

REVIEW: Grudem's *Politics according to the Bible* by P. Viggiano

# New Horizons

IN THE ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

## THE CHURCH & POLITICS

DAVID C. INNES ★ D. G. HART

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## NEW HORIZONS

IN THE ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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Alan W. Montgomery, a ruling elder at Westminster OPC in Hollidaysburg, Pa., is pictured here with his son Jeremiah on the occasion of the latter's ordination and installation as an evangelist of the Hollidaysburg church, to serve as organizing pastor of Resurrection OPC in State College, Pa. For more details, see the Home Missions pages.



DAVID C. INNES

# The Godliness of Government

**J**udging by the low voter turnout in American elections—even in a presidential election year—some people just aren't that into politics. But for a Christian, politics is not a choice; it's an obligation, even if it is not always a passion.

Politics is not just one subject among many, which one may take up with interest or lay aside with indifference or perhaps distaste. God is political, and so the godly must also be political and demonstrate to the world what the beauty of holiness looks like in political life.

God made all things, and so he is king over all his creation. He is not just “like” a king; he literally rules, and with absolute authority. It is no surprise, then, that we find political language throughout the Bible to describe, as the Shorter Catechism puts it, “what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.”

The Fall was an act of rebellion against God's divine government. Graeme Goldsworthy calls it “man's unilateral declaration of independence.” In reconciling us to himself, God chose a nation, Israel, brought that nation into a covenant that resembled a suzerain treaty, and gave it a law. He was Israel's king. Eventually he gave his people a human king, but one who foreshadowed the Redeemer-King, who would bring them peace and make them once again willing subjects of his righteous rule. This Redeemer, the son of royal David, came preaching “the kingdom of God” (Mark 1:14–15), which the apostle Paul preached as the gospel (Acts 28:31). In the book of Revelation, God presents this Savior, Jesus, as King of kings and Lord of lords, judging the nations in righteousness and bringing in his New Jerusalem.

## THE GOODNESS OF GOVERNMENT

Divine government does not invalidate earthly government or deny its importance. As we eagerly await the full manifestation of the kingdom of God, praying, “Thy kingdom come,” we live under human government that God has ap-

pointed for our good (Rom. 13:4). Government is important to God because our good is important to him. So government should be important to us.

The governments that God establishes come in all shapes and sizes: monarchies and democracies, cruel tyrannies and free republics. But regardless of the form of government or how it came to power, God calls us to obey our government (provided that it does not require us to sin—Acts 5:29) precisely because he has appointed it as his “minister” for our good.

Obedience, or good citizenship, in a republic like ours involves political participation. Free government is, as Abraham Lincoln phrased it, “of the people, by the people, and for the people.” It is authorized by the people and operated for the benefit of the people, but it also functions properly only when the people participate in its operations. That can mean petitioning the government, expressing one's views on matters of public concern, or even running for elected office. At the very least, citizens of a republic have a moral obligation to vote when called upon to do so.

Voting is an act of government. By it, citizens select officers of the public trust and steer the country in one policy direction or another. If these votes are to be acts of good government, voters must inform themselves, deliberate on their choices, and make the wisest decisions they can. So the Christian citizen in particular, in faithfulness to both God and neighbor, needs to know about government, the challenges facing it, and, above all, what God says about these things.

I wrote *Left, Right and Christ: Evangelical Faith in Politics*, with my coauthor, Lisa Sharon Harper, to encourage evangelical Christians to be more conscientiously active in political

life and to be more thoughtfully and faithfully biblical in their involvement.

## GOD'S PURPOSE FOR GOVERNMENT

There are many dimensions of political life that require biblical understanding, such as God's creational purpose for government, the common good, peace, moral flourishing, and spheres of authority. But I focus mainly on God's restraining purpose for government, that is, his purpose for us specifically as fallen people.

When the apostle Peter exhorts the church to "be subject for the Lord's sake" to every level of civil government, he specifically notes how God calls government to serve us. It exists "to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good" (1 Pet. 2:14). The apostle Paul identifies these same goods in Romans 13. The first and most obvious purpose for which God has mercifully established government in a fallen world is "to restrain the rapacious tendencies of sinful human beings" (*Left, Right and Christ*, p. 59). Without it, to borrow the eloquence of Thomas Hobbes, life would be "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short."

But the second half of Peter's statement is often neglected, especially by Christian libertarians. Political society is not an alliance for the maximization of self-interest by autonomous human beings. It is a moral relationship. Because God is a Trinitarian community of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, eternally communing with one another in love, we who are made in his image are made for community with one another. For this reason, the political life we share is natural and moral, not simply a useful human convention. As the Godhead is a community of love (so John tells us that "God is love," 1 John 4:16), so too God calls our political communities to reflect his moral character in bonds of love.

Some take Paul's description of government as "God's servant for our good" out of context and present the apostle as meaning that we are free to use government to provide any good we think might be useful or morally commendable. However, I argue that

if it were government's responsibility, even in part, to do the good deeds of society, people would gradually surrender more and more private responsibility to it... Where it ends is not the sort of noble liberty that God intends for his image-bearing vice-regents [1 Tim. 2:2]. At best, you get the control of well-meaning masters over grateful slaves, or some kind of happy human zoo. At worst, and more likely, you get the totalitarian rule of a self-serving administrative class over a docile people who have entirely forgotten how to provide for themselves. (p. 63)

Such a careless and expansive reading of Romans 13 would also violate the principle of limited government, which

is a fundamental principle of biblical civil government for at least three reasons.

First, God gave us government for our good (Rom. 13:4). But whereas he is good, we are not, nor are the people who govern us. Because, on account of our wickedness, we need the restraint of government, so likewise those who govern us, equally wicked, must be limited in their power to govern us. For this reason, "limited government is not only a good idea; it is essential to good government" (p. 63).

Second, God gave us government for specific purposes that are distinct from the tasks he gave to individuals, families, and churches (1 Pet. 2:14). God's purpose for government must therefore be limited, if only with respect to what is proper to people in those other relationships. As I state in *Left, Right and Christ*, "Government is a limited good, and so only limited government can be good" (p. 63).

Third, God gave us government to secure us in the liberty to serve him and one another (1 Tim. 2:2). Jesus summarizes the whole of God's law, and thus all of life, with the word "love." The work of Christ frees us to love, but the work of expansive, do-everything government attempts to make love unnecessary. It makes us incrementally less inclined to love and even drains us of the means to love. For this reason also, godly government is limited government.

Everything is good when we use it according to the Creator's purposes—no more and no less. Government, especially the civic life of a free people, is good. It preserves us in liberty and defends our morality, and through it we order our corporate life. It is the Christian's calling and privilege to inform this governing work with the good Creator's mind. □

*The author, an OP minister, teaches politics at The King's College in New York City. He is the coauthor of Left, Right and Christ, and also writes a weekly column for WORLDmag.com.*





D. G. HART

# Bad Faith, Good Politics?

**H**as the Religious Right been good for American conservatism? One way to answer that question might involve looking at the success of the Republican Party since the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980. Since the votes of white Protestants who identify themselves as “born again” have been crucial to the GOP’s dominance of the White House for the last three decades, students of American politics would have trouble looking at the Religious Right’s influence as anything but positive, at least for Republican leaders and candidates.

But the answer to questions about the Religious Right’s relationship to American conservatism becomes complicated if it is possible to distinguish between American conservatism and the Republican Party. Of course, American citizens who hold conservative convictions vote overwhelmingly for Republican candidates. But the reasons sometimes have less to do with the party’s platform than with the limited candidates that a two-party system provides. What conservatives believe about government and the health and welfare of the United States is not necessarily the same as that for which the Republican Party stands.

For instance, in 1964 GOP officials believed that Barry Goldwater was “too conservative” to be elected, and they hoped for a moderate candidate who would not be so libertarian and anticommunist in order to appeal to independent voters. The same was true in 1980, when Ronald Reagan gained the Republican nomination and adopted a platform similar to Goldwater’s—strongly anticommunist and antiliberal. But by then Reagan’s advisors and some Republican officials recognized that the Democratic Party was vulnerable with Protestants in the South and white working-class Roman Catholics—two groups that belonged uncomfortably to the

Democrat’s New Deal coalition. By 1980, being a conservative looked much more appealing than being a big-government, socially tolerant liberal.

Many of the evangelicals who voted for Reagan were new, both to the Republican Party and to the world of American conservatism more generally. The most important figures in the Religious Right were Southern Protestants who had been Democrats prior to the era of Civil Rights. They included Jerry Falwell, who in 1979 founded the Moral Majority, and Pat Robertson, who in 1988 would run for the presidency in the Republican primaries and later found the Christian Coalition.

Although they formed one flank in Reagan’s coalition, these evangelicals had little knowledge of American conservatism as a distinct wing within the nation’s political traditions. In fact, since the mid-1950s, political conservatives had been

forging a set of ideas and establishing institutions that alerted many Americans to important differences between the United States’ original federal and republican structures of govern-



Jerry Falwell (1933-2007)

ment and the post–World War II domestic and international realities that confronted the nation as the newly inaugurated leader of the free world.

Important among these conservatives were Russell Kirk, the author of *The Conservative Mind* (1953), a book that almost single-handedly put conservatism on the map of the American public, and William F. Buckley, Jr., a clever writer with incomparable energy who founded the magazine *National Review* as a popular and influential vehicle for conservative reflection. Kirk and Buckley were virtually foreign to the leaders of the Religious Right, even though both groups, American conservatives and the Religious Right, overwhelmingly supported Reagan and became foot soldiers in the president’s so-called revolution.

This historical perspective is important for considering whether the Religious Right has been good for American conservatism. Many contemporary evangelicals believe they are conservative because the politics of the American Right follow directly from biblical convictions. They are conservative precisely because they are born-again followers of Jesus Christ. That is, they came to political conservatism by way of faith, or so they think. In contrast, the figures who dominate the world of American conservatism, such as radio talk show hosts Rush Limbaugh and Sean Hannity, are not evangelical. Limbaugh has no apparent religious preference, and Hannity is a Roman Catholic. Although many conservatives would say that these radio celebrities do not represent truly conservative views, even the more thoughtful op-ed writers, such as George Will and Ross Douthat, make no pretense of being born-again Christians. These conservatives came to their political convictions not by faith, but by reflection on the American system of government, the nation’s role in the world, and ideas about the best ways to balance human freedom and social order.

If so many important spokesmen for political conservatism are not born-again Christians, then being conservative is clearly not the same as being Christian. If the leading figures in the America Right—even Ronald Reagan—came to their political outlook not from believing in Jesus Christ or reading the Bible, but through studying the founding and political heritage of the United States and assessing the nation’s current strengths and weaknesses, it is possible to be a good conservative and not be a good Christian. But this is not the impression that many evangelicals create when they argue that their political views stem directly from their religious convictions. Although few members of the Religious Right would question the conservative credentials of a Limbaugh or Will on the basis of faith, they would likely take issue with evangelicals who are not politically conservative. Again, the reason stems from the identification of born-again Protestantism with political conservatism.

And yet, a growing number of evangelical pastors and

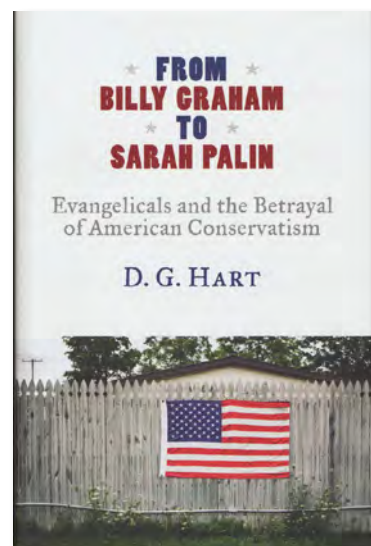
scholars are abandoning the GOP and rejecting conservatism precisely because of their born-again faith. For instance, Jim Wallis and Tony Campolo argue that the teachings of Jesus and love of neighbor require public policies much closer to the American Left or liberalism than to conservatism.

Conservative evangelicals may dispute Wallis’s or Campolo’s appropriation of Scripture. But the evangelical Left’s appeal to faith is not essentially any more irresponsible than the Religious Right’s effort to find a biblical warrant for federalism, republicanism, a strong military, or low taxes. As J. Gresham Machen argued in his day, any effort by the church or Christians to read into the Bible laws or policies about which Scripture is silent is a distortion of divine revelation. In other words, to try to find a biblical warrant for political positions is invariably a violation of Christian liberty. The reason is that in matters where Scripture is silent—which would include most aspects of domestic and foreign policy—Christians have liberty to act according to their consciences.

If someone were to conclude that the Religious Right has hurt American conservatism, then, they would have a point. This would be especially true if it were based on the evangelical habit of voting for Republicans as part of their duty as believers, not as citizens. Members of the Religious Right invariably distort their faith and misrepresent conservatism when they assume that born-again Protestantism necessarily leads to conservative political ideals.

This does not mean that evangelicals should not be conservative. It only means that evangelicals need to find reasons for being conservative that neither contort Scripture nor ignore the thoughtful and often wise writings of American conservatives whose religious views may be wrong. □

*The author, an OP elder, teaches history at Hillsdale College. He is the author or editor of more than twenty books on American religion, including From Billy Graham to Sarah Palin (Eerdmans, 2011).*





GREG FORSTER

# The Church, History, and Politics

**T**he problem of the church and politics is really just a part of the larger problem of how the church relates to society at large. In the American church today, some are alarmed by what they see as a catastrophic collapse of the church's influence over society; many of them have sought to regain that influence through politics. Others believe the true church never really had much influence over society and are frustrated by demands that we seek it; many of them have sought to keep the church out of politics.

Missing in most of these discussions is an understanding of history. The church needs to return to history, along with its study of the Bible and theology, before it can develop a sound framework for finding its proper place within twenty-first-century American civilization.

## NEW COVENANT, NEW APPROACH

The Bible obviously provides general moral principles to guide us, but it does not provide a detailed blueprint for how to run a society in the context of the new covenant. In the Old Testament era, God's people were called to be a distinct civilization; hence, they were given a blueprint for how that civilization should run. But in the New Testament era, God's people are called to be members of every civilization.

Accordingly, the Lord gives us no single blueprint. He calls us to be good citizens in the context of many different societies. Our task is to figure out what it means to live out biblical principles in the context of our culture.

We are social creatures, and human life means life lived in society. Hence, our walk with Jesus means a walk with him in our daily lives as participants in twenty-first-century American civilization. The Christian life unfolds not only in our prayer closets but also in our homes, workplaces, neighborhoods, and civil communities—including our political participation, which has its proper place in God's plan as one social structure among many.

## HISTORY AND SOCIAL LIFE

Finding the path to good and godly citizenship in contemporary America means, among much else, learning its history. The meaning and content of "good citizenship" in our particular society is shaped by its particular history as well as by the general moral principles we get from the Bible.

God is providentially at work in history, through all the social processes going on around us. It is part of our task, drawing on biblical knowledge and also knowledge of history and society, to discern what God is doing in our civilization and how he is calling us to be part of his work. Our redemption involves learning how to become a force for good in our homes, workplaces, neighborhoods, and communities.

Abstract ethical principles and general admonitions to "be good" are insufficient. Every Christian is called to become a student of history and society, in order to discern what God is calling him or her to be and do in daily social life. An important way in which God equips Christians to do this is through the church. Equipping congregants for social discernment and full-time discipleship is a crucial part of making disciples (Matt. 28:19).

## HISTORY AND CHURCH WISDOM

We need a return to history in another respect as well. Just as our society has a history that we need to know in order

to figure out how to live godly lives within it, so also the church has a history from which we need to learn.

The church and society have been in tension in every age. By the power of his sovereign Spirit working in the church, the Lord has raised up great teachers and leaders to grapple with this problem. Just as the church's understanding of theology has unfolded and deepened progressively in history, so has its understanding of political and social engagement.

We must maintain a critical perspective, of course—keeping an eye out for errors and remembering that our own historical situation is unique. But there is much we can learn from how Justin Martyr, Augustine, Aquinas, Calvin, C. S. Lewis, and others wrestled with these questions.

## FREEDOM OF RELIGION

I believe the greatest challenge of our time is the ongoing development of freedom of religion as a social model. Freedom of religion is a precious treasure, but it also presents significant challenges to both the church and our society.

Freedom of religion finds its roots in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century wars of religion. During its early development, Christianity became an official religion. But then the Reformation created persistent social disagreement about what Christianity was. This theological dispute became political due to the interdependence of church and state, producing some of the cruelest wars and persecutions in history.

Freedom of religion was established as an attempt to maintain civic consensus on public morality (don't kill, don't steal, keep your promises, help your neighbor), but disentangle the state from strict confessional commitments. This social model found its most distinct and profound expression in the founding of America. You can't understand America, and thus you can't be a good American citizen, without understanding the blessings and challenges of religious freedom.

## ERODING CONSENSUS

Freedom of religion has largely worked, but it has also generated many new challenges. The main challenge today is maintaining a stable moral consensus. No society can survive unless its members broadly agree on what is right and fair in public life.

Before there was freedom of religion, societies maintained moral consensus through an official community religion. People knew, broadly, what was legitimate in public life because clerical officers had institutional authority to draw the boundaries. Early Christianity adopted this model because no alternative had ever existed, and no need was felt to change it.

In the seventeenth century, Protestants and Catholics were in conflict over theology, but had enough real agreement on public morality to build a common society. Early advocates of religious freedom were confident that such agreement

could be sustained without a state religion. However, sustaining moral consensus over the long term has turned out to be a major challenge.

We shouldn't go back to state religion, and we couldn't even if we wanted to. Today's challenges can be met only if Americans rebuild a genuinely shared moral consensus. Americans of different beliefs must once again—as they have so many times before—find ways to live together in peace with their disagreements.

Moreover, the breakdown of moral consensus has led to the politicization of all areas of life, as differing belief groups have increasingly used power to resolve moral differences. Politics needs to be returned to its proper scope and basis in the rule of law, justice, and civility.

## DANGERS AND PROMISE

As Christians, we are called to bless our neighbors by being good citizens. If we don't help our country overcome this urgent challenge, how can we call ourselves good citizens?

This does not mean that the institutional church as such must become involved in institutional politics. That would not be working to rescue freedom of religion; it would be working to undermine it.

And there are many dangers for us to be wary of. Throughout the twentieth century, unscrupulous politicians had great success manipulating pastors and churches for their own ends. Shame on us if we go down that road again.

On the other hand, we cannot build a wall between “church life” and “world life,” and it would be dangerous to try. That's exactly how the medieval church went off the rails. Without becoming captive to politicians, pastors need to learn how to call their congregants to good citizenship and help them discern what good citizenship requires.

God doesn't owe us success, but there are biblical grounds for this approach. The doctrine of common grace, which was strongly and consistently affirmed by Calvin and virtually the entire Reformed theological tradition until the twentieth century, teaches us that God is sovereignly at work in the processes of human civilization. Discipleship involves learning to cooperate with this common grace in daily life. Calvin rightly insisted that without this approach, the church would slide back into Roman sacerdotalism.

Since Christians have died to self and are genuinely concerned for their neighbors' good, we are perfectly positioned to lead the way in reaching across divides to rebuild social bonds. If we don't, who will? And what will we say to our Lord if we don't even try? □

*The author has written five books, including The Contested Public Square and The Joy of Calvinism. He attends Covenant Presbyterian Church in New Berlin, Wis.*





DAVID W. KING

# Let's Not Repeat the Sin of Jeroboam

**T**he sin of Jeroboam, son of Nebat, was a sad and tragic response to God's goodness to him. The evil that he did in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord's response to it, are most instructive to us as we consider matters of church and state.

From the kingdom of David and Solomon, the Lord had torn ten tribes from which he created the northern kingdom of Israel, and made Jeroboam its first king.

Through the prophet Ahijah, the Lord spoke clearly to Jeroboam regarding two things (1 Kings 11:29–38):

First, the kingdom was being torn apart as a judgment on Solomon, because he was not faithful to the Lord, having broken God's commands by marrying pagan wives and bringing the worship of their false gods within the realm of God's holy nation.

Second, the Lord promised Jeroboam a dynasty over Israel as enduring as the house of David in Jerusalem—"if you will listen to all that I command you, and will walk in my ways, and do what is right in my eyes by keeping my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did" (verse 38).

## JEROBOAM'S SINS

Despite all that the Lord did for him, Jeroboam did not trust him. He was a man altogether of this world.

He reasoned: "If the people of Israel keep traveling down to the house of God in Jerusalem to offer sacrifices, eventually their heart will return to King Rehoboam of Judah . . . and they will kill me" (see 12:27). What was Jeroboam's solution?

Did he take his fears to God in prayer, and perhaps even ask for a sign? No. Instead, he reformed—no, *deformed*—the ordinances for worship that the Lord had given to Israel through Moses. Jeroboam erected new shrines, conveniently located in the south at Bethel and in the north at Dan. He placed golden calves in those shrines (Exodus 32 times two). He established new festivals ("that he had devised from his own heart," verse 33), shrines on high places, and a new

priesthood in place of the Levitical priests.

No true Christian or Bible-believing church can fail to see the evils in Jeroboam's deformation. He not only did not subscribe to the regulative principle of worship, but trampled God's holy ordinances for worship under foot.

Great was the evil of his deformation; great also were the consequences for himself and for Israel.

The sin of Jeroboam became the sin of the nation: "Then this thing became a sin, for the people went as far as Dan [to worship]" (verse 30). His sin led all Israel to sin and brought God's judgment on his house and the whole nation. Indeed, his sin became the benchmark of iniquity for all the kings of Israel after him. For king after king, we read in 1 and 2 Kings that he did evil in the sight of the Lord, refusing to turn away from the sin of Jeroboam and making Israel sin (see, for example, 1 Kings 16:19).

## USURPING GOD'S AUTHORITY OVER HIS CHURCH

In Jeroboam's obvious sins of idolatry and overthrowing God's ordinances for worship there is embodied another great evil. King Jeroboam presumed, in wicked pride, to subordinate the worship of God to the interests of the state. He made the church a tool of the state.

Under the Mosaic constitution, for God's old covenant people, church and state were one. But no king of Israel was above the Lord, Israel's true king. No king of Israel had authority to overturn the law of Israel's covenant Lord, the almighty God, for any reason—and certainly not to secure his own throne. That was more than unbelieving and foolishly self-destructive. It was a usurpation of God's sole prerogative.

[Continued on page 16]

# The North Shore of Long Island

**A**t its heart, Trinity Church (OPC) in Huntington, Long Island, New York, is a worshipping community. The church gathers to worship in response to God's grace in Jesus Christ. The church's "Welcome" booklet observes, worship "is the source from which everything else in life flows."

At Trinity Church, there is an excitement about worshipping God. You see it on the faces of adults and children as they arrive at the Elks Lodge. Reverence is brightly colored by a vibrant and lively enthusiasm during the worship service.

Trinity Church gathered for worship for the first time on September 25. This new mission work is a daughter congregation of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Franklin Square, New York. Ben Miller, who had served for six years as the associate pastor at Franklin Square, is the organizing pastor. Eighty people from Franklin Square are part of this new church plant, including two ruling elders.

Trinity Church is Franklin Square's sixth mission work. The previous endeavors were: Westchester OPC in Mount



Gathering for worship at Trinity Church in Huntington, N.Y.

Vernon (1970s); Christ OPC in Lindenhurst (1980s), which did not develop into an organized congregation; the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Bohemia (late 1990s), whose pastor is Meindert Ploegman, a former ruling elder at Franklin Square; Cristo el Rey in Elmont (2008), a Spanish-language mission work that was folded back into the mother church this past summer; and Reformation OPC (2009) in Queens.

The Elks Lodge is located about twenty-three miles northeast of Franklin Square. The community of Huntington goes back to 1653, when the land was purchased from the Matinecock

people. Today this affluent suburb is part of the New York metropolitan area. Three quarters of a million people call the area around Huntington home.

Ben grew up in a Christian home with rigorous spiritual disciplines. By the time he was in his twenties, he felt a kind of spiritual "burnout." During his time at Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, the Bible began to explode with meaning as he discovered the biblical theology of Geerhardus Vos. Toward the end of seminary and in his first years of pastoral ministry, he experienced a theological revival. The love and grace of God as his Father were opened to him as never before. The fruits of this revival permeate Ben's preaching.

The possibility of planting this latest mission work had been discussed, planned, and prayed about for over a year before Ben was called. Families at Franklin Square were given the opportunity to indicate their interest in participating in the mission work. Then significant

Sunday school at Trinity Church



groundwork was laid for several months before the first worship service was held.

The people in the mission work love being part of it, where they have ample opportunities to use their gifts in the church for the Lord. This includes seeking to build a life in community together and bearing the light of Christ, seeking to lift him up in the streets and neighborhoods of their world.

Please pray for Pastor Miller and the other men who provide spiritual oversight: Eric Farkas, David Innes, and Gene Mayer. Pray that the Lord would bless Trinity Church's outreach and evangelism efforts, bring many visitors to worship, provide financially (the North Shore is an expensive place!), and establish Trinity Church as a solid congregation of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

## God's Provision

"Ordination is that act by which men are set apart to the offices of deacon, ruling elder, and minister. It is the church's solemn approval of and public attestation to a man's inward call, his gifts, and his calling by the church."—Form of Government, XX, 2.

Praise God for his ample provision! During autumn, five men were ordained and installed to serve at churches receiving financial support from the Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension.

On October 7, **Brandon Wilkins** was ordained to the gospel ministry and installed as associate pastor of Hope Presbyterian Church in Grayslake, Illinois, to serve as organizing pastor of **Christ Covenant Presbyterian Church in Crystal Lake**. Dr. David VanDrunen of Westminster Seminary California

### Home Missions Today

For up-to-date Home Missions news and prayer updates, e-mail [HomeMissionsToday@opc.org](mailto:HomeMissionsToday@opc.org). New editions: **February 1, 15, 29.**

Hands being laid upon Brandon Wilkins at his ordination



preached from Galatians 2:1–10.

On November 11, **Joseph H. Fowler, Jr.**, was ordained and installed as associate pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in Charlotte, North Carolina, to serve as the organizing pastor of **Reformation OPC in Gastonia**. The Rev. Clifford L. Blair preached on selected portions of Exodus 5:22–17:16.

On December 2, **Jeremiah W. Montgomery** was ordained and installed as an evangelist of Westminster OPC in Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania, to serve as the organizing pastor of **Resurrection OPC in State College** (see page 2). Dr. Benjamin Shaw of Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary preached on a portion of Psalm 119. Jeremiah grew up as a covenant child in Westminster OPC. Over the years, his pastor, Mark R. Brown, served as his mentor.

On December 2, **Tim R. Beauchamp** was ordained and installed as associate pastor at Second Parish OPC in Portland, Maine, to serve as organizing pastor at **Pleasant Mountain Presbyterian Church in Bridgton**. The Rev. Stephen Tracey of

Lakeview OPC in Rockport preached a sermon from Colossians 1:28, "Presenting Everyone Mature in Christ."

On December 9, **Chad Mullinix** was ordained and installed as the pastor of **Holy Trinity Presbyterian Church in Fort Lauderdale, Florida**. The Rev. John Currie of Westminster Theological Seminary preached.

These five newly ordained men give thanks to the Lord for their calling to serve as ministers of the gospel, and they are grateful for the support and guidance received from family, friends, and many wise mentors along the way.

Please pray that the Lord of the harvest, who has sent these men into his harvest field, will grant them grace to be faithful to him and give them long and fruitful ministries.

Tim Beauchamp pronouncing the benediction at his ordination service



# The Christian Nation in Today's World

LARRY WILSON

I've come to think that perhaps the Scripture text that I've most often heard taken out of context and rendered into a pretext may be 2 Chronicles 7:14:

If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

How often have you heard this verse quoted as if it applied *directly* to American Christians, *directly* to the United States of America? Is not America a "Christian nation"?

A better question might be, Is there even such a thing as a Christian nation in the new covenant era? According to God's Word, the answer is yes. So what is it? Is it a geographical area, or a specific form of civil government, or a certain group of citizens? No, the only Christian nation that exists in the new covenant era is the "one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church." To her alone does God say, "You are . . . a holy nation" (1 Peter 2:9). The church consists of those who have been called out of darkness and into his marvelous light from many different tongues, tribes, and nations. God graciously makes them citizens of the heavenly country whose king is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Because this is so, it is wrong to apply 2 Chronicles 7:14 directly in our era to *any* particular earthly country—including the United States. That promise did apply directly to the church in its old covenant form, the theocratic church-state of Israel in the Promised Land. But that old covenant form of his church

was a temporary arrangement. It was designed to prepare the way for, and to bring about, the coming of Christ and the promised salvation (Gal. 3:23–26).

Our Lord Jesus made it clear that, on account of his saving work and the outpouring of his Spirit, the church would take a very different form in the new covenant. It would become international, rather than national; its power would be spiritual, rather than temporal; it would be spread by gospel witnesses, rather than by soldiers (Acts 1:6–8). Accordingly, rather than inviting the nations to come to the Holy Land in order to become part of the holy nation, the holy nation is instead to go out into all the world and make disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:18–20).

This new arrangement means that God's people hold a dual citizenship in this life. Our Lord makes us at the same time citizens of the church—the one and only "Christian nation"—and citizens of an earthly nation, subject to an earthly government.

Surely the United States has many Christians, and surely that has been a blessing to her. But it is unbiblical to say that any nation, including the United States—as a nation—enjoys special favor from God over and above the other nations of the earth. If the United States has enjoyed God's favor, it has done so for the sake of his church (Rom. 8:28).

Is it unpatriotic to say that 2 Chronicles 7:14 does not apply directly to the United States? If we do say that, then does it mean that we should not love our country? No! In a real sense, the Old Testament passage that applies more directly to new covenant saints is Jeremiah 29:4–7:

Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.

Under the new covenant gospel arrangement, we believers are "elect exiles of the dispersion" (1 Peter 1:1). We are "sojourners and exiles" (1 Peter 2:11). We are scattered throughout the nations. And in that setting, the Lord commands us to be patriotic. We are to love the land in which he has placed us and seek its welfare.

The overarching reason why we are to do so, however, is not because it is a Christian nation, but rather for the sake of our even higher allegiance to the kingdom of heaven and its King. This higher allegiance to the church and her Head should lead us diligently to pursue our vocation as citizens in the country where our Lord has placed us.

This higher allegiance should lead us to *pray* "for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way" (1 Tim. 2:2). It should also lead us to *respect* and *submit* to civil authority because the leaders of the nations rule by God's authority (Rom. 13:1–7). William Still's counsel to pastors was:

The church ... has to be as neutral to it as loyal citizens can be. She is called to gather and build the church of Jesus Christ under any system whatsoever. Her members are to submit to the powers that be, as far as this does not conflict with the individual conscience, and they are to let the state do as it will... What Peter and Paul are saying in Romans 13:1–17 and 1 Peter 2 is that we are to submit to whatever regime we happen to be under—submit to it, not sponsor, or oppose it. (*The Work of the Pastor* [2010], pp. 65–66)

The United States is a great nation. She was founded on good principles, and she has enjoyed great blessings. But she is not a Christian nation. The church—whether she is found in the United States, Canada, England, France, Russia, China, Eritrea, Uganda, Israel, Egypt, Iraq, Iran, or wherever—is the one and only Christian nation of the new covenant era.

All the kingdoms of this world will perish. That includes the United States. But the church—made up of people from every tongue, tribe, and nation—will go on forever. Let us never forget that we have received “a kingdom that cannot be shaken” (Heb. 12:28). At the same time, let us also be active in our vocation as citizens, loving our neighbors and therefore seeking the welfare of our country, of our state (or province), and of our community—wherever the Lord has put us to live and serve.

*The author, a U.S. citizen, is living in Canada and serving as pastor of Redeemer OPC in Airdrie, Alberta.*

## Congratulations

**The Shorter Catechism has been recited by:**

• Steve Sperry (Matthews OPC in Matthews, N.C.)

**The First Catechism has been recited by:**

• Ariel Sanchez (Bethel OPC in Wheaton, Ill.)  
• Gabriel Sanchez (Wheaton, Ill.)

## Four Favorites

### Books on American Church History

**1. Nathan Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity*. Yale University Press, 1991.**

Hatch argues that individualism, anticlericalism, intense democracy, and anti-intellectualism were common themes that shaped both Christian and non-Christian religious thinking along the American frontier. He reinforces his thesis with primary sources and entertaining pictures and stories.

**2. Steven Waldman, *Founding Faith*. Random House, 2009.**

There seem to be two extremes when people today look back at the religious convictions of the Founding Fathers. They want to see them either as committed Christians or as barely religious deists. Waldman presents evidence of the actual beliefs of each of the Founding Fathers and how they disagreed with each other. This is a great book for young people, and the quotations from the Founding Fathers are worth the price of the book.

**3. D. G. Hart (ed.), *Reckoning with the Past*. Baker, 1995.**

Hart has put together an excellent series of sixteen essays about American Christianity from such scholars as George Marsden, Harry Stout, and Mark Noll. Each author considers a dif-

ferent time period in American church history. Particularly good is Harry Stout’s “Word and Order in Colonial New England.” He explains the rejection of Calvin and the Geneva Bible by the American Puritans in favor of the KJV, as Calvin’s covenant theology revealed in the Geneva Bible’s notes did not fit in with their commitment to making America a “New Canaan.” Calvin saw Canaan only as a type of the new heaven and new earth.

**4. Steven E. Woodworth, *While God Is Marching On*. University Press of Kansas, 2001 (pb., 2003).**

Instead of reading only historians’ perspectives on Civil War religion, which unfortunately are often very biased, in Woodworth’s book you can hear the religious perspective of the Civil War soldiers themselves. He presents letters from the battlefield that show the daily life and faith of the soldiers, such as their views of providence, politics in the pulpit, salvation, Christian living, and the life to come. You will come away from reading this book not only enlightened and educated, but also personally encouraged as these soldiers’ letters to home touch your soul.

—Todd Bordow

## Out of the Mouth ...

My daughter-in-law and I were discussing baptism at the dinner table. She told me she would like to be baptized. Her five-year-old daughter chimed in: “I want to be BATHatized too.”

—Colleen Lory  
Antioch, Calif.

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

# A Servant of Christ Grows Up

DAVID A. OKKEN

Recently, Sunshine and I were looking through some of the pictures we snapped back in 2000, when we first visited Karamoja. Here we were on an August day in Nakaale, taking it all in and meeting some of the village residents. We were exploring the possibility of coming to serve in Karamoja. Everything was so foreign to us. It was overwhelming even to contemplate the prospect of our living here. I have to confess that my mind was not focused on the way that God might use our OPC mission in the life of one of those particular folks whose hands I shook and whose pictures I snapped that day. But now, more than ten years later, thinking back while looking at those pictures, there we see little Lokwii Zachary standing in a group of Karimojong, all of them wrapped in the local blankets, the traditional attire.

Yes, Lokwii has been well known to the OP Nakaale Mission Station from the beginning. The seed of the word was perhaps first planted in his heart as he sat under the big tree and listened when Pastor Tony Curto first preached here on January 7, 2001. Over the months and years, sitting under our continual preaching and teaching and through his friendship with the Mission, Lokwii grew up hearing the Word of God. Some planted, others watered, but God gave the growth (1 Cor. 3:6). I can remember many Lord's Day mornings hearing missionary associate Kristie Scott (now Freeman) helping him learn the Children's Catechism. Eventually, he could recite all the answers.

When we interviewed him for church membership, it was a thrill to hear him articulate his faith in Jesus. He decided that while publicly professing that faith, he would also announce his new name. (It is a common practice in this culture for Christians to take new names at the time of their baptism.) On

where parents who have not yet been paid their due maintain some claim upon their (partially wedded) daughter. For a time, a man and woman live together in what looks like full marriage. Yet, the parents later reclaim the daughter and hand her over to another suitor offering more cows. We were very pleased when,

for the good of the marriage and as a testimony of his faith in Jesus, Lokwii opted for a more biblical path. Sufficient animals having been paid, on a Saturday afternoon in the fall of 2007, Lokwii David was married to Asiyo Helen. They now have a three-year-old boy, Longole James, and a little girl of eighteen months, Locoro Anna Grace.

Even when Lokwii was a young student, the impressive grades on his report cards gave evidence of a bright mind. And between

his schooling and his years of interaction with the missionaries, his English became excellent. He showed himself quite capable when given opportunities to serve as a translator for missionaries who were leading a Bible study or teaching Sunday school. As more opportunities were given him, he developed into as good a translator as I have ever seen. When the need arose for the Mission to employ another full-time language helper, Lokwii was the obvious choice. He has been a tremendous help to the Mission. He has been an excellent language teacher to us, and he has done outstanding work as a translator as we have preached and taught the gospel and produced written materials in

Lokwii Zachary David (at the far right) with other Karimojong in 2000



December 14, 2003, it was my great honor to baptize Lokwii Zachary David.

What a joy it has been for the Mission to watch Lokwii David (as he now prefers to be called) mature as a person and as a follower of Jesus Christ! One significant highlight was when Pastor Al Tricarico and I conducted our first and only wedding ceremony in Karamoja. Contrary to his culture, but in obedience to Christ, Lokwii purposed not only to a union with *only one* woman, but to begin living with her as husband and wife *only after* sufficiently satisfying the demands of the dowry. In this way, he wanted to avoid the possibility of facing that unfortunate but all-too-common event

Lokwii David teaching as Al Tricarico observes from the back



around the Word of God. So, while we sometimes do attend the studies ourselves, at other times we send the men alone and have them bring a report back to us. The men have been extremely encouraged and excited about the work they are doing. We see how the Lord is using this to cause them to grow and know Christ more deeply.

Karimojong.

Of all his spiritual progress, the thing that has brought me the most delight has been seeing Lokwii David grow in his own ability to communicate the Word of God to his fellow Karimojong. How gratifying it was the first time I sat under the tree among a group of Nakaale residents while Lokwii taught us about God's calling of Abraham to leave his home and go to a land that he was promising to give to his descendants. He communicated with such skill and confident conviction. It had the feel of a powerful sermon. I found myself wondering if the Lord was raising up, right under our noses, the future Charles Spurgeon of Karamoja (a Presbyterian version, of course)!

Recently, Pastor Al and I have been conducting something of an experiment, giving more teaching opportunities both to Lokwii David and to our other translator, Lokwii Paul. Lokwii Paul was already very much in his element as a teacher. He came to us as one who had some theological training and ministry experience in his past. For Lokwii David, on the other hand, this has been much more new. We are amazed at how well he has done.

At times, we accompany these brothers and sit under their teaching. At other times, we send them alone. We have learned that, at least for some of the Karimojong out in the villages, our very presence can serve to hinder their freedom of expression and interaction

Our prayer times with them have been increasingly rich. And they are excited to study with us the very text that they have taught in preparation for the next week. (Generally, we like to teach a particular Bible story two weeks in a row.) They share with us the comments and questions they have received and the answers they have provided. We have had rich times of reflecting on how things are going while digging deeper into the text together.

For so long we have asked the Lord to raise up leaders among the Karimojong. Yes, Lokwii David may be turning into a wonderful answer to our prayers. And we are prayerfully wondering how his growth and development might inspire others whom God will also call. As I listened to Lokwii David teach, the people were riveted—hopefully by the content of the message, but no doubt also by the sight of this son of Nakaale now grown up and proclaiming God's Word to them. Lokwii tells us of some who have marveled, "How did you come to be able to teach the Word of God like this?" We are encouraging these teachers to respond by saying, "The Lord can call and equip you to do it as well!"

We ask you to pray to that end. We know that such gifts to the church are the fruit of the finished work of our Savior (Eph. 4:8). As surely as Jesus has been raised from the dead and has ascended into heaven, he will raise up laborers for his harvest. So we invite you to continue

to join us, praying with confident trust in Christ. Pray that Lokwii David will indeed continue to grow into a faithful servant of the Lord. And pray that God would continue to use our own preaching and teaching ministries as OP missionaries. But pray also that the maturing ministry of these Karimojong servants will be used powerfully by God for the building of his kingdom in Karamoja!

## WHAT'S NEW

### APPOINTMENTS

- **Rev. and Mrs. Eric W. (Dianna) Tuininga** begin their service on June 1, intending to arrive in Uganda in July, so that Eric can begin teaching at Knox Theological College in Mbale in the fall. The Tuininga family (including eight children) begins missionary orientation training in the U.S. later this month.
- The Committee on Foreign Missions has appointed these missionary associates to a country in Asia, beginning this month: **Miss Erin M. C.** (Lake Sherwood OPC, Orlando, Fla.) for two years, and **Rev. and Mrs. Wendell S. (Priscilla) S.** (pastor, Covenant OPC, Reading, Pa.) for four months.
- **Miss Debra A. Blair** (Bethany URC, Wyoming, Mich.) has been appointed to serve as a missionary associate to Quebec for two years, beginning in January.

### COMINGS/GOINGS

- Serving this year as guest lecturers at Knox Theological College in Mbale, Uganda, until Mr. Tuininga arrives are: **Rev. Donald G. (Anne) Buchanan, Jr.** (recently retired pastor), in January; **Rev. Gerald P. (Pam) Malkus** (pastor, Hope Presbyterian Church, OPC, Syracuse, N.Y.) in February–March.

## Telenews

Call 215/830-9424, ext. \*833, for the latest Foreign Missions news and prayer requests. New editions: **February 3, 17.**

# THE SIN OF JEROBOAM

[Continued from page 9]

## CHRIST, THE EXALTED HEAD OF STATE AND CHURCH

God cut off the house of Jeroboam in judgment. But he preserved the line of David, despite the sins of its kings and God's judgments on them also. From that royal line came Jesus, our Savior, according to his human nature. There came from heaven the eternal Son of the Father, the Son who is God forever blessed. Jesus the Christ, the anointed Savior-King, came not to be served—in contrast to the power-worshiping rulers of this world—but to serve and to give his life to ransom ours from sin and death. Now risen from the dead and enthroned in glory at the Father's right hand, all authority in heaven and earth has been given to him. He has been made the Head over all things for the church, which is his body.

No earthly government has power or authority over King Jesus our Lord. Therefore, no earthly power may presume to exercise authority over Christ's kingdom on earth, his church. Called out of every tribe and nation, Christ's church is subject to Christ alone and may yield allegiance to no other ruler than Jesus Christ, governing by his Word and Spirit.

## THE SIN OF RULERS WHO TRY TO CONTROL THE CHURCH

Jeroboam's usurpation of the Lord's rule over his church was a great sin. But even greater have been the sins of rulers in the last two millennia who have sought to subordinate the church of Christ to their state agendas.

Examples are countless; we cite only a few. Consider the Roman emperors. Or King Henry VIII of England, who made himself head of the church to get a divorce. Or the Stuart kings, who forced Episcopal order on all their realm (and made martyrs of the Scottish Covenanters). Or Hitler, who forced churches to become instruments of Nazi propaganda and control.

Civil rulers—caesars, kings, dictators, soviets, and sometimes elected leaders—have, like Jeroboam, often used the coercive power of the state to make Christ's church their tool.

We rightly condemn that. And when such is imposed on us, we are bound to resist and obey King Jesus instead.

## THE SIN OF CHURCHES IN SERVING EARTHLY CAUSES

What, then, shall we say when churches, with no outside coercion, voluntarily make themselves agents of cultural and political agendas and movements?

That is deeply embedded in the American church tradition. During the Revolution, preachers in pulpits declared, "Thus saith the Lord, enlist in the Continental Army and fight the British hordes of the antichrist" (actual language from actual sermons). We could talk about visions of millennial glory focused on the new nation's march to its manifest destiny,

about churches and preachers building the nation, believing they were thereby building the kingdom of God. Let's skip over the horrors of the Civil War, in which churches and preachers on both sides declared that their side in the contest was God's and the other side was the devil's. Earnest evangelicals and liberal social gospelers labored alike to harness their churches to all manner of social betterment causes, such as Prohibition. In the "Great War" (World War I), churches declared that the Hun had to be defeated in his godless war against Christian (that is, English and French) civilization.

The mainline Protestant church in which I grew up denied that the Bible is God's word, but boldly declared that God wants us to advance his kingdom by fighting for civil rights, global disarmament, farm workers' unions, a just distribution of wealth, etc. It was sin for those liberals to hijack churches and turn them into engines of leftist social change.

Let's come closer to home. Are we alarmed at the direction that social and cultural movements and government policies are taking our nation? Shall we then harness the church of Christ to counter them? Should we use the pulpit, the bulletin, the budget, the membership list, and the church's property to organize marches or tea parties, raise money, promote political movements, boycott businesses, etc.?

To be sure, in regard to the issues of the day, individual Christians, as citizens of the earthly realm, are free *and even obligated* to exercise their citizenship, as they are able, in obedience to God's Word. And pulpits should call sin what the Word of God calls sin, whether in the church or in the world, and point to Christ as the only Savior from sin.

But the church, as church (including its pulpit), may not become the hired Levite for any political movement or party or ideology. Our King did not "love the USA (or a certain political party) and give himself for her." Christ "loved *the church*, and gave himself for *her*."

Jesus did not say, "On this rock I will build (or rebuild) a Christian America" after the image of a Norman Rockwell painting or any other mythical vision of a past golden age. He said, "On this rock I will build *my church*." That is the end to which his royal majesty and power is devoted, and that is the commission given to us: "Be my witnesses; proclaim my gospel to the ends of the earth and the end of the age, and I will build my church"—the one kingdom that will not be shaken when all other realms fall in judgment.

We must maintain a clear and undivided allegiance to our King and to his church. We proclaim the gospel of Christ, first, last, always, so that through us it may please Christ to build his church. □

*The author is pastor of Christ Presbyterian Church in Janesville, Wis. This is an edited version of a devotional message delivered to the 77th General Assembly (2010). Bible quotations are from the ESV.*



# February

1. **Ethiopian Reformed Presbyterian Church.** Pray for the congregations as they minister to covenant children. / **Mark and Michele Winder**, Collierville, Tenn. Pray that Wolf River Presbyterian Church's visitors will continue to attend and desire to become members. / Pray for **the Ministerial Training Institute's instructors and students** as the Spring 2012 semester begins today.
2. Pray for Home Missions associate general secretary **Dick Gerber** as he prepares for the Readiness for Ministry in the OPC Seminar in Greenville, S.C., on Feb. 10–11. / **Kaz and Katie Yaegashi**, Yamagata, Japan. Praise God for the close working relationships between OP missionaries and the pastors of the Tohoku Presbytery. / **Ryan (and Jennifer) Stoddard**, yearlong intern at Bethel Presbyterian Church in Wheaton, Ill.
3. Affiliated missionaries **Craig and Ree Coulbourne**, Urayasu, Japan. Pray that God would lead men in the community to join a Bible study. / **Everett and Kimberly Henes**, Hillsdale, Mich. Pray for a spirit of unity during Hillsdale OPC's congregational meeting on the 5th.
4. **Brian and Sara Chang**, Cottonwood, Ariz. Pray that the Lord would bring new growth to Verde Valley Reformed Chapel. / **Cal and Edie Cummings**, Sendai, Japan. Pray for spiritual growth and understanding for a number of women attending Bible studies. / Pray for short-term missions coordinator **David Nakhla** as he coordinates construction teams going to Japan to work on the Relief Ministry Center.
5. **Woody and Laurie Lauer**, Numazu, Japan. Pray for effective witness to unsaved family members of believers at Kita Numazu Chapel. / **Drew and Sonya Adcock**, Williamsport, Pa. Pray that God would raise up new leaders at Omega OPC. / Pray for Christian Education general secretary **Danny Olinger** as he visits seminaries to interview prospective interns.
6. **Ben and Sarah Miller**, Huntington, N.Y. Pray that Trinity Church will have continued joy and unity in worship and many visitors. / **Steve and Linda Larson**, Uruguay. Pray for the church leaders in Rivera who desire to see the gospel spread throughout their community. / **Cris (and Margaret) Simpson**, yearlong intern at Trinity OPC in Hatboro, Pa.
7. **Mark and Jeni Richline**, Uruguay. Pray for the Richline family as they strive to become fluent in Spanish. / **Douglas L. and Sue Watson**, Honolulu, Hawaii. Pray that Redeemer OPC will assimilate regular visitors into the unity and love of the church. / **Pat Clawson**, Christian Education office secretary and MTIOPC coordinator.
8. **John and Wenny Ro**, Chicago, Ill. Pray that the congregation of Gospel Life Presbyterian Church will have joy and unity in worshipping God and in reaching out. / **Ben and Melanie Westerveld**, Quebec, Canada. Pray for the ministry to the immigrant community. / **Bruce McRae**, Great Commission Publications' director of church relations.
9. Pray for new missionary associate **Debra Blair**, Quebec, Canada, as she assists with outreach programs at St-Marc Church. / **Brad Hertzog**, Queens, N.Y. Pray that men who can lead will be raised up and brought in to Reformation Presbyterian Church.
10. **David Crum**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of Southern California. / Retired missionaries **Betty Andrews, Greet Rietkerk, Young and Mary Lou Son**, and **Fumi Uomoto**. Pray for patience in dealing with age-related problems. / **David Haney**, director of finance and planned giving for the Committee on Coordination.
11. Affiliated missionaries **Jerry and Marilyn Farnik**,



Lokwii David is pictured here with his wife (Asiyo Helen), son (Longola James), and daughter (Locoro Anna Grace). He was an early convert of the OP missionary work in Karamoja. He has served as a translator, language teacher, and Bible teacher. Pray that he will continue to grow as a faithful servant of the Lord. Pray also for the continued progress of the gospel among the Karimojong and the eventual formation of an indigenous church. For more about Lokwii, see pages 14–15.

- Prague, Czech Republic. Pray that visitors will come to church and hear the Word. / **Vern and Olena Picknally**, Fremont, Mich. Pray that God would bless the leadership and profession of faith classes at Fremont OPC. / **Jonathan (and Lauryn) Shishko**, yearlong intern at Reformation Presbyterian Church in Queens, N.Y.
12. **Gene and Cynthia Crow**, Redding, Calif. Pray that God would bring new visitors to Redding Reformed Fellowship. / **Heero and Anya Hacquebord**, Lviv, Ukraine. Pray that the Lord would awaken those attending outreach activities to their need for the gospel. / Pray for wisdom for those serving on **the Psalter-Hymnal Composition Subcommittee**.
  13. Pray for **Ben and Heather Hopp**, Haiti, as they conclude their furlough and prepare to return to their labors in Haiti in early March. / **Larry and Holly Wilson**, Airdrie, Alberta. Pray that God would bless Larry at Redeemer OPC with good health. / Pray for the work of **Barry Traver**, OPC web design and technical associate.
  14. **Larry and Kalynn Oldaker**, Mayfield Village, Ohio. Praise God for his sustaining grace and mercy to Lake OPC. / **Brian and Dorothy Wingard**, South Africa. Pray for opportunities to participate in the ministry of local churches. / **Jim Scott**, publications coordinator for Christian Education and managing editor of *New Horizons*.
  15. Pray that **the church in the Horn of Africa** will continue its bold witness. / **Terry and Karen Thole**, Fargo, N.Dak. Pray that more visitors who are willing to commit themselves to helping establish a Reformed church in Fargo will come to Grace OPC. / Pray for **George Cottenden**, stated clerk of the General Assembly, as he deals with health concerns.
  16. **Stephen and Catalina Payson**, Mifflinburg, Pa. Pray for open doors for campus outreach at two universities near Providence OPC. / **Mr. and Mrs. F.**, Asia. Thank God for the large quantities of Reformed literature that are being distributed there. / Navy chaplain **John (and Linda) Carter**.
  17. **Missionary associates**, Asia. Pray that God would use them to reach students with the message of salvation. / Pray for Home Missions general secretary **Ross Graham** as he prepares for the Readiness for Ministry in the OPC Seminar in Escondido, Calif., on Feb. 24–25. / **Alan (and Carrie) Dueck**, yearlong intern at Church of the Covenant in Hackettstown, N.J.
  18. **Doug and Kristi Bylsma**, Beamsville, Ontario. Pray that the love of Christ would consume Living Hope Presbyterian Church and flow into love and service to neighbors. / Pray for the labors of our **missionary associates** in Asia, as they face sometimes difficult circumstances. / Air Force chaplain **Richard (and Jan) Dickinson**.
  19. Pray for **the M. family**, in Asia, as they prepare to move to a different city to explore another avenue of ministry. / **Jim and Bonnie Hoekstra**, Cedarburg, Wis. Pray that Mercy OPC's distribution of a book about Christ will bear fruit in the community. / Army chaplain **Jonathan (and Marion) Gibbs**.
  20. **Christopher and Della Chelпка**, Tucson, Ariz. Pray that God's elect will be brought into Covenant OPC. / Pray for our **new missionary associates** (including a minister and his wife) in Asia, as they adjust to a new ministry and way of life on the field. / Navy chaplain **Tim (and Janine) Power**.
  21. **David and Sunshine Okken**, Nakaale, Uganda. Continue to remember David's ministry at Nakaale Presbyterian Church. / **Ken and Cressid Golden**, Moline, Ill. Pray that the Lord would bless Sovereign Grace OPC's evangelistic efforts and bring more visitors and core members.
  22. **Tim and Joanne Beauchamp**, Bridgton, Maine. Pray for Pleasant Mountain Presbyterian Church as they seek to bring people under the ministry of the Word of God. / Pray for the labors of missionary associates **Heather Baumgardner, Erika Bulthuis, Leah Hopp, and Emily Pihl**. / **Jan Giandomenico**, office manager and assistant to the director of finance.
  23. **James and Jenny Knox**, M.D. and R.N., Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for the Clinic staff as they minister to the patients treated each day. / **Joe and Jennifer Troutman**, Bedford, Tex. Pray for the continued growth and spiritual development of Mid Cities Presbyterian Church. / **Jason (and Amanda) Kirklin**, yearlong intern at Grace Presbyterian Church in Columbus, Ohio.
  24. **John and Lois Hilbelink**, Rockford, Ill. Pray for boldness and clarity in teaching and preaching Christ at Providence OPC. / **Al and Laurie Tricarico**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for the conversion of the Uganda Mission's Karimjong workers who are unbelievers.
  25. **Barry and Anne James**, Mbale, Uganda. Pray that students at Knox Theological College will continue to grow in their knowledge and understanding of the Reformed faith. / Home Missions administrative assistant **Vickie Swann**. / **Austin (and Rebecca) Britton**, yearlong intern at Grace OPC in Mount Vernon, Wash.
  26. **Philip and Jenny Dharmawirya**, Philadelphia, Pa. Pray for the Lord's blessing upon Emmanuel Chapel in the coming year. / Pray for Foreign Missions general secretary **Mark Bube** as he reports to the Committee on February 28–29. / **Andrew (and Rebekah) Miller**, yearlong intern at Bethel Reformed Presbyterian Church in Fredericksburg, Va.
  27. Foreign Missions administrative assistant **Linda Posthuma** and secretary **Janet Birkmann**. Pray for them during this busy week of Committee meetings. / **Chad and Katie Mullinix**, Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. Pray that God will embolden Holy Trinity Presbyterian Church by his Spirit to proclaim Christ. / **Kathy Bube**, Loan Fund administrator.
  28. **Kent and Laurie Harding**, Doniphan, Mo. Pray for God's hand of blessing on Sovereign Grace OPC's stewardship and leader development. / Pray for Foreign Missions associate general secretary **Douglas Clawson** as the full Committee begins two days of meetings. / **Joshua (and Jessica) Lyon**, yearlong intern at Branch of Hope OPC in Torrance, Calif.
  29. **Bob and Martha Wright**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray that the literacy training program will enable people to read the Scriptures. / **David and Rashed Robbins**, Huntington, W.Va. Pray that Trinity Presbyterian Church will have confidence in the Lord and his Word.

# Cross-Shaped Giving

J. MARK SALLADE

The apostle Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 8:9, “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.” These familiar words probably bring to mind the weekly passing of the offering plate. So, as you hear them, how should these words impact you?

It’s easy to forget that before he became poor, our Savior was *sensationally rich*. He was God of God from eternity past, and in his resurrection he was declared to be heir of all things. He made, sustains, and owns all of creation. And nevertheless, as we sing, “Thou who wast rich beyond all splendour, all for love’s sake became poor.” We see this in his taking on flesh. We see this in his lowly birth. We see this in his humble life. As Christ said, “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head” (Matt. 8:20). We see this supremely in his humbling

himself to the point of death, even death on a cross. “Though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor.”

As Paul highlights this truth, his point is not to shame the Corinthians into giving more. On the contrary, his point here is that *Christian giving has nothing to do with coercion; it’s all about Christ and his cross*. Paul encourages the grace of giving by preaching the gospel. And remember, the gospel doesn’t bark orders at you from the outside; it takes hold of you from within. Christ’s love is a constraining, controlling love. “For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised” (2 Cor. 5:14–15).

We have so much to be grateful for as God’s people. But don’t hear Paul’s words wrongly. You will not find the

power to give in your gratitude. The power is found in your crucified and risen Savior. He is dwelling within you, so that your life—and even your giving—might become *cross shaped*. Does that sound hard? Well, no cross is easy to bear. But don’t forget: in your risen Savior, you too have become *sensationally rich*.

Thus, as you think about giving in this new year, make sure you look to your generous Savior. Don’t just look from a distance—look to him as your life and inheritance. Christ in you is your hope of glory, and Christ in you is your hope of generous, God-honoring, Christlike, cross-shaped giving.

*The author is pastor of Calvary OPC in Glenside, Pa.*

## Worldwide Outreach Totals for 2011

Goal \$3,400,000  
Received \$3,415,655

### COMMITTEE FUNDING

Christian Education 102.1%  
Foreign Missions 100.2%  
Home Missions 100.5%

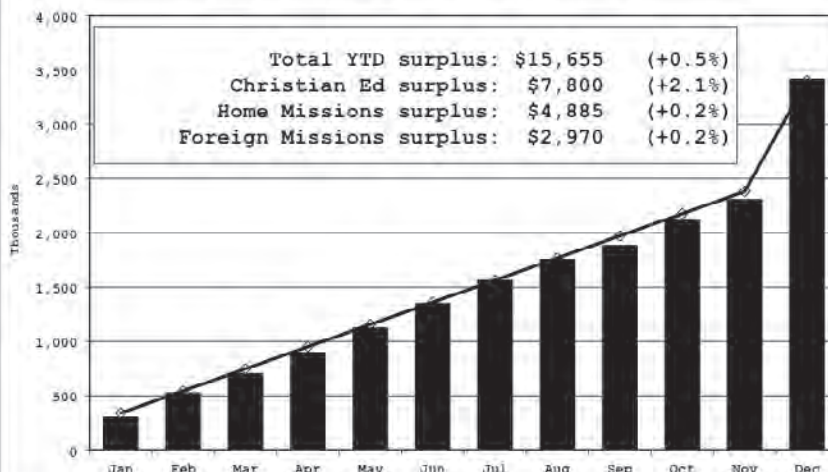
### 2011 THANK OFFERING

Goal \$800,000  
Received in 2011 715,803

Note: More is anticipated yet to be received for the 2011 Thank Offering (by September 1, 2012). However, this will be credited to Worldwide Outreach for 2012.

WORLDWIDE OUTREACH

Worldwide Outreach Year-to-Date  
2011 Receipts with 2011 Goal



## LETTERS

## THE TWO KINGDOMS AND NEUTRALITY

Editor:

There are a few areas where I think Professor Dennison's letter in the January issue of *New Horizons*, critical of my article in the October issue, offers more heat than light.

First, it's one thing to embrace Professor Van Til's presuppositionalist critique of "neutrality," autonomy (Kantian or otherwise), and so forth—and quite another to concur at every point with his descriptions of historical positions. I agree that he probably wouldn't have greeted "two kingdoms" ideas with open arms without asking a lot of questions. Fine. However, there are some great historical theologians today who wouldn't agree with all of his descriptions of other views, even views held by a long line of Reformed theologians (which he was willing to critique). Van Til consigned Protestant Scholasticism to the dustbin because it allegedly returned to the nature-grace dualism of Roman Catholic theology. "Scholasticism" (even in its Reformed orthodox version) was like a swearword. Well, I think our generation has benefited from some more helpful work in historical theology, and Van Til lived and worked in an environment that disliked "scholasticism" in all its forms. Across the spectrum that was true, from fundamentalists to liberals. It was especially apparent among the Barthians, but it would be ridiculous to call Van Til a "Barthian" because he too disliked "scholasticism." At the end of the day, I don't mind disagreeing with my betters on these points; it certainly doesn't affect my esteem of their deepest convictions, which I share wholeheartedly.

Second, Dennison seems to misunderstand my appeal to Kant. Notice that "the moral law within" is in quotes. I wasn't saying that Kant's knowledge of the moral law was infallible (the opposite of what I believe), but that even Kant could pick out some ethical duties (borrowed capital, of course) and attribute

them to an "infallible knowledge" of "the moral law within." The point is exactly the one Professor Van Til made often: because God's Word is true, and we are who God says we are regardless of whether we believe it (namely, created in his image but fallen), and can't suppress all truth at the same time, unbelievers will (inconsistent with their worldview) get some things right. Antithesis is certainly something that we bring into the discussion, as well as common grace. Christians are called to testify to God's moral will as communicated in Scripture—even in their public arguments. We don't leave our heavenly citizenship at the door. However, we also know—as biblical Christians—that unbelievers still operate on borrowed capital and we can use that to reach agreements in policy even where we have different ways of justifying it in principle. Christians (yes, even Reformed ones) don't always get it right and pagans don't always get it wrong—thanks to God's generous providence. It's worth adding that OPC minister and Westminster California professor David VanDrunen's *Natural Law and the Two Kingdoms* explores the Reformed tradition on these questions and would make an excellent conversation-starter.

Third, somehow a number of folks assume that people who distinguish between Christ's two kingdoms think there's this neutral realm of autonomy called "natural law." That's just not how Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Ursinus, Rutherford, and a host of others saw it when they endorsed the two kingdoms in explicit terms. (By the way, though hardly a "two kingdoms" guy, Aquinas didn't see it that way either.) If you affirm a distinction between saving and common grace, you're already a "two kingdoms" advocate.

In short, it would be wonderful if we could get beyond the invocation of slogans and heroes and talk about exegesis and theology. I'm more than a little concerned that in our circles we give too much freedom to caricaturing past (and current) views.

*Michael Horton  
Escondido, Calif.*

Editor:

William Dennison's letter in the January issue calls Michael Horton's article in the October issue insufficiently Van Tilian. But is Horton vindicated by being sufficiently Pauline?

Romans 1 declares that man is without excuse for rejecting God's natural revelation in all creation (vv. 18–22), substituting false gods (v. 23), and committing a horrific catalog of sins despite knowing God's decree of death for such sins (vv. 24–32).

Yet when Mr. Horton wrote "Even . . . Immanuel Kant retained an infallible certainty of 'the moral law within,'" Dennison found fault and omitted the word "even." Can he suggest a statement that more accurately summarizes Paul's teaching that unregenerates know their deeds deserve death?

I appreciate Mr. Horton's warning to Reformed Christians working with Catholics and other non-Reformed that they owe simultaneous allegiance to the Great Commission and the Great Commandment. How else could our Presbyterian forefathers have fought alongside Maryland Catholics in the Revolutionary War? And what lover of my neighbor would I be if I sat quietly in some Reformed tower while the government was threatening Catholic hospitals that refuse to do abortions? Isn't Benjamin Franklin's advice to hang together lest we all hang separately just as relevant in today's culture wars?

*John E. Taylor  
Farmington Hills, Mich.*

### THREE TRINITY CHURCH INTERNS ORDAINED

Three former interns at Trinity OPC in Hatboro, Pennsylvania, have recently been ordained to the gospel ministry and installed at Orthodox Presbyterian churches. Tim Beauchamp was a summer intern in 2007, mentored by Pastors George Cottenden and Larry Westerveld, and (after spending some time in Texas)

Hands being laid on Tim Beauchamp at his ordination



is now serving as the organizing pastor of Pleasant Mountain Presbyterian Church in Bridgton, Maine. John Sharpe was a summer intern in 2009, mentored by Pastor Westerveld, and (after a yearlong internship) is now the associate pastor of Calvary OPC in Tallahassee, Florida. Chad Mullinix was a yearlong intern in 2010–11, mentored by Pastor Westerveld, and is now the pastor of Holy Trinity Presbyterian Church in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Cris Simpson is the present yearlong intern at Trinity Church, which has a long history of preparing interns for the gospel ministry.

Hands being laid on Chad Mullinix at his ordination



## UPDATE

### Churches

• **Central City Presbyterian Church** in Oklahoma City, Okla., was dissolved as of December 31 by the Presbytery of the

Southwest.

• **First Presbyterian Church** in Perkasié, Pa., was received by the Presbytery of Philadelphia as an organized congregation of the OPC on December 2.

• **Grace Presbyterian Church** in Wichita Falls, Tex., was dissolved as of December 31 by the Presbytery of the Southwest.

### Ministers

• On December 2, **Tim R. Beauchamp** was ordained as a minister and installed as associate pastor of Second Parish OPC in Portland, Maine, to serve as organizing pastor of Pleasant

Mountain Presbyterian Church in Bridgton, Maine.

• On December 3, the Presbytery of the Southwest dissolved its ministerial relationship with **Gary W. Davenport** as

regional home missionary, after a leave of absence, and permitted him to demit the ministry, both effective immediately.

• **Brad J. Irick**, formerly a minister in the PCA, was installed as pastor of Winner OPC in Winner, S.D., on October 21.

• **Luke P. Lu** was installed as a teacher in the Presbytery of Northern California

Participants in the ordination of John Sharpe: the Revs. John Schortmann (charge to congregation), Sharpe, Bill Hobbs (charge to minister), Larry Mininger (sermon)



and Nevada on December 17; he is the acting president and a professor at China Reformed Theological Seminary in Taiwan and serves as pastor of Bible Reformed Church (an independent, Chinese-speaking congregation) in San Jose, Calif.

• On December 2, organizing pastor **Richard Scott MacLaren** was installed as pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Perkasié, Pa.

• **Curtis A. Moleterno** was ordained as a minister and installed as pastor of Westminster OPC in Hamill, S.D., on October 21.

• On December 2, **Jeremiah W. Montgomery** was ordained and installed as an evangelist of Westminster OPC in Hollidaysburg, Pa., to serve as organizing pastor of Resurrection OPC in State College, Pa.

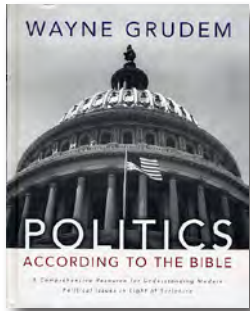
• **Chad D. Mullinix** was ordained as a minister and installed as pastor of Holy Trinity Presbyterian Church in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., on December 9, 2011.

• On August 20, **Stephen L. Roberts** was ordained as a minister and installed as an evangelist of the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic, in order to serve as a chaplain in the U.S. Army Reserves.

• **Sacha Walicord**, a minister in the PCA until received by the Presbytery of Ohio on October 21, was installed as a teacher at Providence Presbyterian Church in Columbus (Pataskala), Ohio, on December 2, in order to do church planting work in Mount Vernon, Ohio.

## REVIEWS

*Politics according to the Bible*, by Wayne Grudem. Published by Zondervan, 2010. Hardback, 601 pages, list price \$39.99. Reviewed by Pastor Paul Viggiano.



If you wonder how front-page news relates to the Christian faith, Wayne Grudem's *Politics according to the Bible* might be

a good book for your nightstand. Grudem offers a gentle, albeit firm, admonition for Christians to embrace their responsibility to bring God's law to bear upon the culture in which they live.

Grudem offers a panoramic sketch of the many issues tearing America away from its foundational biblical values. The book is long, but the first four chapters (123 pages) contain his main arguments. These arguments address the irrationality of disenfranchising religious convictions from the political arena and the false dichotomy in the claim that Christians should "do evangelism, not politics."

God, according to Grudem, intended the Bible to give guidance to every area of life—including government and politics. He then offers an impressive historical résumé of how Christian influence has led to the outlawing of such atrocities as "infanticide, child abandonment, abortion in the Roman Empire, human sacrifice, pedophilia, polygamy, the burning alive of widows, etc."

Grudem adds that "passing good laws and having good government will never be enough to change a society." He recognizes the centrality of the cross of Christ as the answer to the human dilemma. However, the earth belongs to a God who knows best how it should be governed—and has revealed such information in Scripture. Grudem then devotes over 400 pages to applying Scripture to a wide

range of issues.

The hotbed issues of abortion, euthanasia, capital punishment, and gay marriage are handled early and forcefully. Then there are brief, yet instructive opinions on pornography, school vouchers, private property, taxes, health care, the environment, national defense, the CIA, just war, foreign aid, cap and trade, affirmative action, public education, global warming, etc. Grudem has done his homework and handles these topics from an informed perspective. It's very educational, yet there are some concerns.

Grudem's blurring of the law and the gospel is disconcerting. "Preaching the 'whole Gospel,'" Grudem suggests, "must also include preaching what the Bible says about civil government." He doesn't maintain a strong law/gospel distinction. His writes of "a distinct realm of 'things that belong to God,'" implying that there are things outside that realm—a position unthinkable for a Christian, and one that Grudem elsewhere contradicts.

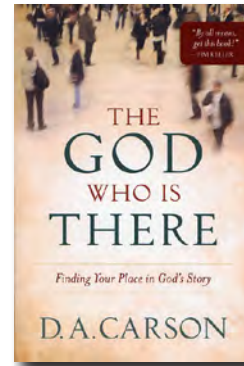
Whether Jesus is reigning or will reign is up for grabs from chapter to chapter, and although Grudem is refreshingly optimistic about the success of the gospel, his final pages suggest a future time of signs and wonders; clearly he is not a cessationist. He also denies the valid use of the Law of Moses as a model for God's standard of justice or general equity. For a book about politics and the Bible to jettison the books in the Bible that address the topic most specifically is disappointing.

Nonetheless, the book is very informative and a valuable resource to bring Christians up to speed on contemporary issues.

\* \* \*

*The God Who Is There: Finding Your Place in God's Story*, by D. A. Carson. Published by Baker Books, 2010. Paperback, 232 pages, list price \$16.99. Reviewed by OP minister Andrew H. Selle.

In this engaging Bible survey, a top-flight scholar attempts to



reach an educated but biblically illiterate audience with the gospel. "If you know nothing at all about what the Bible says, the book you are now holding in

your hands is for you"—a bold claim tempered by: "This book is not for everyone." Indeed, the tiny print with no illustrations requires an earnest seeker.

As to content, there is much to commend. Each of the fourteen chapters focuses upon God's self-revelation in the unfolding history of redemption from Genesis ("The God Who Made Everything") to Revelation ("The God Who Triumphs"). The entire Bible is God's own evangelistic tract. In a manner that is both comprehensible and persuasive, Carson begins by summarizing the vital doctrines of creation and sin rooted in real history, confronting postmodern skeptics with an alternative, God-centered worldview. The chapters on the Incarnation (in the Prophets and the Gospels), the new birth (in John 3), and the wrath of God (in the Revelation) are outstanding.

The book has its flaws, however. Although it ably explains Christ's passive obedience at the cross, it is oddly vague about his active obedience—that perfect righteousness which is the ground of our justification, imputed to believers and received solely by the instrument of faith. And in an otherwise excellent section about the love of God, the author muddies the water by suggesting a type of divine love toward believers that is condi-

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[www.opc.org](http://www.opc.org)

[opc.org/qa.html?question\\_id=227](http://opc.org/qa.html?question_id=227)

## OPC Women's Retreat

April 20–21 • Pittsfield, Mass.

The eighteenth annual OPC Women's Retreat, sponsored by the Presbytery of New York and New England, will be held at the Lakeside Conference Center in Pittsfield, Mass. Kathleen B. Nielson will be speaking on "Redeemed! The Story Unfolded through Isaiah." For more information, contact Mishael Schiller, registrar, at [schillerfamily@comcast.net](mailto:schillerfamily@comcast.net) or 978/687-7924, and go to [www.opc.org/cce/camps.html](http://www.opc.org/cce/camps.html).

tional upon their own obedience. Having drunk from the wells of classic Reformed theology, the author would do better to use its classic formulations about Christ's completed work and the gracious benefits for those who are united with him.

In summary, I highly recommend this book for its intended audience, but it will be most effective when supplemented by such material as David Powlison's brilliant booklet, "God's Love: Better Than Unconditional" (P&R Publishing, 2001), G. I. Williamson's doctrinal study guides, and Tim Keller's works. Also, Carson's book follows closely a lecture series that can be downloaded free at <http://thegospelcoalition.org/thegodwhoisthere>, providing a springboard for believers and their "seeker" friends to hear the Word and discuss it *together*. That's the most effective means of evangelism!

\* \* \*

*The Doctrine of the Word of God*, by John M. Frame. Published by P&R, 2010. Hardback, 684 pages, list price \$39.99. Reviewed by James W. Scott, managing editor of *New Horizons*.

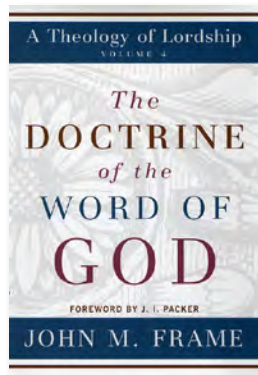
The fourth and probably final volume of John Frame's series, *A Theology of Lordship*, has now been published: *The Doctrine of the Word of God*. This is an important work, but it is not as monumental as its number of pages might suggest. The latter half of the book consists of seventeen appendixes, which are short pieces (including book reviews), mostly published previously, on the general subject of the book.

## New Horizons Now Online

The current issue of *New Horizons* is available at [OPC.ORG](http://OPC.ORG) in full color. Beginning in January, the PDF version became available. An EPUB version is planned, beginning in February. These digital versions may be downloaded onto your computer, tablet, or other device.

The main portion of the book (pp. 1–334) was developed over a

long career of seminary teaching. It sets forth the rich teaching of Scripture about God's speech (especially in Scripture), and is replete with Bible references.



Frame treats his

subject in forty-six chapters, but chapters averaging seven or eight pages cannot say much. Frame himself states that this introductory volume is "a more concise version of what I had originally hoped to write," a mere "summary" with "relatively few citations of historical and current writers," which (health permitting) he may expand in successive editions or supplement with "an additional book or two" on the subject (pp. xxvii–xxviii, 7). Nonetheless, it is a valuable treatment of biblical teaching, with Reformed moorings and a solid commitment to the authority of Scripture.

"My main thesis," Frame says, "is that God's word, in all its qualities and aspects, is a personal communication from him to us" (p. 3). His book is an exposition and defense (from Scripture) of this "personal-word model." This sounds self-evident to the Christian believer, but will evoke disdain from much of the academic world. But Frame recognizes that God's communication is "supernatural all the way through," and that only the

Holy Spirit can "bring persuasion" to his position (p. 7).

Not surprisingly, Frame brings his triperspectivalism to this volume—though it figures less prominently than in earlier volumes in this series. For example, he looks at liberal views of revelation from "my three perspectives, normative, situational, and existential" (p. 21). There is some usefulness to such an approach, but it can lead to some artificial analysis. Thus, he "takes some liberties with the traditional list" of the attributes of Scripture "to align" them with "God's lordship attributes of control, authority, and presence" (p. 201)—admittedly "stretching the scheme slightly" (p. 210).

His equating of the word of God with God (p. 48) is, in my judgment, mistaken, based on superficial exegesis of John 1:1 and other passages. If the biblical text is the word of God, and thus God, shouldn't we fall down and worship our Bibles? Frame of course says no (p. 67), but why not? It is likewise imprecise to speak of God's word as an "attribute" of God (as on p. 71 and elsewhere).

For the most part, though, Frame propounds, in his own way, traditional Reformed doctrine. He has excellent chapters, for example, on "The Inerrancy of Scripture," "The Phenomena of Scripture," and "Assurance."

Frame's writing is clear, almost conversational, being neither pedantic nor pretentious, and always engaging. One need not be a professional theologian, or even a seminary student, to think along with him. I have some disagreements with him, but I would nonetheless recommend this book to people interested in studying the full breadth of the doctrine of the word of God.



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