me, but I still wanted to do it from the comfort of the ranch. That desire took more of a backseat in my life as I started pouring lots of energy into different high school activities. I loved basketball and showing cattle. I was also super competitive and wanted to win, so I spent hours practicing basketball and preparing my cattle for shows.

While other girls my age were worrying about how they looked and what they were going to wear, I was worried about how my cows looked and if I would be able to lead my basketball team to the state tournament. God allowed me to do well in these activities, but after tearing my ACL in my junior year, I was never able to go to the state tournament, and I was not finding as much joy in showing cattle as I had when I started. Then to top that off, my mom asked me what I would do if I could not come back to help my dad on the ranch. I was shocked by that question because in my mind there was no other option. God was showing me that I had set these things up as idols in my life, thinking that they would bring me joy, safety, and purpose. I realized that I might need to have a backup plan, so after some more encouragement from my mom, I went to college to study math education.

Upon completing my college degree, I got a job teaching high school math in Winner, South Dakota, where I was able to live with *Beppa* (Dutch for grandma) during the school week and be at home on the ranch to help my dad on weekends and breaks from school. I was now in my dream position of getting to work outside with my family on the ranch and getting to teach and influence teens at school. I was then at a place where I was sure I would be for the rest of my life.

However, God’s ways are not our ways, and his plans are not our plans. Three and a half years into teaching, the Lord directed my path to Asia. This came about through a series of



A town square decorated for the New Year celebration

events that included my final land payment, my school district going through a financial pinch, a missionary home on furlough saying more help was needed, and friends and family encouraging me to give this new adventure a try. I left in August 2009 on what I thought would be a one- or two-year adventure, but God had a home waiting for me for the next six years! I really did not know what I was doing, but I knew God was in control and things would be okay.

I learned what it means to live out my faith and found out more about what it means to trust in the Lord. I only knew who a couple people were from the mission reports that I had read, and did not know anything about the culture. I had never lived outside of South Dakota, and knew how to work with animals better than with people. But God had a plan to use my ignorance for his glory. Just as he provided for all my needs in South Dakota, so he provided for all my needs in “small town” Asia (400,000 people—about the population of my state).

After helping with the education of missionary kids for six years, it was time to come home and be reenergized in the loving community I had grown up in. Coming home has been like trying to drink water from a fire hydrant: there are so many opportunities to read and study the Bible! I can listen to Christian radio stations in a language I understand, go to church and be taught from God’s Word, and talk to friends and family about how God is opening our eyes more and more to him. This has been a time of stepping back and reflecting on how he has protected me from so many things—especially myself. He is showing me more of his big picture and how he is the one working and moving throughout the world. Each of us, as his children, plays a part in his story, and I’m extremely blessed to have been chosen to be a part of it.

Now God is taking me to another (larger) city in Asia, and I’m excited to see what he will do. I am nervous about living in the middle of a city that big—I am still a country girl—but I know that God is the same everywhere and is in control of everything. He will use my weaknesses to show his power and bring honor and glory to his name!

## SUPPORTING YOUR FUR- LOUGHING MISSIONARIES

*Albert J. Tricarico, Jr.*

*Editor’s note: In October 2012, Al Tricarico, a missionary in Karamoja, Uganda, was on furlough in North America, traveling to speak at various OP churches and presbyteries. In a presentation to the Presbytery of the South, he made some suggestions on how to support missionaries on furlough. We’d like to share a summary of Al’s insights with you as the OPC welcomes a number of furloughing missionaries to its churches during the upcoming year.*

As I travel about on this furlough, I am struck by the high level of interest brothers and sisters have in my life and work. It is humbling—and very encouraging. I am sometimes asked if furlough wears me out. Furlough is work, no question. And I do get tired. But it is work I love. I really believe in it. I tell people that furlough is too long and too short at the same time. It is hard being away from the work. Yet I know that I will return to the field with a slight feeling of regret that I did not visit more churches.

I want to share five things with you. I’m going to offer some suggestions on how you can support your foreign missionaries. Some of these thoughts are mainly for church leaders, but I think they will be of some interest to all of you.

**1. Support Worldwide Outreach.** I love the title of a handout that comes from our General Assembly committees—“The Church’s Faithful Response to the Great Commission.” All of our committees—not just foreign missions—engage in the fulfillment of Christ’s command. You should be pleased that your church is involved so comprehensively in following Christ. Encourage each other to get on board with the whole work of the whole church, as the brochure puts it. As a missionary, I love that I am sent by 330 churches and mission works whose GA committee issued my call, oversees my work, and manages my support. I love our unified approach to ministry and am very glad that there are 30,000 people who participate in the things I am called to do for the sake of the gospel in Uganda. I am glad to be a missionary evangelist of the OPC. I am glad to be a small part of the whole work of the whole church.

**2. Emphasize Connections.** By this I mean the connections between saints in the pew and servants on the field. You’ve all seen airline maps that show the connections, the hubs and the destinations around the world. What would such a map look like if it marked the connections between our active foreign fields and the 330 churches in the U.S. and Canada? Think about it. Eight curved red lines extending from every location where an Orthodox Presbyterian congregation exists, all the way to Uganda, Asia, Eritrea, Ukraine, Quebec, Haiti, Ethiopia, and Uruguay. Each foreign field would have 330 lines extending from it to the churches in North America.



Al Tricarico preaching the gospel in a Karimojong village

Those connections are real, and they are precious to the families you send to the nations.

I have been asked to answer kids' questions, write work summaries for newsletters, and list Mission prayer requests—all by people I did not know until the email arrived and have not met to this day. Yet they know me. Why? Because we are all connected. We are the same church. We have the same duty to work and pray, so that the name of God will be known and loved by the peoples of the world.

I love to be introduced as “our missionary to Uganda.” “Here’s Al. He is our missionary.” I really believe this to be so. I am your missionary, and I work on your Mission.

**3. Stay Current.** I recognize that staying current is a challenge. But let me say that it is very encouraging to interact with people who read *New Horizons* and *Telenews*, and know the landscape as well as one can know it while living in the U.S. and Canada. Most people do a good job keeping up. However, I do occasionally hear and see things that tell me that not everyone is informed to the same degree.

The Committee on Foreign Missions (CFM) has a list of prayer letters and blog addresses used by our missionaries, as well as other promotional materials. Get them all. And if you don't already have one, find a person in your church to process the information, update bulletin boards, and organize prayer requests for display and for use in worship.

#### 4. Prepare for Visits.

- *Advertise the meeting well.* Suggest that people read about the country and pray for the field requests before the missionary comes. The CFM often asks missionaries to write articles for *New Horizons* that coincide with their furloughs. Get the articles. Hand out copies before the visit.
- *Communicate with the missionary* before the visit; discuss the program and ask if the missionary has any needs.

- *Have someone meet the missionary on location early*—especially if the meeting is before Sunday worship. Most people do not like to feel rushed, especially when audiovisual devices and display tables are involved.
- *Introduce the missionary, and close in prayer* when the presentation is over.
- *Give an honest assessment of the visit.* The CFM sends out evaluation forms; please fill them out.

**5. Pray for the Harvest.** Your prayers sustain us, and we are so thankful for them. And let me tell you this: One reason why I like to schedule a lot of visits is that I believe in prayer. If my coming helps you to pray, then your prayers will help the work. Do you believe that?

It can be lonely in Uganda. We have a great team, but it is small. More and more of our family members live in North America. The work is hard. And I have to tell you, the thought that there are brothers and sisters, living on another continent, dealing with a full plate of burdens and duties that need attention, and yet are interested in my work and thinking about me and praying for me, is a source of spiritual strength beyond what you can know. Please receive my thanks for your prayers. I do invite folk to send me prayer requests as well. Sometimes people send them, and then I pray.

*The author currently serves as the associate general secretary of the Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension. For more information about your missionaries, contact the Committee on Foreign Missions office at [cfmsec@opc.org](mailto:cfmsec@opc.org).*

## 👥 What's New

### // Appointments

**Miss Rebecca J. Call** (New Life Presbyterian Church, PCA, La Mesa, Calif.) has been reappointed to serve as a missionary associate in Uruguay for the summer of 2016. She arrived in Montevideo in mid-May.

Former missionary associate **Miss T. M. D.** (Westminster OPC, Hamill, S.Dak.) has been appointed to be a tentmaker missionary in Asia. She plans to arrive on the field in August.

### // Comings/Goings

Tentmaker missionary **Miss T. L. L.** (Lynnwood OPC, Lynnwood, Wash.) is scheduled to return to the U.S. later this month to begin a yearlong furlough.

## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

# BUILDING A FOUNDATION: PENNY PAPPAS & ALI KNUDSEN

// PATRICIA E. CLAWSON



Ali Knudsen with Roger Schmurr in the offices of the Committee on Christian Education

During the Orthodox Presbyterian Church's second twenty-five years, two godly women helped the Committee on Christian Education (CCE) launch two essential endeavors: developing its own Sunday school curriculum and ushering in the denominational magazine, *New Horizons in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church*.

Although Penny Pappas and Ali Knudsen both received their heavenly rest within five days of each other in March, their service to the OPC still benefits those in the pews today. Utilizing her teaching skills, creativity, and exuberance, Penny wrote some of the first Sunday school materials published by the CCE and taught the teachers how to implement the lessons in their classes. Ali Knudsen helped to springboard *New Horizons* and was its proofreader for twenty-six years.

At the OPC's Second General Assembly in 1936, commissioners declared that the unbelief in their former denomination was partly due "to a lack of a consistent system of Christian education" and urged the assembly to develop a comprehensive Christian Education program.<sup>1</sup> In answer, the CCE in the 1940s mimeographed its own Sunday school and summer Bible school materials for congregations. In 1948, the CCE employed Pastor Lewis Grotenhuis to operate a printing press in his home that churned out primary-age Sunday school lessons written by Betty Colburn, the CCE office secretary. Pastor Edmund Clowney was hired in

1950 to author a summer Bible school curriculum, which was then published under the name Great Commission Publications (GCP).

When Robley Johnston became CCE general secretary in 1955, he ensured that the Sunday school material was theologically sound, effectively taught, and attractively published. By 1962, Penny Pappas was among the four writers and editors hired to produce Sunday school materials for GCP.

### Penny Pappas

Before writing a word, Penny, who was new to the Reformed faith, spent the summer reading Calvin, Berkhof, and Machen. GCP published her material for primary-aged children in 1964, and for juniors in 1971. "Loving the Savior," part of Pappas's primary material, featured a story, a worksheet, and a sixty-page teacher's manual that included lesson content as well as practical teaching tips.<sup>2</sup>

Within twelve years, Sunday school material was published for all ages. In 1973, 435 of the 558 churches using GCP materials were non-OP.<sup>3</sup> To increase their financial and customer base, GCP became a joint venture of the OPC and the Presbyterian Church in America in 1975.

To help Sunday school teachers effectively use the materials, Penny became one of three regional teacher trainers, organized by GCP and the Christian Education Committee of the PCA. For twelve years, she conducted workshops to train teachers throughout the Northeast.

Penny was the first one to



GCP writers Penny Pappas (r.) and Dorothy Anderson

promote the use of multiracial pictures in GCP's materials. "If we want our material to be welcomed by a wide spectrum of people across America, we have to depict these people," she said.<sup>4</sup> Penny retired from GCP in 1999, at the age of 77, after laying the groundwork for the effective teaching of children.

### Ali Knudsen

Before 1980, the Committees on Foreign Missions, Home Missions, Christian Education, and Diaconal Ministries each sent their own publications to OPC churches and homes. The OPC's General Assembly in 1979 voted that those publications should cease and that there should be a joint denominational magazine. The first issue of *New Horizons* arrived at members' homes in January 1980.

Ali Knudsen became office secretary for CCE general secretary Roger Schmurr in January 1980—just in time to work on the third issue. The *New Horizons* production assistant for fifteen years, Ali corresponded with writers, proofread the articles before they went to the typesetter, and managed a list of thousands of mailing addresses.

Although Ali was born and raised in the Netherlands and English was her second language, she had a superb grasp of English and served as proofreader until she retired at the age of 75. "Readers of *New Horizons* today probably have no idea of the significance of what was accomplished," said Schmurr. "Ali was a significant part of that effort."<sup>5</sup>

Eighty years after the 1936 General Assembly urged the development of a CCE program to fight unbelief, the Committee on Christian Education and Great Commission Publications continue to serve the educational needs of the OPC, thanks in part to the solid foundation laid by Penny and Ali.

1 *The Orthodox Presbyterian Church 1936–1986*, p. 35.

2 "Great Commission Primary Materials off the Press," *Presbyterian Guardian*, November 1964, p. 151.

3 Thomas R. Patete, "By the Grace of God It Was Done!" in *Confident of Better Things*, pp. 291–92.

4 Amy Joy, "Helen 'Penny' Pappas," *Renaissance Woman*, soon to be published in *Choosing the Good Portion: Women in the OPC*.

5 Gabriela Reason, "Faithful and Effective Service in the OPC Offices," soon to be published in *Choosing the Good Portion*.

### *A Ministerial and Congregational Register of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, 1936–2016*

The Ministerial Register of 2011 has been updated, and a Congregational Register has been added. Every minister and every church (arranged by state and city) in OPC history has an entry. Order this 312-page paperback for \$10 from the Committee for the Historian at [store.opc.org](http://store.opc.org) (pay online) or at [bookorders@opc.org](mailto:bookorders@opc.org) (to be billed). OPC ministers will be mailed a copy, so they need not order.

## ABCs of PRESBYTERIANISM An Abundance of Counselors (2)

Larry Wilson

In biblical church government, elders are to work together, not only in the local church, but also beyond the local level. There are many benefits to this. On a regional level, they can plan, provide leadership, and give oversight to all sorts of ministries that local churches cannot do alone. And together they can help to deal fairly with various conflicts and issues that may arise.

When disputes arise that the local church cannot resolve, that church and any of its members have the privilege of appealing to their presbytery. The assembly of Acts 15 shows how the apostolic church handled disputes and disagreements in the church. When they sent their decision to the churches, it went in the name of "the apostles and elders" (Acts 15:23).

In our presbyterian form of government, we have governing councils, or assemblies. What we call the "session" governs the local church. (Even the name "session" is drawn from the joint character of biblical church rule. The elders are "seated" together. When they meet together, they are "in session.")

What we call the "presbytery" governs the regional church. That is, it exercises jurisdiction over what is common to the ministers, sessions, and congregations within a prescribed region.

Historically, some Presbyterian bodies have also had "synods" that exercise jurisdiction over what is common to the ministers, sessions, and congregations within several presbyteries.

What we call the "general assembly" governs those matters that concern the whole church.

Each of these assemblies—whether it is local or regional or synodical—is a presbytery, that is, a "council of elders." Our Lord Jesus calls it to further truth and righteousness, and to combat sins and errors that threaten the peace, purity, unity, or ministry of the church.

## ● Out of the Mouth . . .

I was helping my son Christian, 5, learn Psalm 23. One day, while we were walking down the sidewalk in the center of town, I told him to get out of the grass next to the sidewalk—because people let their dogs go to the bathroom there.

Surprised, Christian replied, "Then why does God take his sheep on the green grass?"

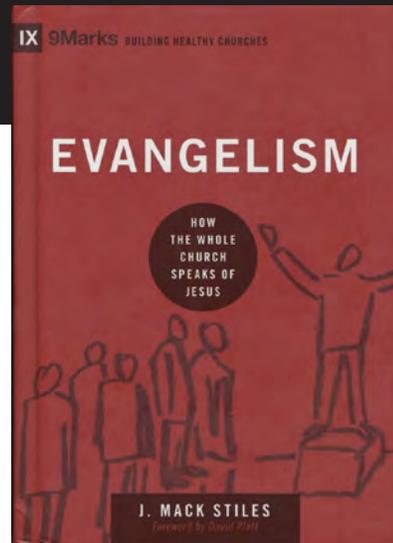
—Heero Hacquebord

L'viv, Ukraine

Note: If you have an example of the humorous "wisdom" that can come from children, please send it to the editor.

# REVIEW: EVANGELISM BY J. MACK STILES

// JOHN S. SHAW



Christian bookstores are filled with books on the topic of evangelism. So how should we evaluate these books and identify the best resources to help us grow?

First, books about evangelism should be theologically precise in defining the gospel message. If you communicate something other than the gospel recorded in the Bible, then you are doing something other than evangelism. Paul provides a good starting point in 1 Corinthians 15:3–8. We might describe this as “the what” of evangelism: what message are Christians called to communicate?

Second, the most helpful books give practical insights. They provide ideas for effective evangelistic work in the areas of preaching, teaching, loving, and personal witness. Often these ideas are filled out with fitting illustrations. We might describe this as “the how” of evangelism: how are Christians called to communicate the gospel?

These two points might seem obvious. Let me suggest, though, that there is at least one other key component of the best evangelistic resources. The most helpful books on evangelism maintain a high view of the visible church. We might describe this as “the context” of evangelism. The Lord Jesus Christ specifically gives the task of evangelism to the visible, organized church, and he promises a plentiful harvest as the church proclaims the gospel.

J. Mack Stiles has written a helpful book that checks each of those three boxes: *Evangelism: How the Whole Church Speaks of Jesus*. He carefully defines the task of evangelism and the message of the gospel (chapter 1). He provides helpful insights and fitting illustrations throughout the book (especially in chapters 4 and 5). Yet he purposely puts evangelism in its proper context: within the life of the visible church. This high view of the church is a thread that Stiles effectively weaves throughout the book, though he gives it specific attention in chapters 2 and 3.

The theme of the book is summarized in this sentence: “This book is about evangelism, but more than that, it’s also about developing a culture of evangelism” (p. 18). On the next page, Stiles makes it clear in what context the culture of evangelism must develop: “Much of our problem with evangelism is that we don’t have a big enough view of the church. I believe that God loves the world and has a wonderful plan for evangelism: his church” (p. 19).

In the first chapter, Stiles defines evangelism in this way: “Evangelism is teaching (heralding, proclaiming, preaching) the gospel (the message from God that leads to salvation) with the aim (hope, desire, goal) to persuade (convince, convert)” (p. 27). He then goes on to amplify each of the four parts of his definition.

Particularly helpful in this section is an emphasis on the use of words to communicate a message with particular content laid out by God himself in the Scripture. He breaks down the gospel message into four parts: (1) God the Creator, who is loving, holy, and just, (2) people who are made in the image of God, but are sinful rebels in danger of wrath and judgment, (3) Christ, the Son of God, who by his life, death, and resurrection secures salvation, and (4) the response to Christ and the gospel message that God requires for salvation: repent and believe.

Stiles calls the church to study this gospel message so that we know and speak it. And he reminds the church of our evangelistic responsibility: an aim or desire to persuade others of the truth of the gospel, so that they might repent and believe.

There is much at stake in getting these definitions right, for the health of the church depends on a right understanding of the gospel and the evangelistic endeavor. “Unbiblical evangelism is a method of assisted suicide for a church, so there is much at stake in getting evangelism right” (p. 39). If you know the story of the beginnings of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, you may imagine J. Gresham Machen responding

with an “Amen!”

In the second chapter, Stiles begins to focus this instruction quite specifically on the local, visible church. He describes “cultures of evangelism” with “whole churches that speak of Jesus” (p. 42). This chapter drives us away from evangelistic programs that sometimes fill the calendars of already busy people without much evidence of reaching unbelievers. The goal is something different: “for churches to be loving communities committed to sharing the gospel as part of an ongoing way of life, not by the occasional evangelistic raid event” (p. 47).

This chapter includes a list of ten or eleven qualities that characterize a church with a culture of evangelism (pp. 48–61). Like any list, we can probably quibble over items that are included or left out. Yet this list provides a helpful way to evaluate the evangelistic health of a congregation, and I found these points to be especially useful:

- In a healthy church culture, people are understood to be made in the image of God, but fallen, sinful, and separated from him—yet able to become new creations in Christ by the transforming power of God (2 Cor. 5:17).
- In a healthy church culture, everyone pulls together—something like what Paul commends in Philippi, thanking God for their partnership in the gospel (Phil. 1:3–5).
- In a healthy church culture, evangelism is modeled (2 Tim. 2:2), with people naturally participating as the Lord gives opportunity, relationships, and competency.
- In a healthy church culture, the church is understood to be the chosen and best context for evangelism.

Under that last point, Stiles writes one of my favorite sentences in the book: “What I do think is that the best outreach happens in a culture of evangelism inside a healthy church” (p. 61). That’s short and simple, and yet such an important reminder. And that sentence provides the transition into chapter 3, which to this reviewer is the most helpful chapter of the book.

In chapter 3, Stiles makes the point that every church has a culture of evangelism. The real question is whether that culture of evangelism is sick or healthy. He describes the healthy church in three parts: what the church is, what the church does, and the mission of the church (p. 71). Again, as mentioned earlier, we can probably quibble over any list like this, disagreeing with what the author included or left out. All in all, though, Stiles puts the emphasis in the right place. He focuses on church membership, public and corporate worship, and the Great Commission. And he calls the church to follow

the example of the apostles (e.g., Acts 6:1–7) by setting the right priorities: the ministry of the Word and prayer (pp. 73–76).

This chapter, situated right at the heart of this book, makes it stand out among the many books published each year on evangelism. Stiles puts the focus of the evangelistic endeavor in the right place: the visible, local church. And he calls the church to focus on the simple, ordinary means that Christ gave to his church, expecting the Lord to bless those means in the gathering of the harvest.

Listen to this paragraph found near the beginning of chapter 3: “In pursuing a healthy culture of evangelism, we don’t remake the church for evangelism. Instead, we allow the things that God has already built into the church to proclaim the gospel. Jesus did not forget the gospel when he built the church” (p. 64).

This book offers much more in the way of description and instruction. Chapters 4 and 5 provide some practical insights on how to develop a culture of evangelism within a local church. Pastors are challenged to communicate the gospel clearly in their preaching. Believers are encouraged to consider how they welcome newcomers and unbelievers who visit their churches. Elders are called to lead their congregation in spiritual maturity, so that the gospel permeates our lives, our words, and our fellowship. The whole church is called to pray regularly for the lost.

These chapters call the whole church to engage in the evangelistic ministry. Even as the pastors and elders focus on the ministry of the Word and prayer, the whole church gives attention to loving one another, caring for those in need, welcoming and loving visitors and unbelievers, praying without ceasing, and speaking the truth of the gospel. This is how the whole church speaks of Jesus, and the Lord promises to give this church a portion in the gathering of the harvest.

All of these insights challenge us to consider our own local congregations and how to participate obediently in the gathering of the nations. But what makes this book so useful and so easy to recommend is that the practical insights are built on a solid foundation: a clear, biblical understanding of the gospel and the fundamental role of the local, visible church in the work of evangelism. And all of that helpful instruction is contained in a book of just over one hundred pages.

For pastors and elders burdened with the responsibility of leading their congregation in a healthy, vibrant evangelistic ministry, I highly recommend this book. With theological precision, practical insights, and a high view of the church, Stiles provides good counsel for building a culture of evangelism in the local church. That is a desire we hopefully all share, as we seek to declare his glory among the nations.

*The author is the general secretary for the Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension. Evangelism: How the Whole Church Speaks of Jesus, by J. Mack Stiles, is published by Crossway (2014). Hardback, 128 pages, list price \$14.99.*

## Home Missions Today

For up-to-date Home Missions news and prayer updates, e-mail [HomeMissionsToday@opc.org](mailto:HomeMissionsToday@opc.org).  
New editions: July 13, 27.

# THE USE OF YOUR HANDS

// MATTHEW A. JUDD

“**Y**ou shall not steal.” What does this mean in practice? Certainly it means that you are to keep the Snickers bar out of your pocket at the checkout line. It also means you are to keep your eyes off of your classmate’s answers as you take a test. And of course it means you are not to waltz into your neighbor’s garage and just happen to come out with his 9/16-inch crescent wrench. But is this all the Lord is telling you in the eighth commandment? Or is there something more to “You shall not steal” than keeping your hands to yourself?

Well, how does God put it? “Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need” (Eph. 4:28). Ah, now we’re getting somewhere. Look at your hands—the ones attached to your arms. Look at them carefully. Look at them honestly. Are they clean? If they are, how? The answer’s obvious, right? You washed them in the shower this morning.

But you’ve misunderstood my question. Look at your hands again. Are they really clean? How can they be? You’ve used them countless times to *take* instead of *give*. To *hoard* instead of *help*. To *resist* instead of *restore*. To protect, pamper and promote self, all at the expense of the needs of others—the obvious needs of your spouse, your children, your fellow church members, the worldwide kingdom of Jesus, your coworkers, your neighbors, and your community. Your hands are dirty, stained, withered, and guilty.

“Well!” you reply, “I think I’ll just put my hands in my pockets and move along now.”

But you know that will not do. A question gnaws in the recesses of your mind: “Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? Or who

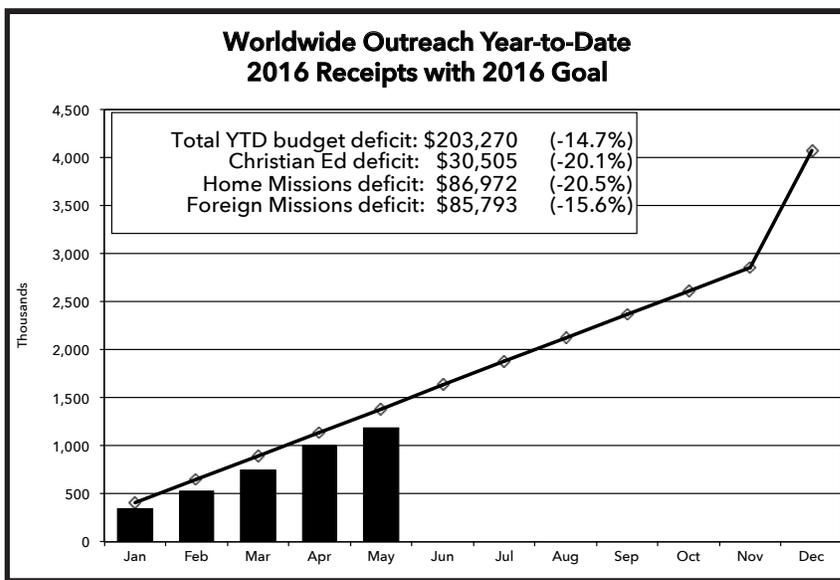
may stand in His holy place?” And the answer stings: “He who has clean hands and a pure heart” (Ps. 24:3–4). Neither soap nor hand cleaner can make those hands of yours clean.

You must look to *Another’s hands*. To One who stretched out his hands to *give* instead of *take*, to *heal* instead of *hoard*, to *restore* instead of *resist*. Here is the One who alone can cleanse your hands. For he stretched out his hands to be mangled for your misdeeds. He didn’t keep his hands in his pockets, holding on to what was his. No, he gave his hands to be nailed to the cross for you, snubbing the needs around you. And this Jesus who died for your sins is now risen with healing in his hands. Healing that not only washes away your guilt, but speaks these words to you: “Stretch out your hand!” And behold your withered, selfish hands are restored and made whole.

But for what purpose does he cleanse your dirty hands and make your withered hands whole? So that you would now labor—diligently, honestly, and regularly with your hands. To what end? So that you may have something to give to him who is in need. Here then is the heart of the eighth commandment: hands cleansed and restored by Jesus. Hands to be pulled out of selfish pockets and put to work—hands to be used *to generously give to those in need*.

Those in need? Those in need of having their filthy hands cleansed by the gospel of Jesus, those in need of experiencing the healing hands of Jesus through you and your resources. So open your eyes and see these needs around you; open your hands and give. Why? Because Jesus has graciously stretched out his hands to you!

*The author is the pastor of Covenant Presbyterian Church in Mansfield, Ohio. He quotes the NKJV.*



## JULY

1. Missionary associate **Jennifer Nelson**, Quebec, Canada. Pray for the three weeks of English for Kids Bible camps, which began this week. / **Brad and Cinamon Peppo**, Springfield, Ohio. Pray that God would bring unbelievers to Living Water OPC's evangelistic Bible studies this summer. / **William (and Kelly) Wood**, summer intern at Trinity OPC in Easton, Pa.
2. **Mark and Karissa Soud**, Birmingham, Ala. Pray that the Lord would provide fruit from Redeemer Presbyterian Church's outreach efforts. / Foreign Missions administrative assistant **Linda Posthuma** and secretary **Katrina Zartman**. / **Andy (and Anna) Smith**, yearlong intern at Bethel Presbyterian Church in Wheaton, Ill.
3. **Ethiopian Reformed Presbyterian Church**. Pray for sound teaching and steady zeal for the Lord. / **Lowell and Mae Ivey**, Virginia Beach, Va. Pray for the Ivey family as they get settled at Reformation Presbyterian Church. / **Ryan (and Rochelle) Cavanaugh**, yearlong intern at Prescott Presbyterian Church in Prescott, Ariz.
4. **Tim and Deborah Herndon**, West Lebanon, N.H. Pray for summer outreach plans at Providence OPC. / **Heero and Anya Hacquebord**, L'viv, Ukraine. Pray for students and leaders at this summer's English/Bible camp. / **Michael (and Melissa) Spangler**, summer intern at Providence Presbyterian Church in Greensboro, N.C.
5. **Ben and Melanie Westerveld**, Quebec, Canada. Pray for Ben as he works with the teams and children attending this month's English Bible camps. / Home Missions general secretary **John Shaw**. / Short-term Missions Coordinator **David Nakhla**. Pray for the Lord's blessing on the labors and travel of all OPC short-term missionaries.
6. **Josh and Kristen McKamy**, Chambersburg, Pa. Pray that the Lord would bless Covenant OPC's outreach efforts by adding three families this year. / **David and Sunshine Okken**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray that the Lord would use village studies to reach many Karimojong for Christ. / **Adam (and Noelle) Wells**, summer intern at Lakeview OPC in Rockport, Maine.
 

*Josh and Kristen  
McKamy*
7. **Mr. and Mrs. F.**, Asia. Pray for special outreach programs being held in July. / **Joshua and Jessica Lyon**, Carson, Calif. Pray that Grace OPC's home visitations will be a blessing to the families of the church. / **David Haney**, director of finance and planned giving for the Committee on Coordination.
8. **Jim and Tricia Stevenson**, Tulsa, Okla. Pray for Providence OPC, that God's elect will be brought in. / **David and Rashel Robbins**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray that new believers in Karamoja will continue to grow in grace and knowledge. / Yearlong interns **Bulut Yasar** at New Life OPC in Montoursville, Pa., and **Joseph Johnson** at Trinity OPC in Hatboro, Pa.
9. Missionary associates **Jesse and Hannah Van Gorkom** and **Christopher and Chloe Verdick**, Nakaale, Uganda. / Pray for **Jim Bosgraf**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of the Midwest, as he gives counsel to organizing pastors and overseeing sessions and helps lead them through the process of organization. / Navy chaplain **Cornelius (and Deidre) Johnson**.
10. **Kim and Barbara Kuhfuss**, Eau Claire, Wis. Pray that new visitors will come to Providence Reformed Church. / **Bob and Martha Wright**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for the health and safety of visitors laboring in Karamoja this summer. / Pray for Christian Education general secretary **Danny Olinger** as he serves as Intern Director.
11. **Mark and Jeni Richline**, Montevideo, Uruguay (on furlough). Pray for Mark as he speaks to the Presbytery of Ohio's junior high camp this week. / **Chris and Megan Hartshorn**, Anaheim Hills, Calif. Pray for adult conversions and baptisms at Anaheim Hills Presbyterian Church. / **Wayne (and Suzanne) Veenstra**, yearlong intern at Harvest OPC in Wyoming, Mich.
12. **Paul and Sarah Murreale**, St. Louis, Mo. Pray that God would bless Gateway OPC with additional families. / **Eric and Dianna Tuininga**, Mbale, Uganda. Pray that the Lord would bless the evangelistic efforts of the OPCU churches in the Mbale area. / **Jon (and Kim) Beall**, summer intern at New Covenant Community Church in Joliet, Ill.
13. **Charles and Connie Jackson**, Mbale, Uganda. Pray for the men serving as pastors and elders in the local churches. / **Mika and Christina Edmondson**, Grand Rapids, Mich. Pray for the continued discipleship and unity of New City Fellowship. / **Doug Watson**, part-time staff accountant; **Kathy Bube**, Loan Fund administrator.
14. **Jim and Bonnie Hoekstra**, Andover, Minn. Pray that God would bring numerous non-Christians to Immanuel OPC. / Pray for missionary associates **John and Alice Steenhof**, Mbale, Uganda, as they assist in training Christian school teachers. / **Miller (and Stephanie) Ansell**, yearlong intern at Faith Presbyterian Church in Garland, Tex.
15. Affiliated missionaries **Jerry and Marilyn Farnik**, Prague, Czech Republic. Pray for students and leaders at this summer's English Camp (July 13-25). / **Jeremy Logan**, Mt. Vernon, Ohio. Pray for new visitors and members at Knox Presbyterian Church. / **Richard (and Erin) Chung**, yearlong intern at Theophilus OPC in Anaheim, Calif.

- 16.** Home Missions staff administrator **Sean Gregg**. / Pray for missionary associate **Kathleen Winslow**, Czech Republic, as she adjusts to her new living and working situation in Prague. / Committee on Coordination: **Jan Gregson**, assistant to the finance director; **Charlene Tipton**, database administrator; **Mark Stumpff**, office assistant.
- 17.** Affiliated missionary **Linda Karner**, Japan. Pray for good relationships with her students. / **John and Wenny Ro**, Chicago, Ill. (downtown). Pray that God would add new people through Gospel Life Presbyterian Church's outreach activities. / Pray for **Alan Strange** and **Derrick Vander Meulen**, coeditors of the proposed Psalter-Hymnal.
- 18.** **Andrew and Billie Moody**, San Antonio, Tex. Pray that the Lord would raise up elders and deacons at San Antonio Reformed Church. / Affiliated missionaries **Craig and Ree Coulbourne**, Urayasu, Japan. Pray for many opportunities to present the gospel to seekers. / *Ordained Servant* editor **Greg Reynolds** and proofreader **Diane Olinger**.
- 19.** Foreign Missions general secretary **Mark Bube**. Pray for Mark's continued good health and strength as he pursues a busy schedule. / **Phil Strong**, Lander, Wyo. Pray that the people of Grace Reformed Fellowship will delight in and love the Lord more than all else. / Pray for **Archie Allison**, chairman of the Subcommittee for Internet Ministries.
- 20.** **Ron and Carol Beabout**, Gaithersburg, Md. Pray that Trinity Reformed Church OPC's temporary summer location would be more visible and accessible for means of outreach. / Foreign Missions associate general secretary **Douglas Clawson**.
- 21.** **Ray and Michele Call**, Montevideo, Uruguay. Pray for continued blessings on the church-planting work. / **Robert and Christy Arendale**, Houston, Tex. Pray that the Word and the Spirit will work together to build up and sustain Cornerstone OPC. / **Ryan (and Rachel) Heaton**, yearlong intern at Tyler Presbyterian Church in Tyler, Tex.
- 22.** **Mike and Katy Myers**, Royston, Ga. Pray for continued growth for Heritage Presbyterian Church and for wisdom during officer training. / Missionary associates **Markus and Sharon Ruth Jeromin**, Uruguay. Pray for the preaching of the Word in Montevideo. / *New Horizons* editorial assistant **Pat Clawson** and proofreader **Sarah Pederson**.
- 23.** Pray for missionary associate **Rebecca Call**, Montevideo, Uruguay, as she assists the Uruguay Mission. / **Chris Walmer**, area home missions coordinator, Presbytery of Central Pennsylvania. Pray for church-planting exploratory work in the region. / **Bryan (and Heidi) Dage**, yearlong intern at Covenant OPC in Komoka, Ont.
- 24.** **Tom and Martha Albaugh**, Pittsburgh, Pa. Pray that God would send new visitors to Redeemer OPC

Mission. / Retired missionaries **Betty Andrews, Cal and Edie Cummings, Greet Rietkerk**, and **Young and Mary Lou Son**. Remember those with chronic illnesses. / **Zachary (and Annie) Simmons**, summer intern at Grace Presbyterian Church in Vienna, Va.

- 25.** **Brian and Dorothy Wingard**, South Africa. Pray for the students at Mukhanyo Theological College where Brian teaches. / **Jay and Andrea Bennett**, Neon, Ky. Pray that the Lord would organize Neon



*Brian and Dorothy Wingard*

Reformed Presbyterian Church into a local congregation by 2020. / **Andrew (and Cyndi) Myers**, summer intern at Calvary OPC in Glenside, Pa.

- 26.** **Christopher and Ann Malamisuro**, Cincinnati, Ohio. Pray for Good Shepherd OPC's summer outreach Bible studies. / Pray for tentmaker missionary **T. L. L.**, Asia, as she prepares for furlough in the U.S. / Pray for stated clerk **Ross Graham** as he works on the minutes and yearbook of the 83rd General Assembly.
- 27.** **Ben and Heather Hopp**, Haiti (on furlough). Pray for Ben as he speaks to OP congregations in the Presbytery of the South. / Home Missions associate general secretary **Al Tricarico**. / Pray for the preparation for the **2017 Ministerial Training Institute of the OPC**.
- 28.** **Jonathan and Kristin Moersch**, Capistrano Beach, Calif. Pray that the saints of Trinity Presbyterian Church will continue to grow in love and service toward God and neighbor. / Associate missionaries **Octavius and Marie Delfils**, Haiti. / **Marvin Padgett**, executive director of Great Commission Publications.
- 29.** Pray for missionary associate **Heather Foss**, Nakaale, Uganda, in her duties at the medical clinic. / **Brian and Sara Chang**, Cottonwood, Ariz. Pray for new opportunities for the name of Christ and Christ Reformed Presbyterian Church to be made known. / **Janet Birkmann**, Diaconal Ministries administrative assistant.
- 30.** **Bill and Sessie Welzien**, Key West, Fla. Pray that the Lord would keep Keys Presbyterian Church bound in peace and unity. / **Mr. and Mrs. M.**, Asia. Pray for Mr. M. as he works with churches seeking to establish a presbytery. / *New Horizons* managing editor **Jim Scott** and cover designer **Chris Tobias**.
- 31.** Pray for the summer ministry activities and travel of our missionary associates in Asia: **S. Z.** and **Mr. and Mrs. C.** / **Jim and Eve Cassidy**, Austin, Tex. Pray that South Austin Presbyterian Church's radio ministry will reach many unbelievers. / Army chaplain **Paul (and Mary) Berghaus** and Air Force chaplain **C. Phillip (and Melanie) Hollstein III**.

# NEWS, VIEWS, & REVIEWS

## GARST MILL TURNS FORTY

*Rodney T. King*

In 1971, a small group of people desiring to establish a Presbyterian and Reformed church began meeting in a home in Roanoke, Virginia, for Bible studies. In response to ads, others joined the group. An article in the *Roanoke Times* on December 11, 1971, told about the new group and referred to the OPC as a “Presbyterian splinter group.”

In 1974, the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic recognized the group as a “chapel,” and on September 1, 1974, this new chapel began holding worship services as Valley OPC at the Central YWCA in downtown Roanoke. In the spring of 1976, the chapel became a church and the congregation elected the Rev. Richard (Dick) Horner as pastor and Jim Horner as elder.

By the spring of 1983, a lot had been purchased directly across from Garst Mill Park in Cave Spring, and a church building had been constructed on it, so the congregation changed its name to Garst Mill Presbyterian Church (OPC).

Dick Horner served as organizing pastor (1974–1976) and then pastor (1976–2007) for thirty-three years, until his retirement. He was followed by the Rev. Timothy L. McClymonds (2008–2012). The current pastor, the Rev. Rodney T. King, began his ministry there in 2012.

On Saturday, May 21, the congregation and its friends met for a picnic at Garst Mill Park to begin a celebration of the church’s fortieth anniversary. They had a great time of food, fellowship, and singing.

On Sunday, May 22, the church gathered for a recounting of the history of the church. Two elders, who have served this church since its beginning, recounted God’s blessings in good times and hard times, and even poked fun at Dick Horner for a particular illustration he often used in his teaching.



*Members, family, and friends of Garst Mill Presbyterian Church*

At the beginning of the worship service, Pastor Rodney King reminded the congregation of David’s prayer in Psalm 71:18, which expresses confidence that God will raise up a new generation of his people. The Reverend Dr. Roger Schultz, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia, and a longtime friend of the congregation, was the guest preacher. His text was that often used by J. Gresham Machen in his last sermons: 1 Corinthians 15:58.

A fellowship meal, with anniversary cake, followed the morning worship service. The church now begins its next forty years of worship and service.

## WOMEN OF THE LIGHT

*Olivia Durham*

The twenty-second annual Women’s Retreat of the Presbytery of New York and New England was held on April 15–16 at the Lakeside Christian Conference Center in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. Ninety women and teens were in attendance.

Our keynote speaker this year was Jean Gaffin, addressing the topic of “Women of the Light.” With her guidance, we focused on the spiritual transformation from darkness into light that God has worked in us, and the implications for our lives

today. Also, Janet Powers held a workshop called “Walking in the Light,” based on Ed Welch’s book *Side by Side*.

Elizabeth Horst was our teen speaker for the weekend, and the girls were enthusiastic about their time with her.

Next year’s speaker will be Ellen Dykas of Harvest Ministries, USA. We are looking forward to hearing her April 21–22 at Lakeside.

Audio files and photos of the event are available for free download at the retreat website [pnynewomen.wordpress.com](http://pnynewomen.wordpress.com).



*Jean Gaffin*



Bobbi Olinger in 2012

## IN MEMORIAM BOBBI OLINGER

David Nakhla

Known for her cheerful disposition, wonderful sense of humor, impeccable home, love of the OPC, and interest in foreign missions, Bobbi Olinger, a charter member of Calvary OPC in La Mirada, California, went to be with the Lord on May 20, 2016, at the age of 94. Roverta “Bobbi” Johnson Olinger was known as one who “sparked a contagious love for missions in countless others.” Into her nineties, she served faithfully on her church’s missions committee.

Bobbi was born on March 18, 1922, in Northville, South Dakota. Losing her mother at the age of five and growing up during the Great Depression, her life had a difficult start. After high school, she moved to Seattle, Washington, where she worked at Boeing Aircraft during World War II. After the war, she married Francis “Denny” Olinger in 1947 and raised two boys in Whittier, California.

When Bobbi visited Faith OPC in Long Beach, she heard the gospel and came to know her living Savior, Jesus Christ. The Olingers’ move to La Mirada led to the planting of Calvary OPC.

Bobbi was widowed when her boys were teenagers, and diagnosed with cancer more than once. Despite her trials, she always exemplified her love for the Lord and her desire to see the gospel advanced. Survived by her two sons and four grandchildren, she will long be affectionately remembered as “the missionary lady.”

## UPDATE

### MINISTERS

- Licentiate **Lowell Ivey** was ordained as a minister and installed as an evangelist of the Presbytery of the Southeast to serve as the organizing pastor of Reformation Presbyterian Church in Virginia Beach, Va., on May 27.
- **Angelo O. Valle** was received by the Presbytery of Central Pennsylvania on May 7 and granted permission to labor outside the OPC as pastor of Christ Reformed Church (a member of the Conservative Congregational Christian Conference) in Alexandria, Pa., where he has been the pastor since August 2013.
- On May 6, **Zecharias Abraham Weldeyesus**, previously an evangelist at Covenant Community OPC in Taylors, S.C., was installed as pastor of Redeemer OPC in Atlanta, Ga.

## REVIEWS

*God’s Glory Alone*, by David VanDrunen. Zondervan, 2015. Paperback, 192 pages, list price 16.99. Reviewed by OP pastor Geoff Downey.

“One never comes to the end of catechizing oneself.” I don’t know who first said this, if anyone, but I think it’s true. I’ll attribute it to Socrates: “Catechize thyself.”

David VanDrunen’s new book is the second in the Five Solas series being published from 2015 to 2017 by Zondervan. Although it may be disappointing to discover that the magisterial Reformers never used these titles, we do find them helpful to organize our thinking about the essential matters of debate since the Protestant Reformation.

VanDrunen expounds this “sola” (*solus Deo gloria*) in Reformed theology and in Scripture, and then helps us to see how to live for God’s glory today. For a fairly short book, this one is rich with Scripture,

confessional theology, and even some historical theology for good measure. The author even engages our theology practically as we consider living to God’s glory in our Bible study, in prayer, and in our suffering.

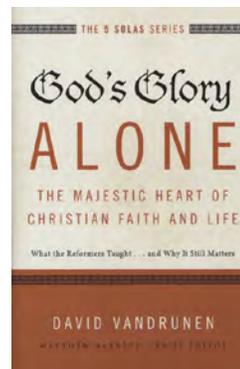
There is more than enough material here for extended reflection, despite, as he reminds us, the allure of all things immediate in a distracted age. He does a fine job of giving a wide swath of material to reflect upon in just eight chapters. This book will really help those who want both a primer on the subject and grist for Sunday school, a reading group, or another forum for extended study and discussion.

If you are familiar with VanDrunen’s writing, you know to expect clear and logical thinking. But this work, perhaps because he is away from his main areas of research and writing, offers many artful turns of phrase. Highlighting a subtheme throughout the book is this beautiful sentence: “The way of God’s glory winds through the lowliness of and desolation of Calvary.” Keeping our eyes fixed upon the theology of the cross, and avoiding a theology of glory, leads to this artful line: “When we open Scripture and learn that we are lost sinners, and that a God of wrath and judgment stands against us, the theology of glory becomes but a dream extinguished by Scripture’s dawn.” This is elegant writing, infused with truth, enrapturing both heart and mind.

One warning about the “catechetical” quality of the book: some phrases may seem clunky due to the proof texting or citation of Scripture, confession, or some scholar. Do not let this slow you down; just follow the flow of thought, and you’ll be glad you did. The book is worth the price alone for the center section on God’s glory in

Scripture.

Next year we mark the five hundredth anniversary of the Reformation. If the five solas are not brought to the foreground, they should be. VanDrunen’s book has accomplished one-fifth of this catechetical equation for us; the book does a fine job of helping us worship with both heart and mind.



***Knox: The Life and Legacy of Scotland's Controversial Reformer*, a 77-minute film on DVD produced by Murdo Macleod. Trinity Digital, 2015. Distributed in the U.S. by Gunn Productions ([www.colingunn.com/knox](http://www.colingunn.com/knox)), \$17.95. Reviewed by Nancy and Larry Mehne.**

The way we think about life is profoundly influenced by our culture and history. As Christians, we are influenced not only by our contemporary world, but also by the history of the church. It is important for all believers to remember what the Lord has done through his providential care of the church. The film *Knox*

is a worthwhile contribution toward the education of Presbyterians today.

The film is the story of John Knox (ca. 1515–1572), beginning with his birth at the time of early protests against corruption in the Roman Catholic Church. Scottish actor Philip Todd narrates the story as he visits the relevant historic sites in Scotland, England, Germany, and Switzerland. The story is carried along with commentary by leading professors, theologians, and historians, and is substantiated by quotations from Knox's own sermons and other writings. But this is not a dry, biographical lecture by any means. Knox's strengths and weaknesses are honestly discussed. Visits to historical sites and explanations by experts alternate with reenactments of events and animated segments, varying the flow of information. The fast-paced story keeps the viewer's attention.

Also treated are Scottish social, political, and ecclesiastical life, the influence of the Reformation in England and on the continent, and the work of earlier and later Reformers. John Knox's fervent stand for biblical truth on the theological issues within the church (preaching in the language of the people, participation of the people in the Lord's Supper, singing of the Psalms, biblical literacy for all, shared leadership by elders and synods) is clearly presented. These subjects are still matters of concern today.

As Knox's mighty work of God in Scotland was coming to an end and he

was near death, his fervent appeal was: "Know God. Be faithful. Bless Scotland." The film concludes with the same plea: that modern, secular Scotland will experience a new reformation.

*Knox* is a well-designed film—historically, theologically, aesthetically, and even evangelistically. It could be used as a tool to teach church history or ecclesiology or as an introduction to the means of grace. It could be used in the context of catechetical instruction or shown at Reformation Day events. It might even satisfy those who have always wanted to visit Scotland and Geneva! The film's music, sound effects, and presentation were well produced. We have enjoyed this content-filled film multiple times. Viewing it with the English subtitles helped us to see names and places for further study.

*Knox* is a gift to help us remember the Lord and our place in his providential work in history.

***Ecclesiastes*, by Douglas Sean O'Donnell. P&R, 2014. Hardback, 248 pages, list price \$22.99. Reviewed by New Horizons editor Danny E. Olinger.**

Although the writing of commentaries on the book of Ecclesiastes has seemingly been without end in recent years, Douglas Sean O'Donnell's *Ecclesiastes* in the Reformed Expository Commentary series is to be commended. O'Donnell makes the case that the problem that the Preacher in the book of Ecclesiastes—called "Pastor Solomon" by O'Donnell—addresses is life in a fallen, sin-cursed world. Wisdom cannot change the reality that God has faithfully carried out his promised punishment upon Adam and his seed for Adam's transgression. O'Donnell writes, "Because of God's curse on creation (the consequences of the fall recorded in Genesis 3:14–15 are assumed throughout), in all our endeavors we cannot find much meaning or sustain-

able joy in this world or present age. It's vanity" (p. 9).

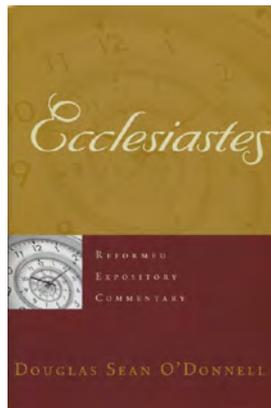
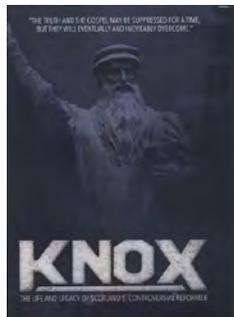
O'Donnell posits that the opening question of the Preacher, "What does man gain by all the toil at which he toils under the sun?" (Eccl. 1:3), and its implied answer, "Nothing," provide an entrance into understanding the book as a whole. Death makes everything vain. But, if that is the case, how is one to live under the sun? All illusions of self-aggrandizement and all pretense of pride in this life must be abandoned. The answer is found in the Lord, in obediently trusting him (Eccl. 12:13).

O'Donnell helpfully adds that the goal of Ecclesiastes—trusting in the Lord and doing what he says—can only be reached by reading it through the lens of Jesus Christ. He writes that the way to read Ecclesiastes is to understand it as God's wisdom literature that contains a unified message that makes better (but not perfect) sense in light of the crucified, risen, and returning Christ. In his death on the cross, Jesus redeemed us from the vanity that the Preacher wrestled with and suffered under. In his resurrection, Jesus restored meaning to our labor under the sun. In his return, Jesus will settle every injustice and elucidate all absurdity when he ushers those who fear the Lord into

the glories of the living God.

God's perfected wisdom is found in Christ, the wonderful counselor. Jesus is the divine resolution. He is the righteous one who conquered all unrighteousness through his death and resurrection, and, as such, he is the meaning of this life. As O'Donnell puts it, the lesson of Ecclesiastes is to turn from drinking out

of broken cisterns that hold no water to drinking from the fount of living waters that is found in Christ. But, before one comes to the living waters that Christ offers, one must first walk through the waterless wilderness where the things of this creation, such as wisdom (Eccl. 1), pleasure and work (Eccl. 2), fame and power (Eccl. 4), wealth (Eccl. 5), and family and health (Eccl. 6) seek to satisfy. The only



water that quenches one's thirst forever is to drink from the Savior, the one in whom a spring wells up to eternal life.

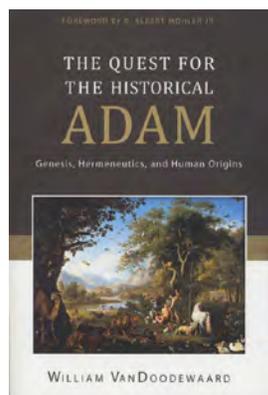
***The Quest for the Historical Adam*, by William Van Doodewaard. Reformation Heritage, 2015. Hardback, 316 pages, list price \$30. Reviewed by OP pastor George C. Hammond.**

The question of the historicity of Adam is perhaps the most important question that the church is engaged in today. I suspect that the debate will have ramifications for the next century; the importance of the topic would be hard to overestimate.

The title of this book suggests that it deals with questions regarding the historical reality of Adam as the progenitor and covenant head of the human race. Albert Mohler, in the foreword for the work, notes, "In terms of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the most urgent question related to beginnings has to do with the existence of Adam and Eve as the first parents to all humanity" (p. vii).

Unfortunately, the book leaves the reader feeling like its title is a broken promise. The first one hundred and fifty pages have little to do with Adam, speaking of him peripherally if at all, and are rather a thinly veiled polemic for reading Genesis 1 as teaching six twenty-four-hour days of creation. The sources cited are largely secondary rather than primary, with only small sections of apparently random passages being quoted without being developed. There is assertion for this position, but little in the way of useful argumentation.

Many of Van Doodewaard's assertions would be contested by scholars of historical theology dealing with the patristic and medieval periods. For example, Van Doodewaard suggests that, contrary to the statements of Anselm about the influence of Augustine's *The Literal Meaning of Genesis* on Medieval theology, Augustine was not really very influential. This is a startling statement that needs to be



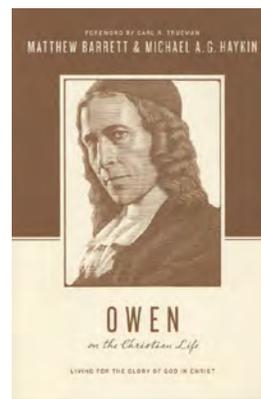
supported, but Van Doodewaard simply drops the bare statement on the page and then moves on (pp. 38–39). Because the sections and quotes are so short and often cite secondary sources, one is left with a sense of cherry picking.

The latter half of the book is more beneficial than the former. The notable bright spot is chapter 5 (pp. 133–92), which deals with the early twentieth century and Old Princeton, presenting a good and fairly accurate, if overly brief, analysis. Significantly, however, early Westminster Seminary is barely mentioned, and J. Gresham Machen's then-famous radio talks on *The Christian View of Man* are not mentioned at all, perhaps because Machen does not fit neatly into Van Doodewaard's narrative.

The book has limited value. Those who are familiar with the issues it touches on and know a bit more of historical theology may find its short characterization of periods helpful. Those who are interested in what the title of the book seems to promise—discussion of the historicity of Adam—would better use their time reading J. P. Versteeg's *Adam in the New Testament*. Those wishing to find arguments (rather than assertions) for a creation spanning six twenty-four-hour days would be better served by reading the essays by J. Ligon Duncan and David W. Hall in *The Genesis Debate*, edited by David G. Hagopian. Those interested in gaining greater insight into the history and complexities of that debate should read the entire *Genesis Debate*.

***Owen on the Christian Life: Living for the Glory of God in Christ*, by Matthew Barrett and Michael A. G. Haykin. Crossway, 2015. Paperback, 296 pages, list price \$21.99. Reviewed by OP professor Ryan M. McGraw.**

As a minister, I would love to believe that everyone in the church would read John Owen. There are few men whom the Father has used under the Spirit's blessing to impart to my soul a greater love for Christ



than Owen. I suspect that many ministers pray that the Lord would enable them to digest the best of what they read in order to pass on to their congregations

even a tenth of what the Lord has given to them. In this book, Barrett and Haykin invite readers to follow Owen on a guided tour of the Christian life. They do so with skill and simplicity, passing on to their readers part of the blessing that the Lord gave them in studying Owen's works.

The topics in this book are well chosen. The authors note that it is difficult, if not impossible, to treat every major theme of Owen's teaching in a single volume. However, they reflect Owen's greatest legacy to the church by promoting his goal of aiming at the personal holiness of their readers. In contrast to many modern versions of Christian living, the bedrock of Owen's teaching is the Bible, the Trinity, and the person of Christ (chapters 2–4). This leads to Christ's glorious work on our behalf (chapter 5), God's sovereignty in our salvation (chapter 6), and the benefits of redemption that come to both the individual believer and the church (chapters 7–9). The striking way in which Owen weaves the highest Christian doctrines into warmhearted Christian devotion keeps married what many try to divorce in the church today.

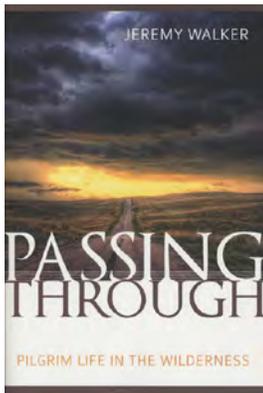
The style of this book is simple and accessible. The authors summarize Owen and digest the best of his thought on Christian living. This is not a scholarly work that sets Owen rigorously in his historical context. Such works have their place, and I have profited from them more in the long run than less scholarly works. Yet not all will have this experience. Ideas need to be understood in context, which requires a lot of work and professional skill. Yet ideas also need to be appropriated and translated for the profit of today's

church. The appendix to the book illustrates the value and power of ministers digesting Owen and mediating his thought to their churches. Haykin provides examples from the long-time pastor of his own congregation, as well as several prominent examples from church history. The Lord has used a revival of Owen's *Works* to bless the church numerous times in the past, and this reviewer hopes and prays that he will do so again and again.

As with any book on Owen's theology, this reviewer hopes that reading *Owen on the Christian Life* will make you want to read Owen himself. Yet this work strikes at the heart of one of the most vital needs of the church today. The church needs to recover a vibrant, scripturally informed, Christ-exalting, Trinitarian view of Christian living. Owen is not the only theologian who ever taught these themes, but he taught them better than most and he speaks prophetically to the needs of the hour. Read this book to use Owen for what God designed him and all other ministers of the gospel to be, namely, instruments of building up the church in unity and maturity to the fullness of the stature of Christ.

***Passing Through: Pilgrim Life in the Wilderness*, by Jeremy Walker. Reformation Heritage Books, 2015. Paperback, 300 pages, list price \$20.00. Reviewed by OP pastor Robert S. Arendale.**

In his book *Passing Through: Pilgrim Life in the Wilderness*, Jeremy Walker clearly and biblically addresses a perennial issue in the church,



namely, the relationship between the Christian and the world. As the title indicates, Walker expounds the theme of the church as a pilgrim people passing through the world.

Our identity as pilgrims, he states,

determines our activity. Chapters 1 and 2 introduce the topic and lay its theological foundations. In these chapters, Walker sets forth Christ and his engagement with the world as the pattern for the Christian (John 17:14–19). He briefly describes three flawed relationships to the world that the believer should avoid: isolation, inattention, and emulation. Instead, the Christian should be a pilgrim (Ps. 119:19; 1 Chron. 29:15; 1 Peter 2:11; Phil. 3:17–4:1; Heb. 11:10, 13–16; 1 Cor. 10:1–5, 11–12).

In the remaining ten chapters, Walker tackles such matters as the environment of the pilgrimage (i.e., the world), the enemy of the pilgrim (i.e., Satan), the attitude of the pilgrim (i.e., faithfulness in the fight), and the hope of the pilgrim (i.e., the new heavens and the new earth).

There is much to commend in this work, but I will highlight two areas: clarity and balance. First, Walker is a clear and engaging writer. His thesis is well stated and well argued. *Passing Through* is a book from which both the seasoned pastor and the recent convert can learn much. Moreover, it is saturated with Scripture. Each chapter begins with a “Scriptural Framework” and closes with “Specific Counsels” (i.e., application). Walker’s arguments are grounded in, and flow from, biblical teaching. And citing such figures as Calvin, Henry, Plummer, Spurgeon, and Bunyan, Walker draws deeply on our rich, Reformed heritage.

Second, the author strikes a healthy balance between “holy separation” and “holy engagement.” As he puts it, “Some have forgotten that we are in the real world, while others have overemphasized our expectations in this world.

Some have neglected the ‘not yet’ of our existence ... others take no account of the ‘already’ of our existence” (p. 33). Such a balance is illustrated in the juxtaposition of chapter 8, “Appreciate the Beauty,” with chapter 9, “Anticipate the Destiny.” Believers are to appreciate the goodness and the beauty of God’s creation, but recognize that this world is not our final home.

There are two areas in which I was left wanting more. While Walker does touch on Christ as the “Great Pilgrim, Pioneer, and Perfecter” of our faith, I would have liked to see this theme addressed more fully. Similarly, while the role of the local church in the life of the Christian pilgrim is briefly addressed, this topic could have been broadened and expanded.

I greatly benefited from this work and would heartily recommend it to the church. It would be an excellent resource for any church’s book table.

## Positions Available

**Pastor:** Covenant Church (OPC) in Reading, Pa., seeks a pastor to faithfully proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ through the preaching and teaching of his Word and provide steadfast leadership with strong organizational skills. He will work in conjunction with our other pastor and the elders to meet the needs of our congregation and the community. For more information, contact us at [pastoralsearch@covenantberks.org](mailto:pastoralsearch@covenantberks.org).

**Teacher (part-time):** Robinson Township Christian School, a classical Christian school located in the western suburbs of Pittsburgh, Pa., is seeking a 9th/10th grade literature and/or French teacher. The qualified candidate would be a thoughtful Christian under the discipline of a Reformed, evangelical congregation (NAPARC). Teaching experience with a minimum of a bachelor’s degree in a discipline compatible with the subject matter to be taught is required. Total teaching hours are approximately 13 hours weekly. If interested, contact Principal Art Broadwick by phone at 412-787-5919 or email him at [broadwick@rtcsonline.org](mailto:broadwick@rtcsonline.org).

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