

REVIEW: Starr Meade's *Comforting Hearts, Teaching Minds* by R. McGraw

# New Horizons

IN THE ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

OCT 2013

PRESBYTERIANS  
← and the →  
HEIDELBERG  
*Catechism*

BY  
ALAN D. STRANGE

*Also:* **OBSERVATIONS AFTER ELEVEN YEARS**

BY ANTHONY A. MONAGHAN

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Cover photo: church tower in Heidelberg, Germany

## NEW HORIZONS

IN THE ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

**Editorial Board:** The Committee on Christian Education's Subcommittee on Serial Publications

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**Managing Editor:** James W. Scott

**Editorial Assistant:** Patricia Clawson

**Cover Designer:** Christopher Tobias

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*New Horizons* (ISSN: 0199-3518) is published monthly except for a combined issue, usually August-September, by the Committee on Christian Education of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, 607 N. Easton Road, Bldg. E, Willow Grove, PA 19090-2539; tel. 215-830-0900; fax 215-830-0350.

Letters to the editor are welcome. They should deal with an issue the magazine has recently addressed. Their language should be temperate, and they may not charge anyone with an offense. They should be brief, and they may be condensed by the editor.

Send e-mail correspondence to the editor at [olinger.1@opc.org](mailto:olinger.1@opc.org).

Send address changes to [CCEsec@opc.org](mailto:CCEsec@opc.org). Allow six weeks for address changes.

The digital edition (PDF, ePub, mobi) and an archive of previous issues are available at [www.opc.org](http://www.opc.org).

Views expressed by our writers are not necessarily those of the editors or official positions of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

Copies are distributed free to members and friends of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

Nonmembers are asked to donate \$20.00 annually. Foreign subscribers must remit USD 40.00 annually to receive the magazine (USD 30.00 in Canada), or they may request a free e-mail PDF subscription.

Requests for a subscription should be sent to [CCEsec@opc.org](mailto:CCEsec@opc.org) or the address below.

Periodicals postage is paid at Willow Grove, Pa., and at additional mailing offices. **Postmaster:** Send address changes to *New Horizons in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church*, 607 N. Easton Road, Bldg. E, Willow Grove, PA 19090-2539.



The 132nd birthday of J. Gresham Machen, an important leader in the founding of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (who died in 1937), was celebrated at a joint evening worship service of four OP congregations in Georgia at Redeemer OPC in Atlanta on July 28. The guest preacher was a man who courageously proclaims the gospel despite the severe persecution of Christians in his home country. A meal followed the service and included the birthday cake shown at the left.



ALAN D. STRANGE

# Presbyterians and the Heidelberg Catechism

**W**hy should Presbyterians—more particularly, Orthodox Presbyterians—care about the Heidelberg Catechism? We have two catechisms of our own that seem quite sufficient—if not to say, in the case of the Westminster Larger Catechism, challenging, even daunting at times. Why should we give a moment’s thought to the Heidelberg Catechism, particularly when we consider theologian B. B. Warfield’s assessment that, when compared to the Westminster Shorter Catechism, the Heidelberg Catechism is “too subjective”?

The Heidelberg Catechism certainly does have a personal element that strikes a different tone from that of the Westminster Catechisms. The first question reflects that different approach: “What is your only comfort in life and death?” It addresses the catechumen directly, seeking to elicit a statement of trust from the one being questioned. The answer affirms the application of the gospel to the catechumen: “That I am not my own, but belong with body and soul, both in life and death, to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ. He has fully paid for all my sins with his precious blood, and has set me free from all the power of the devil. He also preserves me in such a way that without the will of my heavenly Father not a hair can fall from my head; indeed, all things must work together for my salvation. Therefore, by his Holy Spirit he also assures me of eternal life and makes me heartily willing and ready from now on to live for him.”

## THE HISTORY OF CREEDS AND CONFESSIONS

That first question and answer, as beautiful as it is, should whet the appetite of Orthodox Presbyterians for this seminal sixteenth-century catechism. Many are aware that it is one of the “Three Forms of Unity” for Reformed churches, which are the Calvinistic churches that emerged from continental Europe. They are represented today by two churches with which we have fraternal relations: the Reformed Church in the

United States and the United Reformed Churches in North America. The Three Forms of Unity are the Belgic Confession of Faith (1561), the Heidelberg Catechism (1563), and the Canons of Dort (1618). Note that this year is the 450th Anniversary of the Heidelberg Catechism.

The Reformation spawned confession making. Before the Reformation, creedal matters had been decided largely by ecumenical councils. The first two councils—Nicaea (325) and Constantinople (381)—created the great Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed. This, together with the Apostles’ Creed and the Athanasian Creed, formed the foundation of the church’s confession. The Reformation affirmed these great creeds, regarding them as necessary, but no longer sufficient, to secure orthodoxy. The Reformers understood that more was needed for a clear understanding of the gospel than was contained in the great creeds. The key Reformational insight—that the righteousness that God requires is given by him freely as a gift, received by faith alone—along with other insights, demanded confessional expression. These matters, now deemed essential, came to expression not only in the great confessions of the Reformation, but also in the Heidelberg Catechism, which is a teaching device, particularly for youth preparing to come to the Lord’s Table. The Heidelberg Catechism fits right into this great tradition, the background of which warrants exploration.



First, just a word about the first of the Three Forms of Unity: the Belgic Confession is comparatively mild in its critique of Roman Catholicism and supportive of civil authority, all in an effort to distinguish the Reformed from the Anabaptists. The thirty-seven articles set forth a vigorous Calvinism, having much in common with the French Confession of 1559 (especially noteworthy are Articles 22–24, emphasizing the twofold grace of God in justification and sanctification, and Article 35, a Calvinistic articulation of the Lord’s Supper).<sup>1</sup>

## THE MAKING OF THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM

Two years later, the Heidelberg Catechism was drafted. It was adopted for subscription in the Dutch church by the Synod of Wessel (1568). “Frederick III, elector of the Palatinate, had commissioned it, seeking to have the beliefs of the Reformed Church of the Palatinate defined in a way that reflected the core of Evangelical faith over against the kind of quibbling that he witnessed and detested among the Gnesio-Lutherans and the Philippists.” Frederick respected Melancthon and never rejected the Augsburg Confession (1530), yet he was more Reformed than Lutheran. He wanted to bring together the best of both traditions and “asked the theological faculty and local ministers of Heidelberg to compose a catechism for teaching the youth of the region.”<sup>2</sup>

Zacharias Ursinus, a student of both Calvin and Melancthon and a professor of theology at the University of Heidelberg, is generally credited with drawing up the first drafts of the catechism. A committee of Frederick’s theologians, however, prepared the official text, drawing upon (at least) Luther’s *Small Catechism*, Melancthon’s *Examen Ordinandum*, and Leo Juda’s catechisms. It was approved by the Palatinate synod in January 1563. Caspar Olevianus, a student of Calvin and Beza and pastor of the main church in Heidelberg, certainly participated in this work, but probably played a less prominent role than was earlier surmised.<sup>3</sup>

The sharp condemnation of the Roman Catholic Mass in Question and Answer 80 was added as a reaction to the anti-Protestant Council of Trent (which did not adjourn until after the Heidelberg Catechism was adopted). The (Reformed) Council of Dort in 1618–1619 organized the 129 Q’s and A’s into fifty-two Lord’s Days for preaching purposes.<sup>4</sup> The idea was that in the second service (the afternoon service), the whole congregation would be catechized, being taught the Reformed faith by the minister. Some have speculated, though there seems to be no clear evidence to support the point, that the Westminster Larger Catechism was similarly intended to be used by the minister in the instruction of the congregation. I must say that I would commend it for use in this way, either by the minister on Sunday or perhaps at midweek meetings, as the Larger Catechism is a remarkable compendium of Reformed theology.

## PREACHING FROM THE CATECHISM?

The idea of using a catechism for preaching purposes may sound curious to Presbyterians, since we are told that a sermon is to involve, at least, a “painstaking exegesis” of a text. How could a human document, even a catechism meant to teach, be used for preaching purposes? To be sure, there are different theories among those who hold to the church order of Dort about how, precisely, this should be done. But there is agreement that since the Heidelberg Catechism faithfully expresses what the Scriptures teach, the Scriptures are taught in a proper catechetical sermon, in which the catechism is shown to set forth the doctrine taught in Scripture. My preferred way to do this is to read a Scripture text and the relevant portion of the catechism, and then to weave the two together in the sermon. If ministers in the OPC were to use the Shorter Catechism and the Heidelberg Catechism as guides in the evening service, this would be a marvelous tool to train our people in the rich theology and piety of our faith. Good catechetical preaching covers all doctrine and in this way helps to set forth the whole counsel of God to the congregation. This, in addition to our mainstay—powerful redemptive-historical, heart-applicatory, expository preaching—could yield fruit for years to come.

But, given that we have the Shorter and Larger Catechisms to use as preaching guides in our second services, if we choose to do that, why would we even bother to use the Heidelberg Catechism? For one thing, it is practical to do so, since it has already been divided into fifty-two Lord’s Days, as noted above. Additionally, it provides variety (so that one is not preaching the same Shorter and Larger Catechism sermons year in and year out) and does not contradict our Standards (the Heidelberg Catechism says less than Westminster). If there is thought to be a difference somewhere, and I concede that such is arguable at points, the minister might highlight what our Standards say that is thought to be clearer, or correct, as the case may be.

But I would also argue that the very subjectivity of the Heidelberg Catechism, which Warfield held against it, is something in its favor, particularly in attempting to reach out in a postmodern culture that values the personal over the propositional. The Heidelberg Catechism does a good job embodying both, seeking to express what is ours in Christ by the power and application of the Holy Spirit, who brings Christ to us and us to Christ. The Heidelberg Catechism is, one might say, the firstfruits of the Reformation, expressed in catechetical form, whereas the Shorter Catechism and particularly the Larger Catechism are the fruit that has matured. There is an important place for the expression of both in the teaching ministry of the church, and it would be good for any Presbyterian church to make some sort of study of the Three Forms

of Unity and to consider using the Heidelberg Catechism in some way on the Lord's Day.

## THE STRUCTURE OF THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM

The Heidelberg Catechism is organized in three main parts: man's sin and fall, the redemption that is ours in Jesus Christ, and the consequent thankfulness that we are to render in a life of service to our God and our neighbor. This three-fold schema is often reduced to helpful alliterative points like Guilt, Grace, and Gratitude, or Sin, Salvation, and Service. These three parts address the sin that is ours, what God has done in Christ to remedy that, and how we are called to live as the redeemed, engaging in kingdom life in a fallen world.

Following the first question and answer, which summarizes the Christian life, and the second question and answer, which summarizes the three parts of the catechism, the Heidelberg Catechism proceeds to the first main section: "Of the Misery of Man." This first section consists of Questions and Answers 3–11 and sets forth our original innocence that gave way to sin and misery, making it clear that we are sinners who need salvation. The second section is "Of Man's Deliverance." This is the largest section of the Heidelberg Catechism. Questions and Answers 12–25 address deliverance more directly. Since God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—is the author of man's deliverance, the Heidelberg Catechism treats the persons of the Godhead in Questions and Answers 26–28 (Father), 29–52 (Son), and 53–64 (Holy Spirit). These questions and answers particularly show the love of God in the divine rescue mission: the Father appoints the salvation of his own, the Son accomplishes it, and the Spirit applies it. Here we see Reformed soteriology set forth for the first time in catechetical form.

Many questions and answers from this section could be singled out for their doctrinal precision and warm piety, but Question 60 merits particular attention: "How are you righteous before God?" The answer captures the genius of the Reformation: "Only by true faith in Jesus Christ. Even though my conscience accuses me of having grievously sinned against all God's commandments, of never having kept any of them, and of still being inclined toward all evil, nevertheless, without any merit of my own, out of sheer grace, God grants and credits to me the perfect satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ, as if I had never sinned nor been a sinner, and as if I had been as perfectly obedient as Christ was obedient for me. All I need to do is accept this gift with a believing heart."

The second section of the Heidelberg Catechism continues with ecclesiology, including the sacraments (65–68), baptism (69–74), and the Lord's Supper (75–82). Here we have the first catechetical expression of a rich Reformed ecclesiology. It affirms the real presence of Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit, in the sacraments, while avoiding all the errors

of Roman Catholicism, which views the sacraments not as means of grace but, idolatrously, as ends. The Roman Church commits such an error because, historically, it neglected the doctrine of the work of the Holy Spirit. Calvin is, as Warfield said, the "theologian of the Holy Spirit," but Aquinas and the other medievalists were not, jumping over the Spirit in their theologies and proceeding directly from Christology to ecclesiology. When ecclesiology is not based on a proper doctrine of the Holy Spirit, it yields sacerdotalism—a theory of priestly intermediation in which, practically, the church replaces the Holy Spirit. The Heidelberg Catechism, on the other hand, has an ecclesiology that flows from its doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

The third and concluding section of the Heidelberg Catechism is "Of Thankfulness," in which the Ten Commandments (92–115) and the Lord's Prayer (116–129) receive treatment. Recall what we've established thus far: though made upright, we are now fallen, miserable sinners (section 1), from whom God has elected a people and sent his Son to accomplish salvation, applied by the Holy Spirit in the context of the church (section 2). Section 3 addresses the way in which we as Christians are to live: we are to walk in love. That means we are to keep his commandments, not so as to be made acceptable in his sight, but because we are acceptable in his sight through the merits and mediation of Christ. We seek to keep the law out of gratitude for so great a salvation, and the law, in what is called the third use of the law, is the way of life for those who have been delivered from its curse by the person and work of Christ. How we ought to live and to commune with our God in prayer round out this last section of the Heidelberg Catechism.

I hope that there is enough here either to reignite our interest in this wonderful sixteenth-century catechism or perhaps to prompt us to get to know it for the first time and to be instructed and heartened by its personal, devotional expression of the Reformed faith. □

*The author is associate pastor of New Covenant Community Church (OPC) in New Lenox, Ill., and an associate professor at Mid-America Reformed Seminary.*

<sup>1</sup> Jaroslav Pelikan and Valerie Hotchkiss, eds., *Creeks and Confessions of Faith in the Christian Tradition*, vol. 2, part 4: *Creeks and Confessions of the Reformation Era* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 405–6.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 427. See also James T. Dennison, Jr., ed., *Reformed Confessions of the 16th and 17th Centuries in English Translation*, vol. 2: *1552–1566* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2008), 769–70.

<sup>3</sup> Pelikan and Hotchkiss, *Creeks and Confessions*, 427.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 427–28.



JOHN R. MUETHER

# The Heidelberg Catechism in the OPC

In the early years of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, a few Dutch-Americans with backgrounds in the Christian Reformed Church strongly (even excessively, some would say) shaped the Reformed identity of the young church. Among them were Westminster Seminary professors Ned Stonehouse, R. B. Kuiper, and Cornelius Van Til.

But as influential as those men may have been, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church seems to have paid little attention to the Heidelberg Catechism during its early decades. Reasons for this relative neglect are not hard to imagine. The OPC's Committee on Christian Education was particularly eager to commend the Shorter Catechism to the young church, and a series on it by John Skilton ran in the *Presbyterian Guardian*.

Furthermore, it did not help that one voice of admiration for the Heidelberg Catechism was that of Karl Barth. When the 400th anniversary of the catechism was observed in 1963, Barth and other commentators lauded it especially for what it *did not* contain. Unlike other Reformation catechisms and confessions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Heidelberg Catechism lacked a "hardened predestinarian theology" (especially in omitting overt reference to the doctrine of reprobation). And its treatment of the Sabbath was free, admirers claimed, from the dour sabbatarianism of the Westminster Standards. This sixteenth-century catechism was so well in tune with modern sensibilities that it was added to the Book of Confessions that the Northern (mainline) Presbyterian Church created in 1967, even as that denomination demoted the Westminster Larger Catechism from confessional status.

No doubt the OPC's Dutch Reformed connections yielded some exposure to the Heidelberg Catechism. When it came up in the General Assembly minutes, it was often in the context of assessing the OPC's relation to the CRC, with whom it conducted conversations about uniting. But, as Darryl Hart recently observed, the Heidelberg Catechism seemed to be associated in America more with the German Reformed

(the Reformed Church in the United States) than the Dutch Reformed. It was the only confessional standard for the original RCUS, a once-robust Reformed denomination that gradually assimilated into the very liberal United Church of Christ during the course of the twentieth century.

## A HEARING FOR THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM

But not all of the RCUS merged into the Protestant mainline. A remnant, known for a time as the Eureka Classis, remained separate, and when some of their ministerial candidates came to study at Westminster Seminary, Van Til accommodated their desire to study the Heidelberg Catechism by adding an elective course on it. Characteristically, Van Til used this as an occasion to challenge Barth's take on the catechism. In a syllabus that he wrote for the class, *The Triumph of Grace* (1958), Van Til noted that the ecumenical tone of the catechism did not come at the expense of its Reformed character. Rather, it was joining the Protestant protest against all who "fail to proclaim the triumph of the grace of God in Christ." That would include the corruptions of Rome, the errors of Arminianism, and the unbelief of modernism. If this rhetoric clashed with the warm, irenic spirit that others identified with the catechism, then Van Til was closer to the spirit of the *Commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism* (written by the catechism's author, Zacharius Ursinus) than many of the mid-twentieth-century admirers of the catechism.

Van Til's class likely had the spillover effect of heightening the visibility of the Heidelberg Catechism here and there in the OPC. But an even greater breakthrough came several

decades later, when G. I. Williamson published his *Heidelberg Catechism: A Study Guide* (P&R, 1993). Exposed to the Heidelberg Catechism during his labors with the Reformed Churches in New Zealand, Williamson patterned his book after his popular studies on the Westminster Confession and Shorter Catechism. As Greg Reynolds noted, the result was a testimony to Williamson's "Reformed ecumenical instincts," and it introduced the Heidelberg Catechism into many adult Sunday school classes in the OPC.

## SIX FORMS OF UNITY?

This brief survey suggests that the Heidelberg Catechism found its way into the OPC from its exposure to a variety of ecclesiastical influences, beyond the CRC, including contacts with the RCUS and the RCNZ. An interesting development took place in the RCUS in the 1980s, when it elevated the Belgic Confession and the Canons of Dort to confessional status alongside the Heidelberg Catechism, together forming the "Three Forms of Unity." The unusual step of adding to confessional standards suggested not only the compatibility of these documents but also the insufficiency of the Heidelberg Catechism *alone* to function as a subordinate standard.

If there is such safety in numbers, should the OPC adopt the Heidelberg Catechism as well as the Westminster Standards? This question has been considered by the General Assembly on at least two occasions. In 1959, the Presbytery of the Dakotas overtured the General Assembly to "study the desirability of adding the Heidelberg Catechism to the doctrinal standards of the OPC in the interest of Reformed ecumenicity." The General Assembly's response was simply to "commend to the ministers and sessions of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church for study the Three Forms of Unity" in light of "the fraternal relations which the Orthodox Presbyterian Church sustains to various Reformed churches."

A more ambitious overture came from the Presbytery of Northern California to the 58th General Assembly in 1991, requesting the General Assembly to add the Three Forms of Unity to the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms, creating, in effect, six forms of unity as the OPC's subordinate standards. The grounds for the overture were strongly ecumenical and Reformed: "The Three Forms of Unity harmonize well with, and complement, our present subordinate standards: Many of the churches with whom we have ecumenical relations have the Three Forms of Unity as their doctrinal standards. Our adoption of these standards may further the cause of Biblical unity."

The committee assigned to respond to the overture underscored its appreciation for the Three Forms of Unity as "a faithful—and therefore quite acceptable—expression of the Reformed Faith." In their essential teaching, there was no conflict between these two sets of symbols. Yet the committee

counseled against adopting the overture, in part because of the burden it would place on church officers to become familiar with a large body of new material. "As it is now," it counseled, "we believe the Larger Catechism is neglected because it is so extensive." Because the overture might actually diminish the OPC's familiarity with its confessions, it was denied.

## THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM TODAY

The committee also reminded the General Assembly that the Reformed tradition had always embraced "unity in diversity." Various confessions were capable of giving expression to the Reformed tradition. This is a point worth underscoring this year, which is the 450th anniversary of the Heidelberg Catechism. This anniversary provides another occasion to remember the importance of creeds and catechisms that reinforce our confidence in the Christian faith.

Tragically, this is a lesson that the Christian Reformed Church (with whom the OPC severed fraternal relations in 1997) seems to have forgotten. In his book, *Calvinism in the Las Vegas Airport*, Richard Mouw expresses skepticism about the value of Reformed confessions. Much of their teaching consists of "shelf doctrines" (i.e., doctrines beset with "harsh language" and "rhetorical excess," which should be stored away and used only occasionally). However, Mouw acquits the Heidelberg Catechism of these charges, because it "travels well" and continues to serve the contemporary church effectively.

But a more recent Christian Reformed author is unwilling even to make that concession regarding the Heidelberg Catechism. In his book, *Not Sure: A Pastor's Journey from Faith to Doubt* (2011), John Suk, former editor of the *Banner*, writes: "How dare we use what we know to be fallible theories about God coercively, when they are not confessions anymore but goads to enforce unity and communal compliance?" In order to survive, he argues, denominations must "water down" their distinctive teaching; the "explosive and divisive" character of all confessions from the past must not prescribe the faith and practice of the church today.

Some Dutch Reformed in America seem determined to repeat the story of the German Reformed: in the interest of broadening their identity, confessional burdens must be lifted. For them, the Heidelberg Catechism can be celebrated, but only as it resonates with generic Protestantism. But the OPC's exposure to the Heidelberg Catechism suggests a different reason to celebrate. The ecumenical impulse, properly conceived, does not inhibit confessional identity, and the OPC's interchurch relationships have served to deepen the church's Reformed sensibilities. □

*The author is the historian of the OPC and serves as professor of church history and library director at Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando, Fla.*





ANTHONY A. MONAGHAN

# Observations after Eleven Years

**E**leven years ago, in August 2002, my wife and I, along with our two small children, arrived in Charlottesville, Virginia. The purpose of our arrival was simple. I had been called by the Orthodox Presbyterian church in Staunton, Virginia, just across the Blue Ridge Mountains, to take up the labor of shepherding a church plant, Providence Orthodox Presbyterian Church, through its earliest years.

Although Providence OPC had been meeting for worship for a year, our family was at that time family number six in a small group of believers. It's hard to believe, looking back at it, but the addition of my wife and two children swelled the church rolls to a total of twenty-two communicant and non-communicant members.

On January 5, 2007, we were recognized by the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic as a particular congregation, with a total membership of forty-nine. Now, eleven years after our arrival, we have a total of eighty-eight members. Certainly this is no megachurch, even by OPC standards, but it is a healthy and warm congregation, slowly continuing to grow, not only in numbers, but perhaps more importantly in a maturing sense of our mission in Charlottesville. This is not to say that we have not had difficult times—indeed we have, some of them very difficult indeed. But God has been faithful, and while every area is different and every situation is different, I thought it might be helpful to look back at God's work at Providence OPC in Charlottesville and consider some of the lessons we learned along the way.

## LESSON: THIS IS GOD'S WORK

The first lesson is simple, yet difficult to put into practice. We really had to learn that this is God's work. This is a congregation of the church of Jesus Christ; *he* will build his church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. The labors of a pastor can bear great fruit, and the sins of a pastor can bring

great bitterness, but above all the church is Christ's. It belongs to him, and he is the one who builds it. In difficult times and in good times, it is good to remind the church to cling to this simple truth.

## LESSON: KNOW WHO YOU ARE

The second lesson is a practical one: know from the very beginning who you are. We were blessed at Providence, even from the very earliest days, with a strong sense of what we believed as a confessional church, and what we understood worship in spirit and truth would look like. This helped us withstand the pressures that every church plant goes through. I don't know why it is, but whenever a new church comes along, it attracts people who have an agenda to make a church in their own image. This is not necessarily a description of sin—although it can be—but rather the recognition that people come to a new congregation seeking to mold it to fit their image of what a church should be.

For example, very soon after we started, two new families showed up, and both soon began pressing the church to change its pattern of worship. One desired that we drop *Trinity Hymnal* and begin singing the modern worship music they liked and were familiar with. The other family desired that we drop *Trinity Hymnal* and sing only psalms, unaccompanied by the piano. For a young pastor seeking to build a church, there can be great pressure to seek to please men. Having a strong sense of what we believed about worship, even from the very



beginning, helped us to ward off those pressures. Neither family stayed when they didn't get what they desired.

### LESSON: GROW THROUGH THOSE WHO WANT TO BE THERE

That leads to a third lesson, which is perhaps the most difficult to put into practice, because of the very nature of church-planting groups. And that lesson is that the church has to grow through those who really want to be there. A church plant can be a refuge for those who perhaps don't really want to be there, but who don't want to be anywhere else. It is tempting to think that those who come to your small, struggling church plant, disgruntled with the church across town, are going to bring only the joy of the Lord into your midst—and, by God's grace, some really do—but many bring a spirit that is quick to judge, and they may quickly become disgruntled with you as well.

### LESSON: TAKE PRESBYTERIANISM SERIOUSLY

A fourth lesson is to take Presbyterianism seriously. A robust view of the role of the session will not only protect a church, but also protect a pastor. Because of the nature of things, church plants often find themselves with young and inexperienced men. Even after a career and a yearlong internship, I was unprepared for the difficult and thorny minefield of church relationships. I hardly think I was alone in that. The OPC is right to insist that sessions oversee church plants. Although this can be very difficult, since the ruling elders are often volunteers who live far away, the overseeing elders need to be as committed to the church plant as they are to their own congregations.

Presbyterianism is not practiced only in local congregations. It is also practiced in the connections we have with other congregations. Both the church plant and the other congregations in the area need to practice Presbyterian connectionalism. We were planted by Staunton OPC—itsself a small congregation—but we were greatly strengthened and encouraged by the involvement of that congregation in our early years. For church plants, the simple encouragement of having a group from a nearby congregation show up to join in worship is a great boost. The sound of the singing of a congregation of forty, when you are used to twenty-five, gives a wonderful taste of where you are heading, both in your own growing congregation and as a foretaste of heaven.

### LESSON: BE ABOUT THE WORK OF THE CHURCH

Fifth—and this really does go hand in glove with the reminder that this is Christ's church—be about the *work* of the church. It can be very tempting, in the longing for growth and stability, for everyone to think of a stable church as an end in and of itself. But the church has a task: to worship, to pray, and to love. Sometimes churches can find themselves with families or individuals who are difficult and needy. If we view such people as an impediment to the growth of the church—and they can sometimes make other people feel uncomfortable—then we miss the whole point of a church loving one another. Seek out those who are hurting. Care for them, not with an eye toward the growth of the church, but with an eye toward laying down your life for those who need it most.

### LESSON: BE GOSPEL-CENTERED IN UNITY

Finally, be a gospel-centered church: not simply in the sense that the gospel is clearly presented in the worship and life of the church, but also in the sense that the church needs to focus on the core gospel issues that bind us together as Reformed believers. Church plants, and probably especially OP church plants, are likely to draw people with strong theological opinions about subjects as broad as the range from two-kingdoms to theonomy. Be wary of those who have come to think that a certain thread of the Reformed mosaic is itself orthodoxy. The love of Christ constrains us, not only in our own consciences, but to receive and value the entire church—perhaps especially those with whom we disagree. Don't just tolerate the breadth of Reformed opinion in the congregation, but value it, because you value those who hold those opinions. A really gospel-centered church will disagree well, loving unity rather than uniformity. □

*The author is pastor of Providence OPC in Charlottesville, Va.*

The congregation of Providence OPC in Charlottesville, Va.



# Home Missions in 2013

JOHN S. SHAW

**T**his past spring, our teenage son was a member of his high school golf team. To save some money, he used a set of clubs that I used to use. One particular club grabbed the attention of the entire team: a Wilson 5 wood (yes wood, not metal) that I purchased twenty-five years ago. In my youth, this was a cutting-edge piece of equipment, similar to what one of my links heroes used. Yet to these teens, this club was a strange and humorous relic—once useful, but now suitable only for an antique shop or a museum.

As sometimes happens, sports closely mirrors life. The tools of today become historic artifacts as we develop better, more effective tools to accomplish our tasks. One only needs to consider the brisk advance of technology over the previous century to see this principle in action. Can you remember how we accomplished anything before e-mail, cell phones, and Google searches? Our world changes constantly, and we are forced to adapt.

Let's consider how this principle relates to the church. Does the church need to regularly adopt new means and methods in response to the rapidly changing world in which we live? In particular, do we need to change our methods for planting churches because the culture in which we live changes all the time?

We can begin by answering these questions with an emphatic no. The Lord has provided for us in the Bible a tried-and-true model for starting new churches. In the New Testament, the Holy Spirit tells us how the apostles planted the early church. Luke summarizes their approach in Acts 2:42: "And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and

fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers." Devoted to this approach, the early church grew and flourished.

The Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension attempts to follow that model as we help presbyteries plant new churches. We even publish a book called *Planting an Orthodox Presbyterian Church* with the apostolic church in mind. This book describes an approach for building new churches that is patterned after the work of the apostles as recorded in the book of Acts.

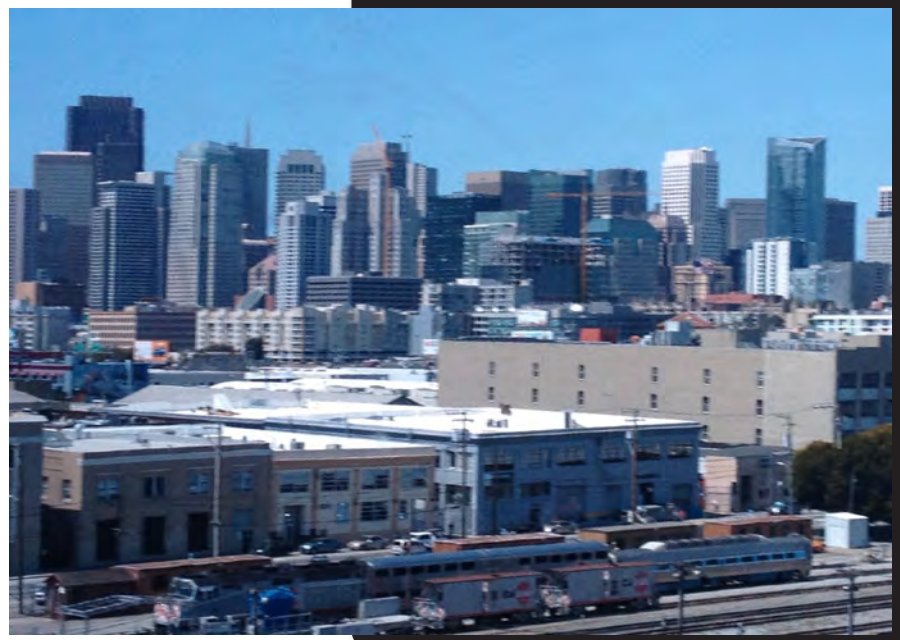
The model could be summarized as follows: we start churches that are biblical, confessional, and Presbyterian. We believe this model of church planting works in every culture because it is the model laid out by God in his Word. It doesn't need to be altered, and it shouldn't be altered, because God's Word is timeless. We have seen this approach work throughout the history of the church and throughout

the history of our denomination. In this sense, at least, we approach church planting in very much the same way today as we did in the past.

Yet even in the model of Acts, we observe much flexibility within the boundaries of biblical principles. Paul preached very different sermons in Antioch and Athens because he recognized the difference in location and audience. Paul wrote very different letters to Corinth and Philippi because he recognized the difference in location and audience. We see an important principle at work: different eras and different cultures require the same gospel message, but that one gospel can be ministered in different ways to different people.

What does that mean for the church? We need to better understand the challenges of our culture, so that we might more effectively communicate the un-

The city beckons.



changing truth of the gospel. So let's close by answering this question: what do the specific challenges of our current culture require from us as we seek to start biblical, confessional, Presbyterian churches?

## HOW TO MEET TODAY'S CHALLENGES

First, we must commit ourselves to a vigorous evangelistic ministry. This is nothing unique to our age. The Orthodox Presbyterian Church began with a zeal for evangelistic ministry. J. Gresham Machen declared as much at our founding, and the early history of the OPC was entangled with a struggle for biblical evangelism and missions. Our theology demands both a biblically grounded gospel proclamation and an energetic and vocal gospel proclamation. Once we know the love of Christ, we must speak, for he compels us to do so (2 Cor. 5:13–15).

Many of the early ministers of the OPC made door-to-door calling and evangelistic legwork a weekly, if not daily, part of their schedule. They considered their calling as ministers to include not merely the work in their studies and in the pulpit, but also the regular work of finding the lost who need the good news. The work of church planting must include regular interaction with sinners who need the healing offered only by Christ. For how shall they know him unless they hear from those who are sent (Rom. 10:14–17)?

Our ministers and ministers-in-training must possess a love for the lost that demands that they speak the good news to sinners. And we must provide for them the tools and training necessary to carry out that task more effectively. Only then can they lead their congregations in an effective and vibrant evangelistic ministry.

Second, we must more effectively

communicate the gospel in urban centers and across cultures.

Several demographic trends in the United States are clear, and two of them dramatically affect the ministry of the church.

First, people are moving in great numbers into the urban centers of our nation. Second, the population is becoming more diverse ethnically and culturally. In the not-too-distant future, there will likely be no majority race within our borders.

These demographic trends call us to recommit ourselves to the regular ministry of the church laid out in Acts 2—a devotion to teaching, fellowship, sacraments, and prayer. Yet we must consider how to most effectively communicate these gospel commitments across racial, cultural, and socioeconomic divides. This will take careful thought, study, and prayer as we communicate to the Antiochs, Athens, Corinthians, and Philippis of the modern day. Thankfully, even as we consider this difficult task, we do so with the comfort of carrying a message that transcends every barrier.

Third, we must learn to use the latest technologies as powerful tools to reach many with the gospel. Long past are the days when church advertisements in the yellow pages, in local newspapers, and on radio exhausted our available resources. In fact, these previously effective means may no longer be so useful. New visitors are much more likely to find us through up-to-date websites or advertisements on social networking websites.

To compete with Tiger Woods or Phil Mickelson, you need to replace your 1980s woods with the latest graphite, titanium, and steel clubs. For the church to more effectively reach a greater number

of people, we must learn to effectively use the latest technological tools. This does not mean replacing the ordinary means of grace (Word, sacrament, prayer, and face-to-face fellowship) with social networking and computer technology. Yet it does mean learning not only the weaknesses, but also the strengths of these technological tools—and then using them to reach more people and help them find a local church that administers the means of grace.

The Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension is committed to a more effective use of technology. In the past two years, we launched a new website (chmce.org) and opened a regularly updated Facebook page to share our work more extensively. We are also helping our new church plants to utilize some of the latest technology. These are merely tools, but they are effective tools to reach the lost with the gospel.

This is church planting in the OPC in 2013. We stand on the shoulders of those who went before us, still committed to planting churches that are biblical, confessional, and Presbyterian. Guided by this commitment, we seek to grow in our practice of evangelism, in our effectiveness in reaching diverse, urban populations, and in our use of the latest technological tools. May the Lord give us wisdom to build the church in patient reliance on the grace of God.



## Home Missions Today

For up-to-date Home Missions news and prayer updates, e-mail HomeMissionsToday@opc.org. New editions: **October 9, 23.**



# Pilgrim's Progress for Children

MARK L. LOWREY, JR.

**W**hy are we producing a child's version of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, the second-most widely read book of all time? Did we really expect children to understand this allegory or even be interested in it? What about the seventeenth-century vocabulary and strange names of characters?

At Great Commission Publications, we considered these questions and many more as we responded to requests to produce a curriculum to teach children the timeless biblical truths in John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*. But if we were going to do so, it would have to teach children in an age-appropriate manner in such a way that, as they got older, it would not have to be "untaught."

We were committed to keeping the story true to Bunyan's original, so if it were read later in life, it would not seem like a different story. GCP did not want the storybook to be like a movie that is nothing like the book.

So this storybook had to be true to the original, but also written at a child's level, specifically ages 6 to 12. And the curriculum had to explain to young minds the wonderful biblical truths that Bunyan was teaching with his story. As young readers grow older and read the original, they will know the story line, but they will also be able to understand the details, depth, and truths of the scriptural analogies in a deeper and more profound manner.

What can a child learn from *Pilgrim's Progress*? Our prayer is that your children—those in your home, families, church, and communities—will gain a deeper understanding of:

- who Christ is and what the gospel is,
- the necessity of God's Word, the Holy Spirit, and other believers for teaching and encouragement,
- what a true Christian is,
- the Christian life as a pilgrim's journey, with ups and downs, distractions, difficulties, and even feelings of being cut off from God as one presses toward the grand end, and

- True to the original by John Bunyan
- 13 chapters with glossary and index
- Over 50 stunning, original illustrations
- Full-color map of Christian's journey
- Treasured keepsake
- Great gift for children and grandchildren
- Hardcover with dust jacket, 112 pages (6 x 9 inches)
- SPECIAL OFFER UNTIL DEC. 31, 2013! Two books for 25% off OR three or more books for 25% off + free shipping (books regularly \$19.95)

- insight into the heart and character of genuine Christians.

These truths not only have significant implications for children now, but also will impact them as they grow in their faith as teens and into adulthood.

The story helps children see that it is necessary to know God's truth in order to know how to respond to others and various situations. They will travel with Christian on his journey and see the various challenges that he faces, while following along on the illustrated map on the inside front cover of the book. Each chapter opens with a full-page illustration to assist children in understanding the major

theme and emphasis of that chapter. Artwork on practically every page will help them grasp unfamiliar character names and qualities. For example, Vain Confidence, a man who tries to lead



Vain Confidence



Christian off the narrow path, is excellently illustrated as a man who exudes false hope.

A chapter-by-chapter glossary further helps children and parents by explaining unfamiliar words and analogies. This child-friendly aid turns the characters of the story into someone they know, such as *Obstinate*, someone who is stubborn or unwilling to change, and *Pliable*, a person easily bent or influenced, who only wants a gospel that makes him happy.

The 13-week curriculum anticipated for fall 2014 will build on each chapter of the book. Each week a reading of a chapter is followed by a teaching time. Then, through individual and group work, children will review and reinforce their understanding of God's truths. This time is critical in relating Bible truths to living out their faith.

May this generation join with others who read *The Pilgrim's Progress* more than once in their lifetime. Charles Spurgeon is said to have read it more than 100 times and said, "Next to the Bible, the book I value most is John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*."

A free sample chapter and introduction are available at the website [www.childrenspilgrimsprogress.org](http://www.childrenspilgrimsprogress.org). There is a special offer for *New Horizons* readers until December 31, 2013: two books for 25% off OR three or more books for 25% off plus free shipping (books regularly \$19.95). These offers are available only by phone at 800-695-3387.

## Congratulations

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

- Caleb Davies (Harvest OPC in Wyoming, Mich.)
- Kayla Schumaker (Harvest OPC in Wyoming, Mich.)

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

- Emma Christie (Trinity Reformed Church in Lanham, Md.)

## Four Favorites

### Books for Group Discussion

My wife and I attend a monthly book discussion group made up mostly of folks in our local church. Here are four good reads that generated lively and edifying discussion among us.

**1. Anthony Trollope, *The Warden*. (Various editions are available.)**

This prolific Victorian novelist—a contemporary of Charles Dickens—gave us amusing and insightful tales about English life, with emphasis on its Anglican milieu. Trollope writes with a keen eye for interesting characters and moral dilemmas. The seamy politics of a hierarchical ecclesiastical establishment will make readers of *New Horizons* glad they live in confessional Presbyterian churches in the U.S.A.

**2. David McCullough, *John Adams*. Simon & Schuster, 2001.**

McCullough is one of our greatest living storytellers. In this marvelous biography, America's second president and his wife Abigail come alive. Their marriage gleams with tender affection and mutual respect. Adams stands out as a man of deep conviction, stalwart integrity, and great courage. Orthodox Christians will be challenged to discern and appreciate the Adamses' true religious beliefs. McCullough's books consistently grab our interest and illu-

minate our understanding of noteworthy people and events.

**3. Alan Jacobs, *Original Sin: A Cultural History*. HarperOne, 2008.**

This book provides a fascinating and intriguing—but often nontheological—account of a basic biblical teaching. How do even non-Christians account for and deal with the inescapability of human depravity? And how has the doctrine of man's innate corruption shaped Western ideas of politics, fundamental social institutions, and how we understand ourselves? Jacobs, a professor of English at Wheaton College, treats this controversial topic in a fresh and unusual manner.

**4. Thomas Sowell, *The Vision of the Anointed*. BasicBooks, 1995.**

Sowell is a brilliant economist and social analyst at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University. In this volume, he exposes and then skewers the intellectual and political elites who try to control the way the rest of us live, regardless of facts and the consequences of their policies. The author lays bare the faulty assumptions and misguided ideology behind today's prevailing "political correctness."

Donald M. Poundstone

## Out of the Mouth ...

My wife, Lisa, was making biscuits, and my seven-year-old daughter, Virginia, misread the words "self-rising flour" on the label of the flour. "What is self-righteous flour?" she asked. I told her it is the flour that Pharisees use.

—Alan Flowers  
Greenville, Mich.

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

# Meet Missionary Deacon Mark Weber

I was born into a Christian home in the suburbs of Philadelphia. The Lord worked faith in my heart at an early age. Throughout my childhood, my family belonged to a Baptist church. I also attended Christian school through high school. My faith during this time was growing through the support of my family and other adults whom the Lord placed in my life.

After high school, I attended Messiah College in central Pennsylvania. Being away from home provided great opportunities for growth in my life. I was challenged to make my faith my own. I have always enjoyed building and fixing things, especially cars. With these interests, I always thought I would become a mechanical engineer. But by God's providence I was led to a major in nursing. I met Christine at Messiah, and we married in 1998. During this time, the Lord continued to grow my faith.

We settled in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and I began work as an R.N. in a pediatric intensive care unit. We belonged to an evangelical church. When Christine applied for a teaching position at a classical Christian school, we came into contact with the Reformed faith. As we read and studied Reformed doctrine, we saw a comprehensive view of God's Word in a way that answered so many of the questions we had in college.

After getting my master's degree in nursing, we moved to West Virginia, where I started a new job as a nurse practitioner in a pediatric intensive care unit. We made it a goal to find a Reformed church there. The Lord led us to Reformation OPC in Morgantown. There we continued to grow in our faith. This time

was also crucial to us as we were starting to raise our family.

Time moved along, and the Lord opened up a new job opportunity at Duke University Hospital in North Carolina. With this move, we transferred our membership to Pilgrim OPC in Raleigh. We have been in Raleigh for the past six years, raising our four boys: Josiah, Gideon, Levi, and Silas. The past few years have been tremendous times of growth for us.

The first area of growth was in the area of missions. From the time Christine and I were first together, we always desired to go into full-time missions, but it seemed that other things always got in the way. A few months after the earthquake in Haiti, Samaritan's Purse was looking for nurses to go there to work in a cholera treatment center. I decided to go on that first of many trips to Haiti. Over the next couple of years, I was making regular trips with different groups, including the OPC. The Lord used these trips to help me rethink my initial desire for full-time missions.

Around the same time, I also became a deacon at Pilgrim OPC. I love being a deacon, demonstrating the love of Jesus by ministering to peoples' physical needs. In addition, I found it fascinating to see how my short-term missions experiences dovetailed with the reading I was doing for the diaconal work. I was able to see some of the issues we discussed as deacons come into play during my time in Haiti. Since then, I have spent a lot of time wrestling with how to do mercy ministry well.

With my short-term missions trips and experience as a deacon in mind,

Christine and I began discussing the possibility of pursuing full-time missions. We spent a great deal of time in prayer about this and looked at several opportunities. In my nearsighted mind, I was sure that the Lord was leading us to Haiti, but it seemed that none of the doors were opening. Finally, I received an e-mail asking if I would consider serving as a missionary deacon in Uganda with the OPC. It was a country I had never considered before. After a couple of visits to Uganda, Christine and I were amazed at how the Lord was preparing us for this place and how he was guiding this whole process. All of the skills and interests I have had will be able to come together in a way that, I pray, will enable me to serve the Lord and his church in Uganda.

## Introducing Christine Weber

I had the privilege of being born into a Christian home in the southwestern corner of New York State, where I heard the gospel from a young age. Looking back, I do not remember a specific conversion experience. I do not remember a time when I was unaware that I was a sinner, in need of Jesus as my Savior. That said, as a child growing up in the Baptist church, I remember having no assurance of my salvation. I would regularly pray the "sinner's prayer" and "rededicate" my life to Christ. The Lord was gracious to preserve me through my adolescence, especially as it included my parents' divorce.

After attending public high school, I enrolled at Messiah College. There I



Missionary deacon to Uganda Mark Weber with his wife, Christine, and their sons Josiah (12), Gideon (10), Levi (8), and Silas (3)



majored in history education and met Mark. From the start, his example encouraged me to spend more time reading the Bible and praying. He also shared with me his heart for service and missions. I watched him graciously give of his time and money to help people at college (specifically by fixing a lot of cars!). When we were seniors in college, I accompanied Mark to a hospital in northern Haiti, where I spent two weeks loving orphaned children with disabilities in Jesus' name. The experience made a huge impression on me. I loved it, and began asking the Lord to allow us to serve him on the mission field, if that was his will.

Mark and I married two weeks after my college graduation and settled near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. I applied for a teaching position in a classical Christian school housed in a PCA church. At the same time, I began attending a Bible study through our church (Evangelical Free), in which the leader was Reformed. Through these experiences, we first encountered the Reformed faith. The teaching resolved so many questions about the Bible with

which I had struggled. It also gave me a peace regarding my salvation that I had always lacked. During this time in Pennsylvania, in 2001, the Lord blessed us with our first son, Josiah. At that point, I stopped teaching to stay home with him.

When Mark's job led us to West Virginia, we joined Reformation OPC in Morgantown and were richly fed the Word through the preaching and teaching of Pastor Larry Semel. We grew both spiritually and numerically in West Virginia, adding two more sons to our family. Gideon was born in 2003, and Levi came along in 2005.

After about five years in West Virginia, we moved again for Mark's job, this time to Raleigh, North Carolina, where we became members of Pilgrim OPC. Our fourth son, Silas, was born in 2009. I have the joy and privilege of homeschooling our boys. A few years ago, Mark had the opportunity to return to Haiti to help during the cholera epidemic. That was followed by several trips to serve in Haiti, doing medical missions. These visits caused us to reexamine the idea of

serving the Lord through foreign missions. We began praying to this end and looking for a position in which we might be of service. The Lord answered those prayers by opening a door for Mark to serve as a missionary deacon in Uganda. We look back on the Lord's faithfulness with hearts full of thanksgiving, and look forward to serving him in Uganda.

Thank you for praying for us faithfully. We would love to have you follow our journey to Uganda through our blog at [webersatwanale.blogspot.com](http://webersatwanale.blogspot.com).

## WHAT'S NEW

### APPOINTMENTS

- Former missionary associate **Miss T. L. L.** (Lynnwood OPC, Lynnwood, Wash.) has been appointed to be a tentmaker missionary in Asia.
- **Rev. and Mrs. Octavius Delfils** (Calvary Presbytery [S.C.], PCA) have been appointed to serve with the OPC Haiti Mission as associate missionaries.
- **Miss Taryn A. Dieckmann** (Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Franklin Square, N.Y.) has been appointed to serve a one-year term as a missionary associate in Karamoja, Uganda. She arrived on the field in September.
- **Mr. and Mrs. F. M.** (Covenant Presbyterian Church, OPC, New Berlin, Wis.) have been appointed to serve a five-month term as missionary associates in Asia. They arrived on the field in August.
- **Miss H. L.** (Reformed Church of Brooklyn, RCNZ, Wellington, NZ) and **Mr. M. W.** (Calvary OPC, Glenside, Pa.) have been appointed to serve one-year terms as missionary associates in Asia. They arrived on the field during the summer.
- **Miss Mary F. York** (Bonita OPC, Bonita, Calif.) has been appointed to serve a two-year term as a missionary associate to the Czech Republic. She arrived in Prague in June.
- The missionary associate appointment to Quebec of **Miss Debra A. Blair** (Bethany URC, Wyoming, Mich.) has been dissolved due to health reasons, and she has returned to the U.S.

# So That You, by His Poverty

MATTHEW W. KINGSBURY

**O**f all biblical interpreters, the apostle Paul commands universal admiration amongst Christians. However, that esteem is strained by his citation of Exodus 16:18 in 2 Corinthians 8:15. In 2 Corinthians 8, Paul urges the Corinthians to give generously to the needy saints in Jerusalem. In Exodus 16, God provides the hungry and quarrelsome Israelites with manna and quail. These events seem unrelated, but in the latter passage Paul finds the character of our Lord, which led to the Incarnation and which is shared by generous believers.

Paul calls Christians to give generously (2 Cor. 8:1–7) and freely (8:8, “not as a command”) because of “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” (8:9). Paul magnifies Jesus with his divine and messianic titles in order to magnify both his sacrifice and his gifts to us. As God, Jesus’ wealth of glory was beyond comprehension; therefore, when he became a man and died, his loss and impoverishment were much greater than those suffered by anyone else. Likewise, his gifts to us of forgiveness of sin, imputed righteousness, and eternal glory make us richer than we could ever imagine.

Christ’s gift of himself to us has implications for the fellowship that believers have with each other; that is, for the communion of the saints. For Paul, our love for one another is grounded in God’s love for us in Christ, which was demonstrated when he gave manna to the Israelites. “Whoever gathered much had nothing left over, and whoever gathered little had no lack” (2 Cor. 8:15, citing Ex. 16:18) because the Lord supernaturally intervened

to ensure that each household had just enough food each day to meet its needs. While the Lord was teaching his people contentment, he was also revealing his love for them. When Paul discusses giving and the communion of the saints, he turns to Exodus 16 because that text proves that God very much wants his people to have enough for their daily needs.

Now God, in his wisdom, has distributed resources unevenly: some have abundance, others have need (2 Cor. 8:14). This seems odd: if God wants our needs met, why doesn’t he supernaturally intervene to ensure an even distribution of resources, just as during the Exodus?

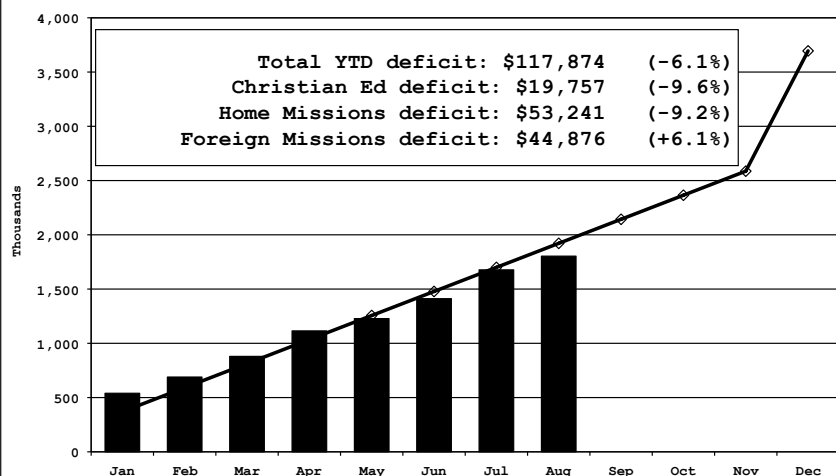
God has chosen instead to intervene through his people: “your abundance at the present time should supply their need, so that their abundance may supply your need, that there may be fairness” (2 Cor. 8:14). The equity and sufficiency that the Father desires for his children, so each might have enough, come about

when the saints perform “such duties, public and private, as do conduce to their mutual good, both in the inward and outward man” (Confession of Faith, 26.1). Today you might help me meet my needs, and tomorrow I may have an abundance because you are in need. If we are concerned for our mutual good, and not only our own private good, none shall lack.

Moreover, God wants us to become like our Savior. Remember, he gave us his riches, meeting our need with his abundance, because of his grace (2 Cor. 8:9). Of his own free will, he gave himself to us, and now we are invited to freely give to one another (for example) in diaconal offerings and the annual Thank Offering. This is an invitation to fellowship with Christ in his grace. By his poverty, we became rich, so our abundance might freely supply the saints’ needs.

*The author is pastor of Park Hill Presbyterian Church in Denver, Colo.*

**Worldwide Outreach Year-to-Date  
2013 Receipts with 2013 Goal**



WORLDWIDE OUTREACH

# October

1. **Mr. and Mrs. F.**, Asia (on furlough). Pray for safe travel and good visits in OP churches. / **Joshua and Jessica Lyon**, Carson, Calif. Pray for the discipleship and ministry of Grace OPC. / Pray for **Danny Olinger**, Christian Education general secretary, as he reports to the Committee on Christian Education, meeting today and tomorrow.
2. **Kim and Barbara Kuhfuss**, Eau Claire, Wis. Pray for Covenant Presbyterian Church's overseeing session as they put together an outreach plan. / **Mr. and Mrs. M.**, Asia. Pray for Mr. M. as he assists the new presbytery with its exams of potential pastors. / **Andrew (and Elizabeth) Barshinger**, yearlong intern at Faith OPC in Elmer, N.J.
3. Missionary associates **Mr. and Mrs. M.**, Asia. Pray for the outreach programs with which our MAs are working. / **Eric and Donna Hausler**, Naples, Fla. Pray that God's elect will be brought to Naples Presbyterian Church. / Short-term missions coordinator **David Nakhla**. Pray for the Committee on Diaconal Ministries as it meets today and tomorrow to consider how best to encourage and equip missionary deacons for their labors.
4. **Brandon and Laurie Wilkins**, Crystal Lake, Ill. Pray that God would help Christ Covenant Presbyterian Church identify future officers. / Pray for tentmaker missionary **T. L. L.**, Asia, as she witnesses to her students. / **Justin (and Hannah) Rosser**, yearlong intern at Matthews OPC in Matthews, N.C.
5. Missionary associates **H. L.** and **M. W.**, Asia. Remember their ministry to university students. / **Todd and Julie Wagenmaker**, St. Louis, Mo. Pray for students who are hearing the gospel through people at Gateway OPC. / **Jeffrey (and Jennifer) Shames**, yearlong intern at Harvest OPC in Wyoming, Mich.
6. Home Missions associate general secretary **Dick Gerber**. / Missionary associates **E. C.** and **T. D.**, Asia. Pray for spiritual growth and understanding for those attending Bible studies. / OPC administrative staff members: **Doug Watson, Jim Scott, Jan Gregson, Kathy Bube, Pat Clawson, and Char Tipton**.
7. **Ben and Heather Hopp**, Haiti. Pray for their safe travel in Haiti. / **Jeremiah and Elizabeth Montgomery**, State College, Pa. Pray for personal contacts between members of Resurrection OPC and non-Christians. / **Jeremy (and Maricruz) Boothby**, yearlong intern at Christ Covenant Presbyterian Church in Amarillo, Tex.
8. **Christopher and Ann Malamisuro**, Cincinnati, Ohio. Pray that some new families will be brought to Good Shepherd OPC. / Associate missionaries **Octavius and Marie Delfils**. Pray for Octavius as he teaches a continuing theology class with Ben Hopp. / Yearlong interns: **Yevgeni Koh** at Bonita OPC in Bonita, Calif., and **Jeremy Logan** at Covenant Presbyterian Church in Mansfield, Ohio.
9. **Ethiopian Reformed Presbyterian Church**. Pray for believers who faithfully attend worship services in their local churches each week. / **Ben and Sarah Miller**, Huntington, N.Y. Pray for Trinity OPC's officer training class. / Army chaplains **Kyle (and Laurel) Brown** and **Stephen (and Lindsey) Roberts**.
10. **Jim and Tricia Stevenson**, Tulsa, Okla. Pray that God would raise up officers to serve at Providence OPC. / Pray for affiliated missionaries **Craig and Ree Coulbourne**, Urayasu, Japan, who are taking a short furlough in the U.S. until mid-November. / **Tony (and Mica) Garbarino**, yearlong intern at Covenant OPC in San Jose, Calif.
11. Pray for the labors of Foreign Missions general secretary



M. M. (missionary to Asia) and Douglas Clawson (associate general secretary for the Committee on Foreign Missions) answer questions concerning biblical church discipline asked by church leaders who want to form Presbyterian churches. Please pray for these church leaders, who have been studying Reformed doctrine and Presbyterian church government.



- Mark Bube**, associate general secretary **Douglas Clawson**, and administrative assistant **Linda Posthuma**. / **Robert and Christy Arendale**, Houston, Tex. Pray that returning visitors will join Cornerstone OPC. / **Jeff (and Dawn) Scott**, yearlong intern at Covenant Grace OPC in Roseburg, Ore.
12. **Doug and Kristi Bylsma**, Beamsville, Ontario. Pray that visitors to Living Hope Presbyterian Church will desire to join. / **Mark and Jeni Richline**, Montevideo, Uruguay. Pray for their efforts to witness for Christ. / **Josh (and Kristen) McKamy**, yearlong intern at New Life OPC in Williamsport, Pa.
  13. **Ben and Melanie Westerveld**, Quebec, Canada. Pray for Ben as he leads St-Marc Church in worship. / **Andrew and Billie Moody**, San Antonio, Tex. Pray that visitors will come to San Antonio Reformed Church. / **Shane (and Rachelle) Bennett**, yearlong intern at Knox OPC in Silver Spring, Md.
  14. **John and Wenny Ro**, Chicago, Ill. (downtown). Pray that God would use Gospel Life Presbyterian Church to save local families. / **Eric and Dianna Tuininga**, Mbale, Uganda. Remember Eric's teaching at Knox Theological College. / **Kevin (and Marianne) Olivier**, yearlong intern at Pineville Presbyterian Church in Pineville, La.
  15. Pray for **Mark and Christine Weber**, Mbale, Uganda, as they adjust to their new living and working situation on the field. / **Glenn and Kathie Jerrell**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of Michigan and Ontario. / **Broc (and Morgan) Seaman**, yearlong intern at Providence OPC in Temecula, Calif.
  16. **Everett and Kimberly Henes**, Hillsdale, Mich. Pray that new students will be knit into the life of Hillsdale OPC. / **Bob and Martha Wright**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for Martha as she works with the Mission to establish a Christian elementary school. / **Steven (and Sarah) Moulson**, yearlong intern at Trinity OPC in Hatboro, Pa.
  17. Pray for missionary associates **Erika Bulthuis** and **Taryn Dieckmann**, Nakaale, Uganda, as they maintain busy teaching schedules. / **Kent and Laurie Harding**, Doniphan, Mo. Pray for the outreach efforts of Sovereign Grace OPC. / **David (and Kathryn) Landow**, yearlong intern at Harvest OPC in Wilmington, Del.
  18. Home Missions general secretary **John Shaw**. / **David and Sunshine Okken**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for people in the villages who are hearing the gospel for the first time. / Pray that congregations will consider having **summer or yearlong pastoral interns** in 2014.
  19. Missionary associates **Leah Hopp** and **Jesse Van Gorkom**, Nakaale, Uganda. / **Daniel and Jill McManigal**, Seattle, Wash. Pray for the continued development of Hope OPC's ministry. / Pray for stated clerk **George Cottenden** as he prepares to mail the Minutes of the 80th General Assembly.
  20. **Tim and Joanne Beauchamp**, Bridgton, Maine. Pray for Pleasant Mountain Presbyterian Church as preparations are made to add an evening service. / **Al and Laurie Tricarico**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for Al and for Dave Okken as they identify potential church leaders. / Navy chaplain **Bryan (and Shelly) Weaver**.
  21. **James and Jenny Knox**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for Jenny as she assists with the local high school's student Bible fellowship meeting each Thursday. / **Larry and Kalynn Oldaker**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of Ohio. / **The Psalter-Hymnal Composition Subcommittee**.
  22. **Jonathan and Lauryn Shishko**, Queens, N.Y. Pray for continued unity among the people of Reformation Presbyterian Church. / Missionary associate **Mary York**, Prague, Czech Republic. Pray for contacts and opportunities to share the gospel. / National Guard chaplain **David (and Jenna) DeRienzo** (deployed).
  23. Affiliated missionaries **Jerry and Marilyn Farnik**, Prague, Czech Republic, and **Linda Karner**, Japan. / **Ken and Cressid Golden**, Davenport, Iowa. Pray that God would send more families to Sovereign Grace OPC. / **David (and Amanda) Franks**, yearlong intern at Covenant OPC in Orland Park, Ill.
  24. **Drew and Sonya Adcock**, Williamsport, Pa. Pray for the positive reception of Omega OPC's new radio ministry. / **Brian and Dorothy Wingard**, South Africa. Pray for Brian's teaching and preaching. / **Thomas (and Erin) Tkach**, yearlong intern at Calvary OPC in Glenside, Pa.
  25. **Woody and Laurie Lauer**, Numazu, Japan (on furlough). Pray that Woody will give a vision for missions to all the churches that he visits. / **Carlos and Diana Cruz**, San Juan, P.R. Pray that God would bring new visitors to Iglesia Presbiteriana Reformada. / **Micah Shin**, yearlong intern at Cedar Presbyterian Church in Hudsonville, Mich.
  26. **Mark and Michele Winder**, Collierville, Tenn. Pray for a new meeting place for Wolf River Presbyterian Church. / Missionary associates **Adam and Sarah Thompson**, Sendai, Japan, and **Christi Zekveld**, Mbale, Uganda. / Air Force chaplain **Cornelius (and Deidre) Johnson**.
  27. **Cal and Edie Cummings**, Sendai, Japan, are thankful for ministry opportunities. / Home Missions staff administrator **Sean Gregg**. / **David Haney**, director of finance and planned giving for the Committee on Coordination.
  28. **Bill and Sessie Welzien**, Key West, Fla. Praise God for his continued blessing on Keys Presbyterian Church. / **Kaz and Katie Yaegashi**, Yamagata, Japan. Pray that seekers will clearly understand the message of salvation. / Pray for today's meeting of **the Board of Trustees of Great Commission Publications**.
  29. **Heero and Anya Hacquebord**, Lviv, Ukraine. Pray for leaders in the young, growing church in Lviv. / **Tom and Martha Albaugh**, Pittsburgh, Pa. Pray that attendees at Redeemer OPC Mission's outreach events will hear the gospel. / **Caleb (and Erika) Smith**, yearlong intern at Bethel Presbyterian Church in Wheaton, Ill.
  30. **Sacha and Martina Walicord**, Mt. Vernon, Ohio. Pray for the men in Knox Presbyterian Church's officer training class. / Retired missionaries **Betty Andrews, Greet Rietkerk, Young and Mary Lou Son**, and **Fumi Uomoto**. / **Sarah Pederson**, *New Horizons* proofreader.
  31. **Church in the Horn of Africa**. Pray for small groups that meet for worship each week. / **Jay and Andrea Bennett**, Neon, Ky. Pray that God would bless Neon Reformed Presbyterian Church's outreach and evangelistic efforts. / **Linda Foh**, website technical assistant.

## VELDHORST INSTALLED AT OOSTBURG

David L. Veldhorst, who grew up in Bethel OPC in Oostburg, Wisconsin, was installed as associate pastor of Bethel Church on August 2. Previously, he served as a PCA missionary to Thailand.

Pastor Craig Troxel (Wheaton, Illinois) gave the installation questions to Mr. Veldhorst, and Pastor Brian De Jong (Sheboygan, Wis.) preached the sermon. Pastor John Tinsley of Bethel OPC gave the charge to the pastor, and Rich Edwards, teacher of the Word at Bethel, gave the charge to the congregation. Pastor David Veldhorst pronounced the benediction.

Ministers at the installation of David Veldhorst (left to right): Rich Edwards, John Tinsley, Ivan De Master, Brian De Jong, Jonathan Falk, Ron Beabout, David Veldhorst, Gordon Oliver, and Craig Troxel



## HUBER INSTALLED IN FORT WORTH

Scott R. Huber was installed as the pastor of Covenant Presbyterian Church in Fort Worth, Texas, on June 28 by the Presbytery of the Southwest. The Rev. Joseph Troutman, pastor of Mid Cities Presbyterian Church in Bedford, Texas, preached a sermon from 2 Timothy 3:14–17, entitled “Breathed Out from God.” He also gave the charge to Scott. The Rev. Chad Bond, pastor of Faith Presbyterian Church in Garland, Texas, gave the charge to the congregation.

Scott graduated from Westminster Theological Seminary in Escondido, California, with an M.Div. in 1991. From 1992 to 2009, he served in the United States Army as a chaplain. From 2010 to 2012, he taught military science as a JROTC instructor at inner-city schools in Indianapolis, Indiana. He also served as chaplain to the Indiana Guard Reserve.

Scott and his wife, Megann, have three children and two grandchildren.

At the installation of Scott Huber were: Alan Byrd, Bill Mock, Charles Ramsay, Scott Huber, Joe Troutman, James Aust, Rick Geltz, David Postema, Chad Bond, and Clarence Mays



## UPDATE

### Churches

- **Good Shepherd OPC** in Cincinnati, Ohio, was received by the Presbytery of Ohio as a congregation of the OPC on August 23.

### Ministers

- On July 21, **Gerald C. Dodds** resigned as pastor of Covenant OPC in Grove City, Pa., renounced the jurisdiction of the OPC, and took a portion of the congregation with him to form an independent church.
- **Daniel J. Halley**, formerly a pastor at Columbia Presbyterian Church in Columbia, Md., was installed as associate pastor at Ketoctin Covenant Presbyterian Church in Purcellville, Va., on July 19.
- The Presbytery of Connecticut and Southern New York has approved the resignation of **Brad S. Hertzog** as an evangelist at Reformation Presbyterian Church in New York (Queens), N.Y., effective August 31.
- **Christopher A. Malamisuro**, formerly a PCA minister, was installed on August 23 as pastor of Good Shepherd



OPC in Cincinnati, Ohio.

- The pastoral relationship between **David J. O’Leary** and First Presbyterian Church, North Shore, in Ipswich, Mass., was dissolved on January 31 for health reasons.
- **Neil P. Stewart**, who was ordained in the Evangelical Fellowship of Congregational Churches (UK) in 1992, was installed as pastor of Grace Covenant Church in Sheffield, Ont., Canada, on February 15.
- The Presbytery of New Jersey dissolved the pastoral relationship between the retiring **Stanford M. Sutton, Jr.**, and Grace OPC in Westfield, N.J., effective June 30.
- **David L. Veldhorst**, formerly a PCA missionary in Thailand, was installed as associate pastor of Bethel OPC in Oostburg, Wis., on August 2.

## Milestones

- Elder **Douglas M. Clark**, 58, of Matthews OPC in Matthews, N.C., died on August 4 during emergency heart surgery.

# LETTERS

## CHURCH MERGER IN BRINK, N.J.

Dear Editor:

It was a great blessing to read Bruce Fenton’s article in the May 2013 issue about the merger of Redeemer OPC and Faith Bible Church into one congregation, Faith Bible Church—Orthodox Presbyterian. Elder Fenton did an excellent job sifting through details and describing the providential events that brought these two congregations together. However, there is one important clarification I would like to make. On page 20, the article might give the impression that I was the one who initiated contact with Rev. Pritts, the pastor of Faith Bible Church, and who first suggested that the two congregations merge. In fact, it was Rev. Pritts who initiated contact with me when he had learned that I was going to be taking a new call, and it was he who initially suggested that the two congregations work toward a merger. He was the one who got the ball

rolling on this process, and who should be credited with doing much of the legwork that made this merger possible. I thank God for this humble servant of the Lord and for his vision for seeing these two congregations come together as one.

*Geoffrey L. Willour*  
Lyndhurst, Ohio

## COVENANT THEOLOGY

Editor:

In reviewing *Sacred Bond: Covenant Theology Explored* in the July issue, L. Charles Jackson asserts that authors M. G. Brown and Z. Keele “are at variance with the WCF at points.” Why? Apparently because they do not affirm that “all the biblical covenants are administrations of the covenant of grace and thus fundamentally gracious (as in WCF 7.5).” But the “covenant of grace” in WCF 7.3, 4 is introduced by way of contrast to the “covenant of works” (7.2, 3), which distinguishes it from, e.g., the Noahic covenant (Gen. 8:21–9:17).

How can the latter be “redemptive,” as the review suggests? The beneficiaries include Noah and all his descendants (Gen. 9:8–12)—along with the beasts!—so designating it “redemptive” logically entails a doctrine of universalism. But its promise, recipients, and covenant sign all differ from those of the covenant of grace. While the Noahic covenant is necessary for the plan of redemption to unfold and contains typological pointers, it certainly is not the “new covenant in my blood” (Luke 22:20) through which both New Testament and Old Testament believers are redeemed (Rom. 3:25–26).

The WCF declares that the covenant of works is “a law,” given to Adam (7.2–3; 19.1), which after the Fall “continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness; and, as such, was delivered by God upon Mount Sinai” (19.2), and from whose judgment and condemnation only “true believers” are redeemed (19.6).

The review, however, raises an even greater concern. There seems to be an increasing reliance upon oversimplified theological systemizations and selective

## DAVID DeRIENZO DEPLOYED

Second Parish OPC in Portland, Maine, said farewell to associate pastor David DeRienzo on Sunday, August 4. The congregation worshipped together, prayed with David, and then had a time of extended

fellowship with him and his family. After a couple of weeks in Mississippi, David was deployed at the end of August as a National Guard chaplain to serve in Afghanistan.

The congregation of Second Parish OPC in Portland, Maine: in the middle: David and Jenna DeRienzo with their two boys, Roman and Vincent





appeals to historic theological writings, not the Bible. Galatians 4:21–31 illustrates that there are two covenants, only one of which brings forth redeemed children of promise. In Galatians 3:6–14, Paul elucidates no less than five contrasts between the Abrahamic covenant (characterized by faith, vv. 6–9) and the Sinaitic covenant (characterized by works of the law, vv. 10–12). Even in the Old Testament, the Lord promised to make a “new covenant” that is “not like the covenant” he made with Israel (Jer. 31:31–34).

*David Van Dyke  
Hudsonville, Mich.*

Editor:

The question, “How can the covenant with Noah be redemptive?” is a good one. It is one that Reformed theologians have struggled with for centuries. It also relates to Mr. Van Dyke’s other concern, which is that if the redemptive covenant with Noah included the whole created order (including beasts), then it would necessarily lead to a universalist view of salvation.

First, it does not necessarily follow that because God included all of creation in the covenant promise made to Noah, God will save everyone and everything in exactly the same way. For example, when Adam fell into sin, the whole creation was cursed. The promise of grace to save Adam included not only Adam’s salvation, but the hope of the future blessing of the created order that had been cursed when Adam fell. Scripture testifies to this idea of including creation in redemption quite eloquently in Romans 8:20–22:

For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.

A “two-kingdoms” blogger has rightly noted, “Orthodox Christian theology always teaches that it is precisely the

creation that God redeems in Jesus Christ (what else could he possibly be redeeming?).” As Oliver O’Donovan argues, the resurrection is something of a key to understanding this idea:

The resurrection of mankind apart from creation would be a gospel of a sort, but of a purely Gnostic and world-denying sort which is far from the gospel that the apostles actually preached. So the resurrection of Christ directs our attention back to the creation which it vindicates.

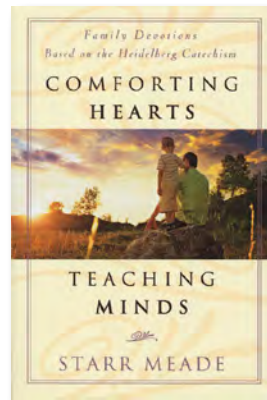
Maintaining the scriptural link between creation and redemption doesn’t answer all of the tricky questions connected to it, but it does enable us to understand how at least in principle one can recognize the Noachic covenant as redemptive, yet also inclusive of the whole of creation, without being “universalist.”

*L. Charles Jackson  
West Milton, Ohio*

## REVIEWS

*Comforting Hearts, Teaching Minds: Family Devotions Based on the Heidelberg Catechism*, by Starr Meade. Published by P&R, 2013. Paperback, 255 pages, list price \$14.99. Reviewed by Pastor Ryan M. McGraw.

Sinclair



Ferguson relates a story in which a woman told him that she had listened to a particular sermon of his several times, and

that she was getting more out of it each time. Curious, he listened to the sermon

### TALLAHASSEE LADIES’ RETREAT

One Saturday morning this summer, Calvary OPC in Tallahassee, Florida, hosted her first-ever ladies’ retreat. Thirty women—from college students to grandmothers—attended. Gail Mininger, wife of Pastor Larry Mininger of Lake Sherwood OPC in Orlando, Florida, spoke on “Gleanings From 45 Years of Marriage.” After a continental breakfast in the

fellowship hall, Gail gave three 45-minute talks. Topics included the sovereignty of God, submission, walking by faith, contentment, expectations, truth in love, and feeding your marriage. After a question-and-answer session, a catered lunch was served. The church retreat grew out of a retreat for presbytery pastors’ wives that Gail has hosted in her home the past two years.

Ladies at the Tallahassee retreat; far right: speaker Gail Mininger



himself. After listening to it, he concluded that if this woman had been catechized, she would likely have retained the entire sermon after the first or second hearing.

Catechizing is one of the most important discipleship tools available both to family and church. Using a question-and-answer method, children and families learn how to think through the truths of Scripture in an organized way. Yet catechizing is often neglected today. People who are raised on a steady diet of prayer, family worship, private Bible reading, public worship, and a Reformed catechism will better know what they believe, why they believe it, and how to walk with God in every area of life.

Yet catechizing can be difficult. To offset this difficulty, Starr Meade has prepared a year's worth of studies to help families learn and discuss the Heidelberg Catechism. This volume is similar to her earlier acclaimed work on the Westminster Shorter Catechism. Each section of the book begins by citing the full text of the relevant catechism questions for that week. She provides a brief devotional segment for each day of the week. This gives families a useful starting point to discuss the doctrines that they are memorizing and meditating upon in the catechism. She concludes each devotional segment with family Scripture readings. For the most part, she has followed the original division of the catechism into fifty-two Lord's Days, but has divided a few of the longer sections into two parts in order to promote ease of use.

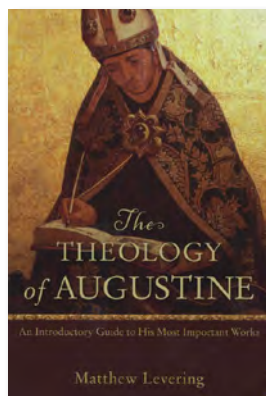
This is a wonderful resource to help families grow in their knowledge of the Bible, in their ability to digest the theology of Scripture, in their personal godliness, and in their love for Christ. Starr Meade's introduction provides a fitting conclusion for this review:

A catechism cannot and should not replace Scripture. But it is an invaluable aid in summarizing and remembering the most important teaching of Scripture. Learning a catechism doesn't guarantee a child's conversion. Knowing truth well is not the same as re-

sponding to truth and living in the light of it. But our children cannot respond to truth they don't know. They can't live in the light of truth with which they are unfamiliar. Helping children to learn well the truth of Scripture is where we begin. Knowing a good catechism is one of the best beginnings we can provide for our children. (p. 9)

\* \* \*

***The Theology of Augustine*, by Matthew Levering. Published by Baker Academic, 2013. Paperback, 224 pages, list price \$24.99. Reviewed by Prof. Carl R. Trueman.**



There is no postbiblical writer of more theological importance than Augustine. Yet he is a vast and subtle thinker and, while the *Confessions* is broadly accessible, his body of writings as a whole is not. That is why it is such a pleasure to be able to commend the latest book from the distinguished theologian Matthew Levering. *The Theology of Augustine: An Introductory Guide to His Most Important Works* is, as the subtitle indicates, an overview of the most important writings of the bishop of Hippo: *On Christian Doctrine*, *Answer to Faustus, a Manichean*, *Homilies on the First Epistle of John*, *On the Predestination of the Saints*, *Confessions*, *City of God*, and *On the Trinity*. Some of these works will be familiar to many, at least as titles; others are perhaps less well-known. Yet all make significant contributions to Augustine's thought.

In each chapter, Levering offers a detailed summary of the arguments put forward by Augustine. As far as possible, he avoids offering overt interpreta-

tion of the texts. What emerges so clearly from the book as a whole is the centrality of love to human life, both as individuals relate to each other and the world around them and as they relate to God. It is thus appropriate that the final text with which he deals is *On the Trinity*, which draws out in a remarkable synthesis the connection between human love, divine love, and the doctrine of the Trinity.

Augustine's doctrine of the Trinity has been subjected to searching criticism, perhaps most influentially in recent decades by the late Colin Gunton. Gunton saw in Augustine an incipient modalism and the intellectual origins of many of the problems later manifested in Enlightenment thought. While not offering a direct rebuttal to Gunton, Levering's summary of Augustine's *On the Trinity* is helpful; it is an excellent introduction to the text and avoids making anachronistic theological judgments.

This is a book that should be read by thoughtful pastors. There is no theologian who explores the psychology of love in a more searching way than Augustine. This is pastorally very helpful. For example, why do people have a compulsion to look at pornography? Augustine offers a multilayered answer, from the power of the visual in gripping the mind and fueling salacious appetites to the fact that fallen human love is about objectifying the other and finding its debased fulfillment ultimately in sexual pleasure. He would also add that the only cure for such is to learn to love God and thus to hate that which opposes God.

This is an excellent introduction to Augustine's thought, which will also prove useful as an ongoing resource when

**What is the history that required the formation of the OPC?**

For the answer, visit the OPC website  
[www.opc.org/machen.html](http://www.opc.org/machen.html)

## Dayton Reformation Conf.

October 25–26 • Vandalia, Ohio

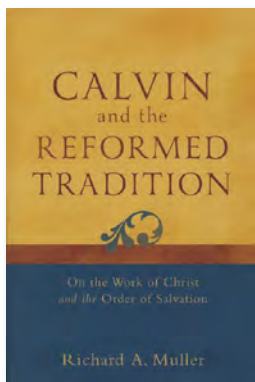
- Conference Theme: *Christianity and Culture: The Voice of the Church*
- Speakers: Peter Lillback, David VanDrunen, Doug Wilson
- Open forum with the speakers
- Details and registration information: [http://cpcvandalia.com/refconf\\_2013.html](http://cpcvandalia.com/refconf_2013.html)

grappling with the texts themselves.

(For Trueman's fuller review of this book, go to [www.reformation21.org/articles/augustine-for-professors-poets-and-pastors.php](http://www.reformation21.org/articles/augustine-for-professors-poets-and-pastors.php).)

\* \* \*

***Calvin and the Reformed Tradition*, by Richard A. Muller. Published by Baker Academic, 2012. Paperback, 288 pages, list price \$39.99. Reviewed by OP Pastor Samuel Rodriguez.**



Richard A. Muller, who teaches at Calvin Theological Seminary, has written an excellent collection of essays on historical Reformed

theology.

The major premise of the book is that while John Calvin was a major second-generation codifier of Reformed theology, he was not the be-all and end-all of the tradition. Rather, the Reformed tradition was diverse and more complex than just one of its contributors. Chapter 1 introduces the context of the study as a whole, situating it from the beginning of the Reformation (1517) to the early Orthodox era (1640). He cogently demonstrates that the history of the Reformed tradition should be given nuanced, contextual study.

## Minneapolis Bible Study

Mission OPC in St. Paul, Minn., has begun a Bible study in the northwest suburbs of Minneapolis in the hopes of finding families and individuals interested in a church plant for the north metro area. If you know of anyone who might be interested, please contact Pastor Jim Hoekstra at [rjth70@aol.com](mailto:rjth70@aol.com) or 262-227-6926.

Chapter 2 is provocatively entitled “Was Calvin a Calvinist?” He examines three options for answering this question. First, yes of course Calvin was a Calvinist, since he was John Calvin. In this view, he was the defining Calvinist.

The second option is that he was not his own follower, so no he was not a Calvinist. Calvinism was not an appellation that theologians in the Reformed tradition accepted in the early Orthodox era. The third option is to identify Calvinism with the Reformed tradition. But the answer here is more complex, because it presents Calvin as having an exclusive place in the greater Reformed tradition that he did not have. Muller then deals with the so-called five points of Calvinism or TULIP. Explaining that TULIP is an Anglo-American creation of recent vintage, it cannot and ought not be used to define the greater Reformed tradition. Muller, who has made a career out of debunking “Calvin against the Calvinists” scholarship, also debunks theories that identify such things as “Christocentrism” and “Predestinarianism” as the central Reformed dogmas. He also shows that the dichotomy between humanism and Scholasticism is dubious. Thus, the terms *Calvinist* and *TULIP* are anachronistic and reductionistic when applied to the Reformed tradition of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Chapters 3 to 5 deal with Christ's death and its sufficiency and efficacy. There were several orthodox options in the period dealt with in this book. Page 77 and footnote 22 outline at least seven distinct formulations of this doctrine among the early modern Reformed. Chapter 4 demonstrates that Calvin did

not teach two wills in God, contrary to Moise Amyraut. Chapter 5 contrasts two Reformed theologians who were hypothetical universalists. It should be noted that Calvin and all the Reformed believed that Christ's death was efficient for the elect alone (see p. 61, n. 21). Chapter 6 explains how the theological concept later termed the *ordo salutis* originated in the Reformed tradition. Chapter 7 clearly demonstrates that union with Christ and the *ordo salutis* were held as complementary doctrines, not rivals. Chapter 8 argues that the practical syllogism was of Reformation origin.

This is an excellent book. It is well documented with 1,005 footnotes. There are some typographical errors (of no consequence), and the book would have been well served by at least a select bibliography. For those interested in historical Reformed theology, it is a must read.

\* \* \*

***Renée of France*, by Simonetta Carr. Published by EP Books, 2013. Paperback, 128 pages, list price \$11.99. Reviewed by OP member Katherine VanDrunen.**

Renée of France was a French princess and Italian duchess during the Reformation. The endnotes of this biography for all ages reveal Simonetta Carr's thorough research.

As the religious sentiment in both France and Italy shifted between tolerance and persecution, both Roman Catholics, including her family, and the Reformers pressed Renée to use her noble status for their cause. Correspondence from Calvin reveals both his empathy for her plight and a strong personal connection,



## NEWS, VIEWS, REVIEWS (cont.)

although they met only once. He encouraged her to face her adversaries boldly in defense of the true doctrines, particularly the Lord's Supper and justification by grace alone.

Renée was the only surviving child of King Louis XII. Her brother-in-law became King Francis I, because as a female she could not reign. Although her family was Roman Catholic, her governess, Madame de Soubise, was Reformed and became Renée's attendant when she moved to Italy as the wife of Ercole, the heir apparent of the prestigious Italian duchy of Este. She also corresponded with the Reformed Marguerite of Navarre. Renée maintained her court as both French and Reformed and harbored persecuted French Protestants. When Ercole became duke in 1534, political and papal pressure made him less tolerant of Renée's practices.

About two years later, Calvin visited her and followed up through the years with letters and pastors. Unfortunately,

advice in her court varied from encouraging her to outwardly participate in the Roman Mass to boldly proclaiming her Reformed beliefs.

Carr notes that Renée's most valuable contribution was as a patroness. In 1540 Ercole tried to alleviate criticism from local papal authorities by giving Renée a villa fifty miles away. There she was free to host ministers, collect Reformed writings, provide refuge for Huguenots, and financially support Reformers. Eventually Ercole confiscated this and imprisoned her in his palace, where she succumbed to intense Jesuit pressure to renounce her heresy, but never to the complete satisfaction of the authorities.

Renée returned to France when Ercole died. Although Calvin feared she valued her properties over her heavenly inheritance, she used a castle given to her as a wedding gift from King Francis I to establish a Protestant haven for refugees of the religious wars.

She provided schooling, safety, and medical care for hundreds, including Jeanne d'Albret and her son.

Carr recounts Renée's struggle to practice her faith amidst a clash of pressures. Theodore Beza saw her as weaker than Queen Marguerite of Navarre (who married a royal Protestant) or their daughter Jeanne d'Albret (who declared Navarre Protestant when she was crowned in 1560). In contrast, Renée, having no politically powerful Protestant advocates, relied on the tolerance of her Catholic family, whom she loved—Calvin saw this as hindering reason and truth. Although at times she outwardly bent to intense pressure, her final will gave glory to God and humble thanks for preserving her faith.

Carr shows Renée's struggles with the things of this world, but also reveals how she used her position and possessions to support the Reformation.

Participants in the youth camp of the Presbytery of the Southwest in July

