

NEW HORIZONS

≡ *in the* ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ≡

3 Turning Church
Inside Out
// by Jon Shishko

JULY 2014

6 Outreach—Where Church
and Community Intersect
// by John S. Shaw



**Bringing Your Church
to Your Community**

CONTENTS

FEATURES

- 3** Turning Church Inside Out
By Jon Shishko
- 6** Outreach—Where Church and Community Intersect
By John S. Sharw
- 10** Solid Comfort from a Familiar Verse
By F. Allan Story, Jr.
- 12** What Is a Retreat?
By Thomas E. Tyson

DEPARTMENTS

- 8** Home Missions
Planting and watering in San Antonio
- 13** Prayer Calendar
- 15** Stewardship
The stewardship of our fellowship
- 16** Foreign Missions
The church in Quebec City
- 18** Christian Education
Media matters • ABCs of Presbyterianism
• Out of the mouth ...
- 21** News, Views, & Reviews

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in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church

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TURNING CHURCH INSIDE OUT



JON SHISHKO // It happens every Sunday. The sermon is over. The benediction has been received. The doxology has been sung. The doors at the back of the auditorium are opened. People begin to flow into the lobby. Lively conversation and the aroma of good cake and even better coffee fill the air.

Children zigzag around adult legs to make it to the snacks and back to their festive kid's table. They catch up with one another, discussing another week gone by. Their parents and the other adults have no time to sit. They duck in and out, jumping from one conversation to the next, engaging one another with smiles, handshakes, and hugs. It's joyful, delightful, and wonderful, and it happens every Sunday.

There's only one problem. No one else sees it! It's inside, behind the heavy doors of a rented public school building in Fresh Meadows, Queens, New York. It's the best party of the week, but very few people realize that they are also invited. It is a community—a loving community—in the middle of a city full of people looking for love and community. The joy is contagious, and it would be contagious to outsiders—if only it weren't inside opaque walls.

Jesus realized the gathering power of the covenant community as he looked out on his disciples and said, "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do

people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 5:14–16).

Shining Our Light before Others

The idea isn't to show off or boast or put on a show. It's absurd to think of "light" bragging or boasting. Light immediately and accurately communicates what it is. When light penetrates darkness, there is no wondering what it is. It's immediately known, identified, and understood as "the light"! Christ cues us evangelistically by saying, in essence, "Live before the watching world in a way that enables outsiders to see what Christians really are. They will be drawn to your heavenly Father when they see what he has done and is doing in and for you. Instead of programs upon programs, simply demonstrate who you are as the joyful, vibrant, and diverse covenant community that I have made you."

This does not mean that we should

abandon the buildings we use for Sunday services, so that neighbors can see the congregation during the coffee break. But we must, at this point, ask some questions. How do we keep from, perhaps unintentionally, putting our light under a basket? How do we ensure that we who are already inside are not the only ones who see the light that Jesus says should be shining before others? According to Jesus, the light belongs on a stand. That means it's intentionally put somewhere in order to optimize its illuminating ability. How do we optimize the light that shines in Christ's people, so that those outside may "see" and "give glory to your Father who is in heaven"?

On the overseeing session of Reformation Presbyterian Church, we have been asking these questions, and they have led to ongoing, regularly scheduled, noninvasive, exciting, and effective evangelistic opportunities. We are now used to thinking in terms of turning Reformation Church inside out. We resist the urge to just jump in and do more things. Instead, we think about

what we are already doing and consider how we can turn that inside out. That is, we insist on making Reformation's ministries both perfecting and gathering, instead of perfecting at the expense of gathering or gathering at the expense of perfecting (cf. Westminster Confession of Faith 25.3).

We intentionally work at making what we do accessible and inviting to outsiders as well as to insiders. We regularly ask questions like: What sort of Sunday activities are appropriate and accessible to believer and unbeliever alike? What are the current needs of current church members and the current needs of future church members? How can we use the opportunities, people, and gifts with which God has blessed Reformation, to reach out and gather others? In short, how do we turn Reformation inside out to ensure that our light is in fact shining before others?

Meeting in the Park

These questions make for lively session meetings! At one such meeting, back in the spring of 2012, we began to discuss what to do with the upcoming summer Sunday evenings. In the past, we had held prayer meetings and Bible studies in various homes. That worked, until too many people started coming. What a wonderful problem to have! But it was, nonetheless, a problem. We wanted a place that would be accessible to all. We needed a place in New York City with plenty of parking. It would be summertime, in the cooler afternoons and evenings. The idea of being outside was attractive. We specifically thought of the fellowship time that comes after morning worship, and we began to ask: How can we take that outside? How can we put that fellowship, that community, that love,

that joyful, delightful, wonderful party, before the watching world, so that we can invite outsiders into it?

While almost everything in New York is expensive, day permits to reserve a specific picnic area in one of New York's public parks cost only twenty-five dollars. That's the best rent rate in the whole city! Twenty-five dollars each week got us ample parking, grills, and tables, along with a picnic area big enough to fit hundreds. And the best part was that we would be outside in a public area full of outsiders in Queens' beautiful Cunningham Park. No walls, no doors, no buildings—just the church before the watching world, ready and prepped to invite anyone interested in joining the party.

But what sort of picnic party would this be? This was for a Sunday night, and it was to be at a time that used to be filled with Bible studies and prayer meetings. What we would do in the park had to be accessible to outsiders, not awkward. We decided that, in addition to fellowship and feasting, preaching and a Q&A would be the most appropriate use of the time. The event would take place from 4 to 7 p.m., and

we would do it on multiple Sundays in August and September. We would begin with cooking and eating, all while inviting people from the park. When people began to finish or move on to seconds, the preaching would begin. The sermon would be 10–15 minutes long. After that, everyone would be encouraged to ask any question they wanted to ask. The entire time of preaching, questions, and answers would be thirty to forty minutes—about the time of a sermon or Bible study.

Getting Everyone Involved

Turning church inside out means constantly thinking about how to make the whole event go smoothly—and yet still be a church-wide effort. In this case, there would be grill men and grill women, volunteers to play with the children, photographers and videographers, a setup crew, a cleanup crew, and volunteers who would bring soda, chips, dips, and dessert. Everyone would receive invitation cards, and everyone would be encouraged to invite as many others as possible. In addition, everyone was asked to begin thinking of the questions they would ask during the Q&A



Queens BBQ&A 2012



Preaching at Queens BBQ&A 2012

time. From start to finish, this was making use of the gifts that God had placed inside Reformation: the people, the funds, the abilities and creativity of the people—all marshaled and mobilized to take Sunday outside, to reach the outside.

Wherever Reformation people could chip in and help, they were asked to do so. And did they ever rise to the occasion! As a session, we refused to name the event. We intentionally came up with a provisional title, which we knew was a little weak: “Preaching in the Park.” When we first announced the idea to the congregation, we explained that “Preaching in the Park” was just a temporary title. In order to get people on board from the very beginning, we asked them to come up with a better name. One member suggested “BBQ&A,” and that’s what it’s been ever since. That, in itself, is what turning church inside out is all about. Pastors and elders don’t have to do everything! Let the people come up with titles and creative ideas!

Using Social Media

And the congregation’s contributions continued to come. Another suggestion was to think in terms of posting Reformation events on meetup.com. This suggestion has worked out wonderfully and has repeatedly led new visitors to Reformation. Two ongoing Reformation Meetups are intended to turn

our kids ministry and various community outreaches inside out (see meetup.com/Kidz-Club and meetup.com/Reformation-Outreach-Queens-NYC). We have also had success turning Sunday studies and Sunday sermon series inside out. We simply set up a Meetup for the series and post each sermon and/or study as an individual Meetup. It’s simply reorganizing what we already do in a way that enables outsiders to gather along with us.



People hearing the good news at Queens BBQ&A 2013

The Meetup site for BBQ&A (meetup.com/BBQ-A-2013-at-Cunningham-Park) serves as a place where Reformation photographers and videographers can post their wonderful photos and videos. At many points, the work done by members of the congregation is really breathtaking! Check out this terrific video contribution from the very first BBQ&A: <http://vimeo.com/48209501>. All these things are part

of the church reaching out and gathering. Links like this make it very easy for people at Reformation to invite their friends through e-mail or Facebook. All they need to do is share the video or some pictures from last year—or extend an invitation through the website Meetup.com itself. And who is going to take offense at an invitation to come and enjoy the beautiful summer, the gorgeous park, and great food, fun, and fellowship?

The Lord has been very good to us. BBQ&A has been tremendously fun, edifying, and profitable for Reformation in both 2012 and 2013. We continue to grow in our ability to invite, gather, and live before those who are still outside, while, at the same time, building up the covenant community that God has already established.

This year, we hope to invite more people in July than we’ve been able to do in previous years. BBQ&A 2014 is scheduled for August 3, 10, and 17, from 4 to 7 p.m. at Picnic Area Purple in Cunningham Park. If you’re in the area, please come and visit us! If you can’t make it, please remember these dates in prayer as we seek to make disciples of the nations by laboring in Cunningham Park in Queens. □

The author is an evangelist serving as the organizing pastor of Reformation Presbyterian Church in New York City, N.Y.



Discussion at Queens BBQ&A 2013

OUTREACH— WHERE CHURCH AND COMMUNITY INTERSECT



JOHN S. SHAW // “Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Missions exists because worship doesn’t. Worship is ultimate, not missions, because God is ultimate, not man,” says John Piper.

Human beings were created and designed for worship. More

accurately, human beings were created and designed to worship the Creator. Unfortunately, men and women embrace sin and choose to worship created things rather than the one and only Creator (Rom. 1:21–23). That basic fact about the human race calls the church to a lifetime of missions, outreach, and evangelism. “Missions exists because worship doesn’t,” says Piper. He goes on to say, “So worship is the fuel and goal of missions” (*Let the Nations Be Glad!* 3rd ed., p. 32).

The apostle John records an interaction between Jesus and a Samaritan woman in which Jesus makes a similar point. The Lord masterfully directs the conversation throughout by answering the woman’s questions in surprising ways. When she asks a question about the proper place of worship, he answers, “But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him” (John 4:23).

Notice two things in this verse. First, Jesus teaches something about

God’s people: we are worshipers. He describes our worship—“in spirit and truth”—but he most basically says that the people of God are worshipers. Second, Jesus teaches something about God the Father: he seeks worshipers. He pursues and gathers worshipers.

These two basic truths should inform our activity as congregations. Because God’s people are worshipers, the ministry and activity of the church should begin with worship in secret, in private families, and in public assemblies (Confession of Faith, 21.6). Yet our commitment to the glory and worship of God does not end with personal experiences of worship. The Father is seeking, pursuing, and gathering other worshipers.

How does the Lord do this work? He sends his church, filled with the Spirit and armed with the Word of God. We don’t simply sit in our buildings every Sunday, waiting for new worshipers to fill the seats. The Lord sends out his church. We serve him in the gathering of worshipers as we participate in missions, outreach, and evangelism (Matt.

28:16–20; Acts 1:8; 2:42–47).

Outreach and Evangelism

Of course, the big question then becomes: how do we practice outreach and evangelism in our local congregations? Let me describe one approach and then explain how congregations in the OPC have applied it. First, make a list of the talents, gifts, passions, interests, and places of influence among the members of your congregation. Second, make a list of the passions, interests, and gathering places within your local community. Then consider where these circles intersect. These points of intersection provide opportunities to build relationships that open doors of opportunity for witness.

This approach acknowledges the varied gifts the Lord provides for each congregation. He provides exactly the right gifts at the right time for a local body to grow and flourish (Rom. 12:3–8; 1 Cor. 12:12–31). What a blessing it is to recognize the various talents, gifts, passions, interests, and influences that come from God and see them at work

within a congregation.

This approach also acknowledges the unique characteristics of the community in which the church resides—the passions, interests, and gathering places that define the community. These are also gifts from the God who “makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust” (Matt. 5:45). At the points where the interests of a congregation and the interests of a community intersect, we have the opportunity to build relationships with neighbors. And those relationships give opportunity to shine the penetrating light of the gospel through godly actions accompanied with words of truth.

Putting It into Practice

Does this really work, though? Consider some examples.

In the summer of 2006, two retired school teachers from Mission OPC in Saint Paul, Minnesota, came to me with an idea. The Lord had given them opportunities in previous churches to work with Asian internationals who had come to the United States for school or jobs. The teachers had developed a love for these families and learned how to communicate with and serve them. But they also found out that these internationals would like to learn how to sew and quilt. One of these teachers had a passion for quilting, and had recently come across several used sewing machines at an excellent price. Her skills

and passions, mixed with opportunity, intersected with their desire to learn.

A plan was born. The skilled seamstress designed a program to teach basic skills of sewing and quilting. The other teacher found materials to teach the Bible at a very basic level, since most of their students would lack even the most basic Bible knowledge and struggle with the English language. I reviewed their materials, the church provided space and help with childcare, and the classes began that same fall. Through some trial and error, they gradually built a program that incorporated basic Bible teaching sandwiched between two sessions of quilting classes.

The International Quilting Circle has spawned all sorts of ministry opportunities and gospel conversations for almost eight years. More than one hundred students have come through the classes. Some students have asked for one-on-one Bible studies, and in one case the study continued for years. Others have asked for more opportunities to learn English through the study of the Bible in groups, so an English Language Learners class was started. Every year, quilting students join the church for fellowship events and also for worship. Most wonderfully, Mission OPC has celebrated four baptisms through the contacts from these classes, while other students have professed faith and been baptized in other local churches.

The Lord has blessed this partic-



International students using quilting skills to make bags

ular ministry and added to his church. But notice how this ministry started. Members of Mission OPC possessed particular talents, gifts, and passions. Members of the community possessed particular interests that overlapped. These points of intersection provided an opportunity to build relationships, which opened doors to witness.

Consider another example from the same church, but this time focused on gathering places. Mission OPC's building stands a couple of blocks from Como Park, a large gathering place with trails, picnic areas, and sports fields. Every year the park hosts a large Hmong Freedom Celebration and Sports Festival on the weekend nearest to July Fourth. Thousands upon thousands of people walk past the church building to attend the festival. So members of the church set up a booth in front of the church building and provided cold water for anyone who was thirsty, comfortable seats in the shade for those who needed to rest, a table filled with gospel tracts and literature about the church, and people ready to talk, share the gospel, or pray with anyone who stopped.

When a congregation takes the time to study the local community, many opportunities for outreach and evangelism become evident. Mission OPC hosted the National Night Out neighborhood party the summer after purchasing their building. More than sixty neighbors spent a Tuesday evening

[Continued on page 20]



Tuesday English class studying the Bible

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED IN MY GARDEN

// ANDREW T. MOODY



The congregation of San Antonio Reformed Church in San Antonio, Tex.; Pastor Moody: back row, center left

Everything I need to know about church planting I learned in my backyard garden. Well, maybe that's an overstatement, but I have learned quite a bit while exercising my *somewhat* green thumb. Let me explain. This spring I decided to plant a vegetable garden in my backyard. Since I was building it from the ground up, I could choose the design for my aboveground beds, handpick my seeds, and exercise a great deal of control over my crop from planting to the final harvest. I wanted this to be a family affair, so my son Nathanael helped me build the beds (his middle name is Machen, so that gives him instant OP street cred). My wife, Billie, and I picked out the fifteen kinds of seeds we would use, and I enlisted my eldest child, Elian, to help me plant.

It has been a joy to watch the sprouts push their way through the surface, and grow and flourish with daily doses of

sun and water. We have yet to enjoy the fruits of the harvest, but I have high hopes for incorporating our homegrown produce into our meals in the coming months.

However, even with all of the hard work and precautions that I took to exercise maximum control over the process, I am reminded daily that I am not ultimately in control. Some plants sprouted quickly and have grown tall, while others have yet to show any signs of life. Weeds have taken root among the vegetables and require constant pulling and plucking. The plants have attracted other creatures that want to eat them, and this requires further measures to protect our humble crop from being decimated before we are able to enjoy the fruits of our labor.

Despite the difficulties involved, and the great possibility of failure on my part as a suburban farmer, I have found this to be a most rewarding and worthy exercise. I have taken great joy in seeing new life emerge from below the soil, being able to

tend to it, and helping to provide the means for its growth. I am reminded daily that I'm not in control. I have tools at my disposal and wisdom to apply; however, I could never design something so wonderful and complex, and I certainly can't *make* any plant grow.

Through my adventures in gardening, I have come to see more clearly the wisdom in how the Scriptures compare the work of starting and growing churches to working in a garden. Paul reminds the church in Corinth that, though he was the one who planted the seed of the gospel in their midst, and Apollos remained to tend and water that seed among them, they were both serving the



New members being received at San Antonio Reformed Church

Lord God, who gives the growth (1 Cor. 3:5–9).

Church planting is difficult and costly work. None of us really knows quite what we are getting ourselves into at the outset of a new mission work. There is no way of knowing what joys and sorrows are to come. This can lead to great excitement and anticipation, but it can also be a bit scary, because we don't know what the future will bring.

Just as with my vegetable garden, things come up in the course of church planting that I never anticipated. They have required a great deal of attention and hard work, in order to care properly for individual plants and the garden as a whole.

Seeing unbelievers profess their faith in Jesus and watching younger Christians mature through the Spirit's work is a tremendous joy. In my calling as an evangelist, I have been the instrument of planting and watering. I have fed people with God's means of grace, I have rejoiced with them in times of great triumph, and I have counseled and prayed with them through tremendous suffering, but it is beyond any doubt that God alone gives the growth.

God knows which sprouts are wheat and which are tares. He knows which will be eaten up by the birds or caterpillars and which will bear much fruit on the day of harvest. These things will often take me by surprise, but he is never caught off guard. Our master gardener carries out his plans to perfection!

Church planting is a joy because it is a privilege to tend the master's field. In fact, his plans for expanding the harvest are so grand that we need him to continue to raise up more helpers to plant, water, and tend! The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few (Matt. 9:36–38).

Even now, he calls us to lift up our eyes and see that the fields are white for harvest (John 4:35). His kingdom is in the process of blossoming, even as we see small seeds being sown that will grow and rise up to unexpected heights like a mustard tree (Luke 13:18–19).

It is truly awesome to see the fruit of the Spirit's work as he brings the spiritually dead to new life in Christ. Each new believer is unique and dearly loved by God. Each new local church is unique and dearly loved by her bridegroom. Despite our diversity, we are all one in Christ.

It is a joy to report that God is growing his church in northeast San Antonio! Over the last few months, we have added sixteen new members to our rolls, which is a great encouragement. However, as the Lord gives, he also takes away. The Sargent family recently moved to Pennsylvania, so that Jonathan can begin his studies at Westminster Theological Seminary. An army chaplain and his family are getting ready to move to a different assignment. It is hard to say good-bye.

Home Missions Today

For up-to-date Home Missions news and prayer updates, e-mail HomeMissionsToday@opc.org.
New editions: July 2, 16, 30.

However, we know that Christ's church is much larger than our local body, and so we are sending these families out with the hope that they will bear much fruit wherever the Lord takes them!

The statistics for church plants are discouraging. The average new church experiences heavy turnover in its earliest years. In fact, according to my attendance records, we have had 120 separate families come through our doors over the past three years. There is always a need to grow. I am thankful that the Lord keeps this as a pressing need, because it is easy to get comfortable where we are.

We need to continue sowing the seed of his word, anticipating the future harvest. The church of Jesus Christ is not a fly-by-night operation, but a holy institution that spans the entirety of redemptive history. We labor today with an eternal perspective. What we do today will be used by the Lord to glorify himself until he returns.

There are no "miracle grow" formulas for the church. The Spirit works in different ways with different groups at different times. In San Antonio, we have focused on having a solid presence online. Our website is easy to find, and it is the primary source of information for people who are interested in learning more about us. We also maintain a Facebook page that provides us with an active social media presence. Last summer, we hosted a team from Providence Presbyterian Church in Pflugerville, Texas. They helped us carry out an outreach barbecue that was attended by many people in the area. We have also had signs printed up that we have put out at major intersections in the area where we are meeting.

As we are preparing for more teams to come and assist us with outreach this summer, we are excited to think of new ways to interact with our community and show them the love of Christ. Whether it is developing relationships with the patrons at the local pub, meeting people at the flea market, or interacting with students at the college campus where we meet for worship, our aim is to introduce as many people as possible to our Lord Jesus Christ.

We have a particular burden to reach unbelievers with the good news of Jesus. Our goal is not primarily to draw Reformed Christians out of other churches, but to see the dead come to new life in Christ. The apostle Paul was a prolific church planter. He reveals his own strategy in Romans 15:20–21 (quoting Isaiah 52:15): "I make it my ambition to preach the gospel, not where Christ has already been named, lest I build on someone else's foundation, but as it is written, 'Those who have never been told of him will see, and those who have never heard will understand.'"

May the Lord be pleased to fulfill Isaiah's prophecy in our midst today as we engage unbelievers with the gospel! Please join with us in praying earnestly that the Lord of the harvest would send out even more laborers into his harvest. Could your church send a group to help work in God's beautiful garden here in South Texas this coming year? We can always use more laborers to help plow the master's fertile fields.

SOLID COMFORT FROM A FAMILIAR VERSE



F. ALLAN STORY, JR. // Many pastors have heard, even frequently, “Pastor, we don’t need all this theology. Just tell us what to do.” I have a standard answer: “Sure. Rejoice always. In everything give thanks.”

These are biblical commands, but the point is that you can’t

really do these things without theology. These commands, like many others, cannot simply stand by themselves. A pasted-on smile is fake, not really rejoicing at all, and not obedience. And these commands don’t mean that we should rejoice about happy things and give thanks for happy things in spite of bad things that may be happening too. That’s a pretend game that tries to ignore real pain. Rather, Christians are taught realistic rejoicing and giving thanks while fully acknowledged pain and sorrow. Only a sound doctrinal understanding enables someone to obey commands like this. Theology is eminently important and practical.

Romans 8:28 is an excellent example of how theology supplies the needed doctrinal foundation for practical living—in this case, rejoicing and giving thanks even in difficult circumstances. It says: “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”

This is a favorite verse for many. It has long been for me, as well as for many Christians, a great source of comfort. I have preached on it, taught it, and applied it to my own difficult situations. It has especially been a comfort for me

since my beloved wife, Linda Kay, died unexpectedly in her sleep in the early morning of December 29, 2012.

Taken in context, three doctrines, not expressly stated in the verse, are nevertheless clearly present and offer practical comfort that is unobtainable without biblical doctrine.

God’s Sovereignty over All Things

This is one place where the Arminian believes that “all” does not mean “all.” But it is not by chance that all things work together for good. If all things work together for good (for Christians), then it is because God is at work behind all things, which is what is specifically stated in Ephesians 1:11, where God is referred to as “Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will.” We must understand that chance does not reign. Equally, we must see that men don’t reign. God reigns over all things. There are no accidents, nor are we victims of either chance or enemies.

We see that Romans 8:28 teaches what Calvinists recognize and others deny about God’s sovereign control over all things, from the largest to the smallest events. He sovereignly appoints events that we like and those that

we dislike. Submission, dependence, and prayer are practical responses to God’s sovereignty. However repugnant it may be to some, the doctrine of God’s sovereignty is biblical and practical. It is practical Calvinism, which all true Calvinism is.

God’s Love in All His Sovereignty

If all things work together for the good of believers, it means that God purposes good for us in all things, which ultimately means that God works these things out of love for us. To see this from this verse, we need a right understanding of what it means for all things to work together for our good. We certainly cannot think that Romans 8:28 means that everything happens just as we would like. That clearly isn’t true. Clearly, things occur that we would rather avoid. Things happen that we regard as tragic, things that are painful. But the affirmation in this text is that all of these things, as well as the more happy occurrences, work together for our good as God’s people. So “good” refers to that which God intends for our benefit, primarily our eternal benefit, even though it may entail earthly sorrow and pain. Here is the doctrine of God’s good providence. This is the



Allan and Linda Kay Story in 2010

doctrine of sovereign grace as applied to providence, rather than as applied to salvation.

Practically, this means that when difficult things happen to us, we must consider them, in faith, to be for our good. And we see this because this is what the Scriptures teach us about those things. It means a change in practical perspective, rooted in doctrinal teaching and understanding. “We walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Cor. 5:7). A worldly perspective may see things as being bad, when faith, believing what God says in his word, sees it as good, even though the goodness of it is neither visible nor understood. Sometimes we don’t understand why certain things happen or how they will work out for our good, but we believe that they happened because it was God’s will and because they are ultimately for our good and reflect God’s love.

It is an impoverished Christianity that does not take comfort from knowing that God is in control and that his sovereign will is always loving and entirely good for us. Yet a common question is, “Why do bad things happen to good people?” The two common answers are either that God is not in control, or, if he is, that he doesn’t care. The scriptural response is that the only ones whom God counts as good are Christians (by the imputed righteousness of Christ), and that the bad things that happen to them are actually good

things for them.

Yet it would be an impoverished Calvinism that saw these things and no more. As comforting as these truths are, this verse does not teach merely a calculus of benefit. We are not simply to weigh heavenly and eternal benefit against earthly loss and conclude that, on balance, the event was good. We

should not look for comfort primarily in a self-centered way. There is more here for our comfort. When she who did me good and not evil all the days of her life came to the end of that earthly life after we shared nearly forty-two years of marriage, was the essence of my loss the good things she would no longer do for me? Of course not! It was the separation, the loss of the relationship. In the same way, my comfort in that loss does not consist simply in the more distant and remote promise of heavenly and eternal benefit, as wonderful as those things are. Romans 8:28, understood in its context, offers additional comfort as well.

God’s Presence in All Our Need

The good that Christians receive in God’s every sovereign act, and the comfort we receive from Romans 8:28, is covenantal (relational) fruit from God’s not sparing his own Son but delivering him up for us all (v. 32). While the verse certainly teaches the loving causality already seen, it also points in the direction of our relationship to God. Romans 8:28 teaches us that the recipients of good in all things are “those who love God.” These are “those who are called according to His purpose,” a purpose that Christ “might be the firstborn among many brethren” (v. 29), a purpose rooted in eternity and in God’s predestining act (vv. 29–30).

These are doctrinal truths, but they

are preeminently relational truths as well. They call to our attention our relationship to the triune God. The Christian’s comfort is our relationship with Christ, not in heaven only, but right now on earth. As “those who love God,” we love him. As “those who are the called according to His purpose,” we are loved by him, which is an unabashedly Calvinistic truth. Christ loves us and gave himself for us. “Neither death nor life ... nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (vv. 38–39). Only this greater relationship can offer or sustain comfort in the loss of a loved one. In other words, in addition to seeing in Romans 8:28 a decretal Calvinism, we see there a relational Calvinism, which Calvinists commonly call covenant theology.

Sometimes we hear that Romans 8:28 should not be quoted to those who are in the early stages of great sorrow. And certainly the glib reciting of the verse by someone personally unacquainted with its application can be offensive, but the words themselves offer the comfort of the Comforter and of the God of all comfort. They have been for me a source of encouragement from the first hour of my loss. I do not still have my wife, but I have my Savior and my God—not just speculatively and remotely, but personally and close to me.

The words “And we know” at the beginning of Romans 8:28 express faith in the doctrines taught in the verse. They turn the doctrines of God’s sovereignty, of his sovereign love, and of his covenantal presence into practical comfort in trying events. They point us to Christ himself. Consequently, we perceive things differently. We respond to things differently. We pray differently. On such a foundation, we can indeed rejoice always and give thanks in everything. □

The author is the pastor of Providence Presbyterian Church in Austin (Pflugerville), Tex. This article is the substance of a devotional presented at the 80th General Assembly last year. He quotes the NKJV.

WHAT IS A RETREAT?



THOMAS E. TYSON // According to Webster, a retreat (in our sense of the word) is “a period of group withdrawal for prayer, meditation, study, and instruction.” The Machen Retreat and Conference Center exists to be just that.

It is the only center owned and operated by the OPC that is

dedicated to achieving that purpose. So both the property and the schedule of its use are ours!

The MRCC came about as follows: In July 1995, Paul Cunningham and his wife Jane invited me, my wife Jean, and our daughter Natalie for breakfast at their home in Highland County, Virginia, which is tucked away between the Backcreek and Allegheny Mountains, just west of the Shenandoah Valley. I was at that time General Secretary of the Committee on Christian Education. Mr. Cunningham had a startling proposal. He desired to give the OPC approximately fifty acres of wooded property to develop as a retreat and conference facility.

We accepted it, with thanks to God! Both the property ownership and the direction of its use landed upon the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic, which soon erected an operating committee to get things rolling. Additionally, the CCE supported the venture with a \$35,000 development gift. The construction of facilities began with major help from Paul Cunningham, a Christian group called the Sowers, and numerous OP church work parties.

Soon a main lodge appeared, housing both indoor and outdoor dining and meeting areas, an industrial kitchen, and laundry, shower, and bathroom facilities. Later three enclosed, heated bunkhouses and five open-air, screened

bunkhouses (each with a twelve-person capacity) were completed. Construction of other facilities followed shortly, including tent sites, fire and barbecue pits, a shooting range, a field for recreational activities, and a basketball court. Swimming, always popular at such places, was available in the nearby Bullpasture River—and it was both clean and safe!

As the years went by, numerous camps, conferences, retreats, and family reunions soon filled the calendar at MRCC. You can read all about it at www.machen.org, including how to register for these upcoming events:

Science Camp, July 14–19

Labor Day Retreat, Aug. 29–Sept. 1

Singles' Retreat, Oct. 3–5

Ladies' Retreat, Oct. 10–11

Some have wondered how remote MRCC is from them. It's not as far away as you might think! From Charlotte, North Carolina, or New York City, for instance, it is six hours by car—not unlike the distance many travel for vacations. MRCC is central to a large number of OP congregations east of the Mississippi. The address is: 6 Job's Hill Road, exactly ten miles south of McDowell, Virginia.

All events, including planned conferences, family reunions, and individual family vacations, must be organized under the oversight of the Retreat Operating Committee. For information, availability, facility requests, usage fees, and event registration, please visit our website or contact the director, the Rev. Rodney King, at director@machen.org.

MRCC is worth investigating, if you want to “retreat” from the normal distractions of your life in order to nurture your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and enjoy fellowship with other believers. Think of MRCC in terms of God's promise to his covenant people in Isaiah 55:12: “For you shall go out in joy and be led forth in peace: the mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.” □

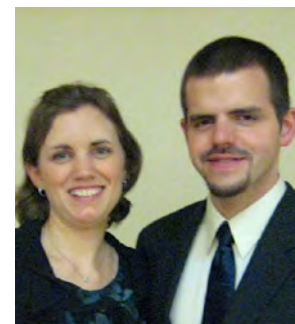
The author is a retired OP minister.



MRCC picnic facility

JULY

1. **Ben and Melanie Westerveld**, Quebec, Canada. Pray for Ben as he works with the teams and children attending this month's English Bible camps. / **Ken and Cressid Golden**, Davenport, Iowa. Pray that God would send new families to Sovereign Grace OPC. / **Barry Traver**, who has served as technical associate for the OPC website for many years, is retiring. Thank the Lord for his years of faithful service.
2. **Andrew and Billie Moody**, San Antonio, Tex. Pray for the discipleship and ministry of San Antonio Reformed Church. / Foreign Missions administrative assistant **Linda Posthuma** and secretary **Abigail Cory**. / Army chaplains: **Earl (and Susan) Vanderhoff** and **Paul (and Mary) Berghaus**.
3. **David and Sunshine Okken**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for the Okken family as they conclude their furlough and return to Uganda today. / **John and Wenny Ro**, Chicago, Ill. (downtown). Pray that God's elect will be brought into Gospel Life Presbyterian Church. / Pray for staff accountant **Doug Watson's** transition to working part-time.
4. **Sacha and Martina Walicord**, Mt. Vernon, Ohio. Pray for unity and fellowship among the people of Knox Presbyterian Church. / Pray for retired missionaries **Betty Andrews, Greet Rietkerk, Young and Mary Lou Son**, and **Fumi Uomoto**. / **Jeffrey (and Maryfrances) Carter**, yearlong intern at Calvary OPC in Glenside, Pa.
5. **Heero and Anya Hacquebord**, L'viv, Ukraine. Pray for students and leaders at this week's English/Bible camp. / **Kent and Laurie Harding**, Doniphan, Mo. Pray that Sovereign Grace Reformed Church's summer outreach efforts will bear fruit. / Pray for stated clerk **Ross Graham** as he adjusts to his new responsibilities and works to produce the four-hundred-page minutes and yearbook of the Eighty-first General Assembly.
6. **Phil Strong**, Lander, Wyo. Pray that Grace Reformed Fellowship will serve and honor the Lord with one mind. / Pray for **James and Jenny Knox**, M.D. and R.N., Nakaale, Uganda, in the U.S. for the birth of their first child. / **Matthew (and Trina) Patton**, yearlong intern at Bethel Presbyterian Church in Wheaton, Ill.
7. Pray for missionary associate **Heather Foss**, Nakaale, Uganda, serving as Clinic administrator in the Knoxes' absence. / **Daniel and Jill McManigal**, Seattle, Wash. Pray that people will be drawn to Hope OPC and find it an inviting place. / **Robert (and Grace Marie) Holda**, summer intern at New Covenant Community Church in Joliet, Ill.
8. **Robert and Christy Arendale**, Houston, Tex. Pray that the Word will not return void and that recent visitors to Cornerstone OPC will return. / Missionary associate **C. G.**, teaching at a university in Asia this month. / *New Horizons* staff: **Pat Clawson**, editorial assistant; **Sarah Pederson**, proofreader.
9. Pray for **Mr. and Mrs. M.**, Asia, arriving in the U.S. today to begin a yearlong furlough. / **Tim and Joanne Beauchamp**, Bridgton, Maine. Pray for unity and growth within the congregation of Pleasant Mountain Presbyterian Church. / Pray for **Danny Olinger**, Christian Education general secretary, as he serves as Intern Director.
10. **Brandon and Laurie Wilkins**, Crystal Lake, Ill. Pray that God will bless Christ Covenant Presbyterian Church with new families. / Pray for the summer ministry activities and travel of our **missionary associates in Asia**. / **Bulut Yasar**, summer intern at Amoskeag Presbyterian Church in Manchester, N.H.
11. Pray for tentmaker missionary **T. L. L.**, Asia, in her responsibilities as English Conversation Department coordinator. / **Jeremiah and Elizabeth Montgomery**, State College, Pa. Pray for God's spirit to direct and empower Resurrection OPC's gospel witness. / Pray for safe travel for short-term missions coordinator **David Nakhla** and short-term missionaries.
12. Home Missions staff administrator **Sean Gregg**. / Affiliated missionaries **Jerry and Marilyn Farnik**, Prague, Czech Republic. Pray for students and leaders at this week's evangelistic English camp. / Committee on Coordination staff: **Kathy Bube**, Loan Fund administrator; **Jan Gregson**, assistant to the finance director; **Charlene Tipton**, database administrator.
13. **Mr. and Mrs. F.**, Asia (on furlough). Pray for the family as they prepare to return to Asia following a yearlong furlough. / Home Missions general secretary **John Shaw**. / **Andrew (and Samantha) Forten-berry**, yearlong intern at Trinity OPC in Hatboro, Pa.
14. **Mike and Katy Myers**, Hartwell, Ga. Pray that Heritage Presbyterian Church will seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. / **Brian and Dorothy Wingard**, South Africa (on furlough), are speaking at a youth camp in Ohio this week. / **Darryl (and Anita) Kretschmer**, summer intern at Providence OPC in Madison, Wis.
15. **Woody and Laurie Lauer**, Numazu, Japan. Pray for Woody as he assists in the training of young men for Christian service. / **Jay and Andrea Bennett**, Neon,



Jeremiah and Elizabeth
Montgomery

Ky. Pray that the Lord would bless Neon Reformed Presbyterian Church's outreach and evangelism efforts. / **David Haney**, director of finance and planned giving for the Committee on Coordination.

16. Carlos and Diana Cruz, San Juan, P.R. Pray that the congregation of Iglesia Presbiteriana Reformada will grow in spiritual maturity. / **Cal and Edie Cummings**, Sendai, Japan. Pray for volunteer teams assisting at the Nozomi Center this summer. / **Jeff (and Diane) Downs**, yearlong intern at Covenant OPC in Orland Park, Ill.

17. Kaz and Katie Yaegashi, Yamagata, Japan. Pray that God would guide and equip them for their ministry in Yamagata. / **Tom and Martha Albaugh**, Pittsburgh, Pa. Pray that God would send more families to Redeemer OPC Mission. / **Timothy (and Leslie) Ferguson**, summer intern at Emmanuel OPC in Wilmington, Del.

18. Greg and Stella Hoadley, Fargo, N.Dak. Pray for new visitors at Grace OPC. / Pray for Foreign Missions general secretary **Mark Bube** as he visits with church leaders in Brazil. / **Daniel Adams**, summer intern at New Hope OPC in Frederick, Md.

19. Pray for the labors of affiliated missionaries **Craig and Ree Coulbourne** and **Linda Karner**, Japan. / **Christopher and Ann Malamisuro**, Cincinnati, Ohio. Pray that visitors to Good Shepherd OPC will desire to join in fellowship. / Air Force chaplains: **C. Phillip (and Melanie) Hollstein III** and **Cornelius (and Deidre) Johnson**.

20. Christopher and Della Chelpka, Tucson, Ariz. Praise God for his continued blessing on Covenant OPC. / Pray for **Mark and Christine Weber**, Mbale, Uganda, as they minister to the people in their community. / **Louis (and Lizette) Cloete**, yearlong intern at Redeemer OPC Mission in Pittsburgh, Pa.



Christopher and Della Chelpka

21. Al and Laurie Tricarico, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for the many weekly meetings that take place in Karamoja where the gospel is presented. / **Chad and Katie Mullinix**, Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. Pray for God's word to speed ahead and be honored at Holy Trinity. / **Joseph Johnson**, summer intern at Trinity OPC in Novato, Calif.

22. Brian and Sara Chang, Cottonwood, Ariz. Ask the Lord to grow and strengthen Verde Valley Reformed Chapel. / Pray for the labors of our **missionary associates in Uganda**. / Pray for the **MTIOPC homiletics instructors and students** as they have Intensive Training this week at Grace Presbyterian Church in Columbus, Ohio.

23. Pray for Foreign Missions associate general secretary **Douglas Clawson**, teaching at MTIOPC in Columbus,

Ohio, this week. / **Jim and Bonnie Hoekstra**, Andover, Minn. Pray that neighbors will attend Immanuel OPC's outreach seminars. / **Brian Guinto**, summer intern at Reformation OPC in Olympia, Wash.

24. Home Missions associate general secretary **Dick Gerber**. / **Eric and Dianna Tuininga**, Mbale, Uganda. Pray for the local churches' programs for women and children. / **Marvin Padgett**, executive director of Great Commission Publications.

25. Pray for missionary associate **Leah Hopp**, Nakaale, Uganda, as she begins a seven-month home leave in Canada. / **Jonathan and Kristin Moersch**, Capistrano Beach, Calif. Pray that the Lord would provide a suitable facility where Trinity Presbyterian Church can meet on Sunday evenings and throughout the week. / **Sean (and Amanda) Severns**, summer intern at Calvary OPC in Tallahassee, Fla.

26. Bill and Sessie Welzien, Key West, Fla. Pray that the Lord would bring more locals to Keys Presbyterian Church. / **Mark and Jeni Richline**, Montevideo, Uruguay. Pray for the fellowship and commitment of new believers attending worship services. / **Jeffrey (and Jennifer) Shames**, yearlong intern at Harvest OPC in Wyoming, MI.

27. Ethiopian Reformed Presbyterian Church. Pray for the spiritual needs of the various congregations. / **Jim and Tricia Stevenson**, Tulsa, Okla. Pray that the Lord would add to Providence OPC and raise up officers. / **Robert (and Shannon) Mossotti**, summer intern at Mid-Cities OPC in Dallas, Tex.

28. Joseph and Carla Fowler, Gastonia, N.C. Pray for Reformation OPC, that the preaching of the Word will bring edification and conversion. / **Bob and Martha Wright**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for safety in travel for Bob, as his labors have him on the road frequently. / **Jim Scott**, *New Horizons* managing editor. / **Janet Birkmann**, Diaconal Ministries administrative assistant.

29. Missionary associates **Mary York**, Czech Republic, and **Amanda McCrina**, Japan. / **Joshua and Jessica Lyon**, Carson, Ca. Pray that the people of Grace OPC will continue to observe all that Christ commanded. / **Joshua (and Chelsea) Lauer**, summer intern at Calvary OPC in Harrisville, Pa.

30. Ben and Heather Hopp, Haiti, are thankful for ministry opportunities the Lord has provided them. / **Kim and Barbara Kuhfuss**, Eau Claire, Wis. Pray that visitors to Providence Reformed Church will return and join with the body. / **Timothy (and Alison) Cho**, summer intern at Grace OPC in Vienna, Va.

31. Tony and Mica Garbarino, Morgan Hill, Ca. Pray for Christ-centered growth at Providence Presbyterian Church. / Associate missionaries **Octavius and Marie Delfils**, Haiti. Pray that visitors to the worship services in Port-au-Prince will be responsive to the preaching of the Word. / Pray for **Lou Ann Shafer**, music editor for the Psalter-Hymnal Committee.

THE STEWARDSHIP OF OUR FELLOWSHIP

// STEPHEN DUFRESNE

The apostle Paul writes, “I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now” (Phil. 1:3–5).

One of the wonderful things about Paul was that he was not a lone wolf. He was not a one-man army out to single-handedly evangelize the world. He had a lot of company, and he appreciated that company and rejoiced in the fellowship. In our confession, we call this fellowship enjoyed by Paul the communion of the saints (WCF 26). The doctrine is simply stated in the first paragraph: “All saints, that are united to Jesus Christ their Head, by his Spirit, and by faith, have fellowship with him in his graces, sufferings, death, resurrection, and glory: and, being united to one another in love, they have communion in each other’s gifts and graces.”

The first thing we see is that the communion of saints is one of the benefits of our union with Christ. It is a product of the work of Christ, not the natural associations of people. We have this communion because Christ has made us into one. Paul makes this abundantly clear in Ephesians 2:13–22. Verse 13 puts us on track by tracing this fellowship to “the blood of Christ,” by which we “have been brought near.” The saints could not help but begin to realize the implications for their life.

The second thing we see is that this communion, or fellowship, requires stewardship. Our gifts and graces are to be shared among us, not hoarded. When you read the second paragraph of WCF 26, you see how those “gifts and graces” are to be used. Stewardship requires a wise, willing, and joyful participation in one another’s lives. Don’t confuse the

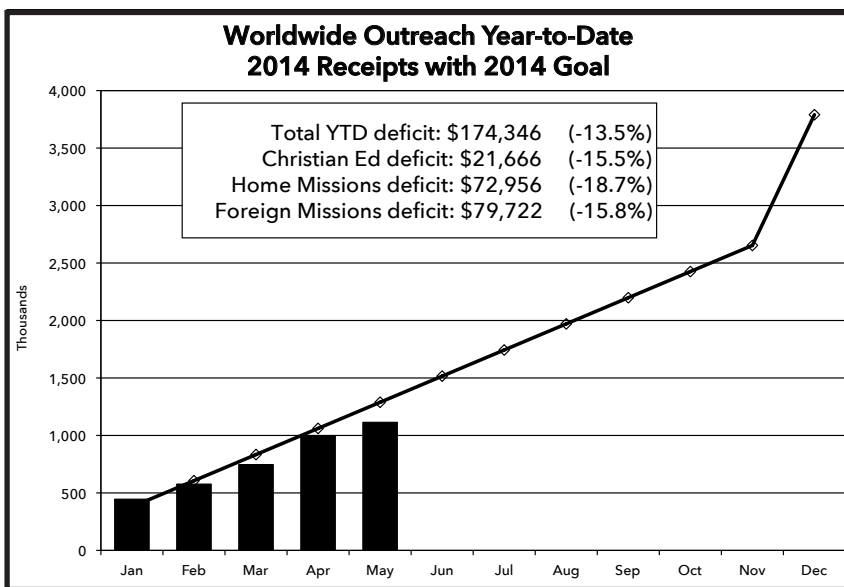
dutifulness of it with a begrudging resignation to it. No, our gifts and graces are to be handled with an eye toward God’s glory and their usefulness to one another.

When Paul wrote to the Philippians while under house arrest in Rome, he highlighted the stewardship of their fellowship. In verse 5, he lays out the reason he could pray with joy and the reason for the thankfulness he had toward God. The reason was their partnership (*koinonia*) with him. They were caught up, not only in the personal benefit of the gospel, but the corporate benefit of it. In verse 7, Paul further explains his joy saying that the Philippians were “partakers (*synkoinonous*)” of grace with him, not only as he suffered for the faith, but also as he defended it before Jews and Gentiles alike. They had fellowship in the advancement of the gospel.

The history of the Philippian church shows their exercise of this stewardship. Paul had brought them the good news of Jesus Christ, and once they had received it, they became partners with him. Lydia opened her home (Acts 16:14–15), the church sent gifts to support Paul while he was in Thessalonica (Phil. 4:14–16), they sent Epaphroditus to minister to him in Rome (Phil. 2:25; 4:18), and they likely aided him while he was in Corinth (2 Cor. 11:9).

The stewardship of our fellowship should bring about in each of us a personal interest in the work of the OPC. As stewards, we are not patrons, but partners with one another. As stewards of our fellowship, we are not investors, but that which is invested.

The author is the pastor of Providence Presbyterian Church in Pataaskala, Ohio.



PUNCTUATION MARKS IN QUEBEC CITY!

// BERNARD WESTERVELD



Eating snacks during an English Bible camp sponsored by Église réformée St-Marc

Sentences end with punctuation. A question mark indicates uncertainty. A period communicates a fact or a conviction. An exclamation mark expresses enthusiasm and excitement.

That very variety of expressions came to mind as I reflected upon the ministry that the Lord has committed to me in Quebec City. For thirteen years, I have served the French-speaking congregation of Église réformée St-Marc as pastor and evangelist. This past year, however, several new challenges have arisen. Some end with *points d'interrogation*. Others require a *point final*. And then there are the *points d'exclamation*, which increase my zeal to serve the Lord in Quebec.

Points d'Interrogation

Several events of the past months raise some *points d'interrogation* (question marks) for us. Most significantly, the Anglican diocese wants to sell the church building that we have rented for the past twenty-five years. The property value for future condominium development puts the purchase price well beyond our reach. Will the bishop conclude a sale? Will the new owner require us to vacate the building this fall or next year? Where will we worship?

On another front, we have wrestled with questions about reaching the new immigrant believers living among us. Over the years, we have received a significant number of believers from Madagascar. A group of them recently established an ethnic congregation under the oversight of the Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar. While some families have decided to remain active at St-Marc, we do wonder who will leave. Immigrants from other countries regularly worship with us. While they sincerely appreciate the biblical instruction and the welcome received at St-Marc, they rarely become more involved. Why have they not taken up a more active leadership role in the congregation, given our encouragements to do so? How can we prepare them for the challenges of living the

Christian faith in the individualistic, materialistic, and hedonistic society of Quebec?

Then we face the reality of solid members moving away. Some key families are in the process of moving because of changes in employment. Several students have moved to Montreal to pursue their degrees in a different university or to begin their careers. While we are thankful that other congregations will be blessed by their faith and gifts, we do ask who will replace them at St-Marc. How will we continue some key ministries that these brothers and sisters in Christ undertook with such zeal? How will we meet our budget?

The revolving door through which church members pass also brings in many visitors. Our great geographical location, our outreach activities in the neighborhood, and our sincere desire to invite inquirers to church have produced a steady stream of visitors. We rejoice to welcome each one. But why do so many not return? Why, after several weeks and sometimes months of faithful attendance, do some stop coming?

Finally, among all the questions are concerns for the future leadership. Despite two significant efforts to train men, we still have no one willing or ready to be ordained as a deacon. Why has the Lord not yet raised up men of God who excel in service? Who will teach us to serve? The training of men for eldership is also progressing slowly. When will we be able to infuse new blood into the session?

Point Final

While we have many *points d'interrogation*, we are also convinced that some things must not change. Some aspects of church ministry end with a *point final* (period).

We gather to worship the Lord God every Lord's Day, regardless of our number. We sing his praises. We listen to his Word. We receive the sacraments. We pray together, and then we leave with the Lord's blessing. That will never change.

We also preach the whole counsel of God. What a privilege it is to open God's Word and to take up its reading and its proclamation where we left off the previous week. Such expository preaching produces faith in the hearts of God's elect and causes them to be edified.

We also teach all the doctrines of grace. On Sunday evening we gather in order to receive additional instruction. The younger teenagers receive catechetical teaching, and the older teens and some adults work through the questions and answers of the Heidelberg Catechism. We also study Reformed doctrines through theological conferences, as well as in one-on-one instruction in the homes of individuals interested in making a public profession of faith.

We evangelize. While there are some church programs for evangelism, our Christian testimony is most often given by members of the church in their daily activities. They talk about their Christian life to an unbelieving friend, and they answer questions about faith in Christ Jesus.

We seek to serve and love our neighbors. Once again, while we do have some church programs, most Christian service is done unnoticed: writing cards of encouragement, being a listening ear, volunteering in the neighborhood, exercising hospitality, etc. We do not need a church building, nor a large congregation, nor a significant budget to be God's light in this world through our good works.

While many aspects of our ministry in Quebec end with *points d'interrogation*, the essential ministries of Word and deed will continue. *Point final*.

Points d'Exclamation

The Lord in his mercy has also given us reasons to be excited about future opportunities. Many possibilities end with *points d'exclamation* (exclamation points).

This year we are celebrating our sixtieth anniversary. *Bonne fête!* Happy birthday! On June 25, 1954, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Quebec City decided to inaugurate a French-speaking Reformed mission: Église réformée St-Marc de Québec. While the mission work initially served Reformed immigrants from France and Switzerland, over the years new converts among the Quebecois (the French-speaking natives of Quebec) joined the small congregation. Immigrants from other francophone countries have since joined, creating a multiethnic congregation. With respect to doctrinal faithfulness and evangelistic zeal, St-Marc has made much progress in shedding vestiges of its former liberalism and seeking to be a church that reaches out. We celebrate *the Lord's faithfulness!*

Two years ago, when the church building was to be sold (the sale did not go through), the St-Marc congregation established a committee to study its vision and mission. That exercise has enabled us to examine who we are, what our strengths are, what weaknesses need to be worked on, where the Lord has placed us, what opportunities he is opening up before us, and what could possibly threaten our ministry. We are developing a clearer idea of the particular mission the Lord has prepared for us. As the bishop is now pressing to sell the church building, we are convinced more than ever that we need to remain in the same neighborhood, reaching out to the university and college communities that surround us. If we must leave this building, we are convinced that the Lord

will provide a new meeting location close at hand. We want to pursue a Reformed mission in *this neighborhood!*

While our location has preoccupied us, we recognize the need to renew our outreach via the Internet. We have started a Facebook page. We're using Facebook to connect with former members and worshipers of St-Marc and to invite them to our sixtieth anniversary celebration. A regular worshiper at St-Marc is renewing the layout of our website. Lord willing, we will post more Reformed instruction on the site. We are excited to reach seekers and believers with *sound biblical teaching!*

With respect to biblical teaching, our session is overseeing a translation project. Very few written Reformed resources are available in the French language. The synod of the Reformed Church of Quebec has granted us funds to begin translating Reformed works on covenant theology and the Christian worldview. We have hired a translator, a member of our congregation. A collaborative agreement will be signed with *Kerygma*, the Reformed publication ministry of John Calvin Seminary in Aix-en-Provence, France. We will provide the francophone believers with *solid Reformed material!*

Our neighborhood outreach ministry continues through English for Kids. Once again we will offer three weeks of Bible day camps to kids whose parents want them to learn English. While some of the children come from evangelical families, the majority do not. For a second year, we will also organize the camping trip English for Teens. We will share with each of them *the good news of Jesus!*

New faces continue to appear during our worship services. Recently two young adults, both from Europe and visiting Quebec City, came to worship, thanks to a personal invitation. Neither one had ever been to a church service before. Both of them loved the Christian fellowship. While they have since returned to Europe, we rejoice to *receive each one!*

Finally, we continue the missionary partnership with the OPC. We may never meet personally, but we do meet together before the throne of God in prayer. We pray for the OPC, and you pray for us. The Lord is answering. We remain eternally thankful for *your prayers!*



English for Kids instruction

MEDIA MATTERS

// JAMIE DEAN

In 1871, journalist Augustus St. Clair penned a devastating article about the illegal abortion trade plaguing New York City: “Thousands of human beings are murdered before they have seen the light of this world, and thousands upon thousands more adults are irremediably robbed in constitution, health, and happiness.”

It may not surprise readers to learn that St. Clair’s article—titled “The Evil of the Age”—appeared in a newspaper owned by a Bible-believing Presbyterian. Perhaps more surprising: that pro-life paper was the *New York Times*.

Less than 150 years later, the same newspaper regularly laments the efforts made in various states to pass new restrictions on legalized abortion, and warns about threats to “the tenuous state of women’s right to make their own reproductive decisions.” A few years ago, the *New York Times* remembered late-term abortionist George Tiller as “an American hero.”

For those pondering how we got here, Marvin Olasky traces the dramatic, anti-Christian shift in American newsrooms in a newly updated edition of his book *Prodigal Press*. (Olasky’s colleague, Warren Cole Smith, also contributes new material to the 2013 edition.)

I serve as news editor at *World* magazine, a Christian news publication, where Olasky serves as editor in chief, so I have an admittedly professional interest in a book about how Christians engage journalism in an overwhelmingly secular culture.

But I believe many other Christians will profit from reading Olasky’s take on the historical trends that led away from a biblical underpinning in American journalism and towards the dominance of secular humanism in mainstream newsrooms.

Thankfully, the book doesn’t end there. The author also offers suggestions for regaining a Christian perspective in both reporting and reading the news. Those suggestions are helpful for both journalist and reader alike.

For Christians who are tempted to retreat from the



sometimes crushing volume and impact of the news, Olasky reminds them what good journalism does: it chronicles what God is doing in the world he created and in the sinners he is redeeming—a subject that should interest every Christian as well.

Historical View

To show the decidedly Christian perspective in much of early American journalism, Olasky notes that from 1825 to 1845 over 100 cities and towns in the U.S. had explicitly Christian newspapers.

In the early 1880s, journalist Nathaniel Willis founded the *Boston Recorder* after his conversion to Christianity. The *Boston Recorder* maintained the second largest circulation in the city, and Willis wrote that all kinds of stories provided “occasion to record many signal triumphs of divine grace over the obduracy of the human heart, and over the prejudices of the unenlightened mind.”

Other newspapers regularly wrote of God’s providence in news stories about everyday events. Many of these reports noted God’s sovereign control as fact, not opinion.

The *New York Times* continued its abortion coverage in 1871 with a dramatic, undercover investigation exposing the evil underbelly of a gruesome industry that left many babies—and some mothers—dead. The coverage provoked outrage among many New Yorkers, and prompted new laws to clamp down on the already illegal industry. These stories straightforwardly reported abortion as murder.

Changes were coming, however, and Olasky doesn’t dwell on a golden age of Christian journalism. He notes that as American culture grew more secular, much of journalism diverged with it. For Christian newspapers, this secularization had an opposite affect: many retreated inside their Christian circles and produced fluffy, “happy talk” journalism that no longer held up the light of God’s Word to the darkness of the world.

As Christian journalists retreated over coming decades, secular journalists began vowing allegiance to a new god: objectivity. If a reporter could write all sides of a story, according to this view, he could remain objective and let readers decide the truth on particularly difficult issues.

Olasky writes that the notion of complete objectivity is a fallacy. Every person has some kind of belief system that influences how he views the world. For Christians, our understanding of the world comes from God's infallible Word. The Bible becomes the plumb line for Christian journalism.

"God defines reality, and our understanding of reality should conform to His definition of it," Olasky writes. "Biblical objectivity—accepting God's view of the world as reality—is what defines true Christian journalism."

Reading, Writing, and Resting

This kind of analysis isn't always easy. Some issues don't come with a crystal clear, biblical command. Christian journalists and Christian readers must seek wisdom in analyzing the news—and humility in presenting it. Often we'll fail, but we must work hard to think biblically about our words, and to rest fully in the Word himself.

God commands us to use our words for many purposes: to encourage, to love, to teach, to expose evil, and ultimately to glorify God. Olasky commends Christian journalism (and Christian reading) as a way to do all of these.

That means we expose the evil of abortion, but we also rejoice in stories about mothers who have carried their babies to full term because of the ministry of faithful Christians. We write about the sufferings of believers in places like South Sudan, but we also show how the gates of hell aren't prevailing against Christ's church, despite persecution.

In all of this, Christian journalists offer Christian readers a real opportunity to participate in God's work in the world by glorifying him for his merciful deeds and praying in specific ways for his will to be done on earth as it is in heaven.

I've often wished that I could do more for some of the suffering Christians I've met in some of the worst parts of the world, but I also realize that perhaps the best I can do for them is to name them in writing before God's people, and hope that readers will lift them up before the throne of grace.

We don't know how God will use all these imperfect words, but the Christian writer and the Christian reader can take comfort in the reminder from Proverbs 30:5, "Every word of God proves true; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him."

The author, a member of Matthews OPC in Matthews, N.C., is the news editor of World magazine.

☆ Congratulations

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

- **Belbet Avery**, Providence Presbyterian Church, Bradenton, Fla.
- **Leah Folkert**, Providence Presbyterian Church, Bradenton, Fla.

ABCs of PRESBYTERIANISM

The True Vicar of Christ (3)

Larry Wilson

In John 14:12, Jesus says, "Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father." Really? Does Jesus really say "greater works than these will he do"? Clearly he does, but what can he possibly mean by that?

Luke 10:17–20 shows that our Lord deemed spiritual things to be greater than physical things, and eternal things to be greater than temporal things. Accordingly, it is noteworthy that John 14:12 does not speak of "signs" and "wonders," but rather of "works" or "things." According to our Lord Jesus, the conversion of sinners through the gospel is in fact *even greater* than physical, temporal miracles.

That's not all. Thanks to the outpouring of the Spirit, as the vicar of Christ on the earth, these works will also be done to an even greater extent. Don't forget why this can be the case. Jesus says it will happen "because I am going to the Father"—not in spite of that fact, but because of it (John 14:12). We receive power to carry on Christ's work and do "greater works," precisely because Jesus went to be our Advocate with the Father and sent the Holy Spirit to be his Advocate with us!

How can we carry on Christ's work and do these "greater works"? We cannot, unless he empowers us to do them (John 15:5). And how can we experience the power of the Holy Spirit working for us and in us and through us to carry on Christ's work and do these works? The answer is: *through faith*. We saw how the Holy Spirit inspired the Word and illumines it. The sword of the Spirit is the Word of God (Eph. 6:17). Keep hearing God's Word, and keep responding in faith—with prayers and praises.

Note what our Lord Jesus immediately goes on to say in John 14:13–14: Ask! Pray! When we do rely on our Lord by hearing his Word and responding in prayer, then who is it who ultimately does these works? Look again at John 14:13–14: "Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it."

● Out of the Mouth . . .

The other day I heard our four-year-old daughter Monica mumbling the answer to Shorter Catechism Q. 4 to herself: "... wisdom, power, holiness, with liberty and justice for all."

—Robyn Johnson
Wasilla, Alaska

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

OUTREACH

[Continued from page 7]

eating together in the church parking lot, and the congregation established some new relationships.

Reformation Presbyterian Church in Queens, New York, hosts BBQ&A events in the park at the end of every summer and has significant conversations with its neighbors.

Jeremiah Montgomery, the pastor of Resurrection OPC in State College, Pennsylvania, gives open-air gospel presentations every week at a major gathering point on Penn State University's campus, and the Lord has used those presentations to open doors for ongoing gospel conversations.

Brandon Wilkins, the pastor of Christ Covenant Presbyterian Church in Crystal Lake, Illinois, volunteers at a Christian-run youth center that serves high school students and has enjoyed opportunities to counsel and present the gospel.

Eric Hausler, the pastor of Naples Presbyterian Church in Naples, Florida, teaches weekly Bible studies at the county jail, and some of his former

students and their relatives have attended worship more than once.

We could compile a long list of opportunities for witness that church plants and congregations have utilized, and then celebrate how the Lord has blessed those efforts. But what can we learn from these examples?

What Do We Learn from This?

Effective outreach and evangelism ministries require time and thought. The Lord providentially brings people with particular talents, gifts, passions, and interests to each congregation. The Lord also providentially shapes a community with particular passions, interests, and gathering places. When we take time to analyze how the Lord has shaped our congregation and our community, he often opens the door to tremendous periods of witness that produce much fruit.

Congregations must emphasize weekly worship, sound biblical preaching, and consistent discipleship and teaching. The Christian is by nature a worshiper, but the Christian should also

long to see more and more people gathering for worship. That desire to see

the Lord receive the worship he deserves from a greater number of people motivates our ministry of witness. May we give thought, planning, and time to evangelism and outreach. And may the Lord bless our witness by gathering more of the worshipers he seeks. ◻

The author is general secretary of the Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension.



Another project completed!



Finishing a T-shirt quilt



Instruction in the use of sewing machines

NEWS, VIEWS, & REVIEWS

JEFFREY SCOTT ORDAINED AT ROSEBURG, OREGON

On May 16, the Presbytery of the Northwest met to ordain and install Jeffrey Scott as the first pastor of Covenant Grace Presbyterian Church in Roseburg, Oregon. Paul Hamstra, moderator of the PNW, officiated at the service. The sermon was preached by Alan Strange, a professor at Mid-America Reformed Seminary. Bruce Hollister, Mr. Scott's pastor during his seminary days, delivered the charge to the newly ordained minister. Larry Conard, stated supply at Covenant Grace from 2009 to 2013, asked the ordination and installation questions and gave a charge to the congregation. Mark Sumpter offered a pastoral prayer before Mr. Scott concluded the service with a benediction.

Approximately one hundred people attended the service. It was preceded by a dinner prepared and served by women and youth of the church. In addition to people of the congregation, many ministers and elders, as well as other members of the regional church, joined in the celebration.

Jeff, a 2013 graduate of Mid-America Seminary, served as a yearlong intern in Roseburg prior to being called as the church's pastor. He and his wife, Dawn, have five children: Silas (12), Liliana (10), Maran (9), Eden (5), and Elias (2).

DOUG WATSON RETIRES

Until he retired from full-time work in June, Douglas A. Watson served the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in many ways over thirty-six years near his Wilmington, Delaware, roots. Doug served as pastor of Covenant OPC in Seaford, Delaware, and Calvary OPC in Ringoes, New Jersey; as teacher at Trinity OPC in Hatboro, Pennsylvania; and as an evangelist, an area home missionary coordinator, and, most recently, as the first OPC staff accountant.

Before graduating from Westminster Theological Seminary in 1976, Doug



Participants in the ordination service of Jeffrey Scott: Larry Conard, Alan Strange, Jeff Scott, Bruce Hollister, Mark Sumpter, and Paul Hamstra

worked as a data processor in a bank, developing skills he used as the OPC staff accountant. "[Doug's] employment enabled the expansion of the giving program and the loan fund," said David Haney, director of finance and planned giving. "He charted new territory at a critical juncture in the expansion."

Throughout this journey, Doug's wife, Betty, stood by his side, raising five children and his sister. Both from OP families, they met as campers at French Creek Bible Conference, a youth ministry close to Doug's heart.

After seventy-three years in the North,



Doug and Betty Watson

the Watsons have retired to South Carolina, near Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, where Doug works part-time as a bookkeeper. He also continues as the OPC accountant part-time—which fits Doug's attitude. "I always figured I'd do whatever the Lord has for me to do," said Doug. "Here I am. What's next?"

UPDATE

CHURCHES

- **Faith Presbyterian Church** in Silver Point (Cookeville), Tenn., was received as an organized congregation by the Presbytery of the Southeast on May 16, 2014.

- On May 23, **Redeemer OPC** in Airdrie, Alberta, Canada, was received as an organized congregation by the Presbytery of the Northwest.

MINISTERS

- The pastoral relationship between **Ronald L. Beabout** and Calvary OPC in Cedar Grove, Wis., has been dissolved, effective June 30.

- **P. Michael DeLozier** was erased from the roll of the Presbytery of the Southeast at its April 25–26 meeting, at his request,

as he has been received as a minister into the Evangelical Association of Reformed and Congregational Christian Churches.

- **Matthew A. Figura**, formerly an evangelist, was installed on May 16 as pastor of Faith Presbyterian Church in Silver Point, Tenn., to continue his work in that newly organized congregation.

- On May 3, the Presbytery of Philadelphia granted the request of **Harry R. "Buster" McLeod** to demit the ministry.

- The pastoral relationship between **Steven F. Miller** and Nashua OPC in Pukaski, Pa., was dissolved as of May 31 by the Presbytery of Ohio; on June 1 he was received by the Presbytery of the Alleghenies of the RPCNA and installed as pastor of a church in Beaver Falls, Pa.

- Licentiate **Jeffrey M. Scott** was ordained as a minister and installed as pastor of Covenant Grace Presbyterian Church in Roseburg, Ore., on May 16.

- **Thomas K. Sheppard** was removed from the roll of the Presbytery of the Southeast due to his transfer to the Evangelical Presbyterian Church's Presbytery of Florida to serve as the pastor of Glendale EPC in DeFuniak Springs, Fla.

- On May 3, **David A. Smiley** resigned as regional home missionary for the Presbytery of Philadelphia shortly before his scheduled installation service, for family reasons; his resignation was accepted, and

he was enrolled as a minister without call.

- On May 23, **Larry E. Wilson**, formerly the organizing pastor, was installed as pastor of Redeemer OPC in Airdrie, Alberta, Canada.

LETTERS

GOD'S LAW: YOUR FRIEND

Editor:

I write to thank you for the article by Larry E. Wilson in the May issue. Many convicting points were made; however, I was especially encouraged by his last paragraph. In this paragraph, he states, "When God is your friend ... God's law is your friend." This simple sentence really brings out a truth that I and I'm sure many other Christians have never thought of. The law has for so long been put off and considered "Old Testament," but it is time for Christians to take up this new friend and follow Christ.

Amy Chapman
Marstons Mills, Mass.

REVIEWS

Housewife Theologian: How the Gospel Interrupts the Ordinary, by Aimee Byrd. P&R, 2013. Paperback, 240 pages, list price \$12.99. Reviewed by OP member Kelli Clifford.

Do you ever feel embarrassed to tell people you are a housewife? Are you confused by all the different opinions about womanhood? Aimee Byrd, a member of Pilgrim Presbyterian Church (PCA) in Martinsburg, West Virginia, wrote *Housewife Theologian* to encourage married women to improve their theology (p. 68) and better grasp biblical truths about women's roles. She calls women to do theology as a "necessary part" of their vocation as housewives (p. 13) and dismisses the notion that this field is just for professionals. Her lighthearted and personal writing style firmly challenges superficial notions of the "per-

fect Christian wife."

Byrd rightly sees theology as impacting every area of our lives as married women, including submission, physical beauty, sexuality, and hospitality. She minces no words in calling women to apply truth to all areas of their life and deal with the sin that is preventing them from doing so. Sin "is not a well-mannered guest. It multiplies, infests, and consumes" (p. 161). Yet she points out that even when Eve blew it, "God did not give [Adam] a new helper" (pp. 28–29). What a gracious insight!

Byrd strives to elevate the title of "housewife" from the depths to which it has fallen. She does not tell you *how* to wash your laundry, school your children, or love your husband. Instead, she points to our motivations. *Why* do we stress out when the house is a mess? *Why* are we so worried about our looks? Our deepening affections for Christ must motivate all our activities. Christ's love for us becomes the source of our confidence and desires. So don't expect to finish feeling like you have failed at being a wife. But neither will you feel like a success! You should finish feeling like a normal Christian woman.

While Byrd addresses many topics in general, she leaves the work of specific application to the reader. Every chapter ends with meaty questions that could be used in a Bible study, personal devotions, or conversations with your spouse. The questions are honest, encouraging, and to the

point—one of the best parts of the book. I recommend following her instructions and reading the book over the course of a year to allow you the time to chew on the questions with honest, deep reflection.

Given the intimate issues discussed in the book, I would recommend it to engaged or married women. Having said that, one could certainly adapt

the content to disciple a broad age range of single or married Christian women. Some editorial oversights and typos may require you to reread some passages to get a firm handle on their meaning, but the benefits of a solid, Reformed book on womanhood make them easy to overlook.

BOWE BERGDAHL RELEASED

As this magazine was going to press, it was learned that Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl, the son of Bob and Jani Bergdahl, was released on May 31 after five years of captivity by insurgents in Afghanistan. His parents were members of Sovereign Redeemer Presbyterian Church (OPC) in Boise, Idaho, until its dissolution last year. Many people in the OPC and others have been praying for his safety and release. See *New Horizons*, April 2013 (www.opc.org/nh.html?issue_id=202), page 9.



From Heaven He Came and Sought Her: Definite Atonement in Historical, Biblical, Theological, and Pastoral Perspective, edited by David Gibson and Jonathan Gibson. Crossway, 2013. Hardback, 704 pages, list price \$50.00. Reviewed by OP pastor Benjamin W. Swinburnson.

This book is an important contribution to the defense of the Augustinian and Reformed doctrine of definite atonement. The historical essays cover a wide range of the doctrine's history. Haykin and Hogg deal with the ancient and medieval treatment of the doctrine; the latter discusses Gottschalk of Orbais, who provided the most advanced and stimulating pre-Reformation Augustinian views. Helm brings a philosopher-theologian's precision to his helpful analysis of Calvin, while Blacketer's well-researched piece refutes common attempts to drive a sharp wedge between Calvin and Theodore Beza. Gatiss provides a thorough examination of the British delegation's involvement at the Synod of Dort and the theological diversity of the delegates. Djaballah provides a synopsis of Amyraut's *Brief Treatise* on predestination, although he does not mention Lum's 1985 translation of this work. Trueman helpfully addresses aspects of Owen's seminal discussion of this doctrine.

This book is especially valuable for its exegetical contributions (Williamson, Motyer, Harmon, J. Gibson, and Schreiner). Taken together, they firmly root the idea of definite atonement in the unfolding, seamless fabric of the history of revelation. The theological essays (MacLeod, Letham, Williams, Wellum, and Blocher) show how the doctrine of definite atonement plays a key role in shaping the overall biblical system of doctrine. The book fittingly concludes with three essays (by Strange, Ferguson, and Piper) on the pastoral significance of the Atonement.

It should be no surprise that a book of this size might provoke a few critical observations. First, the book's criticism of the adjective "limited" is at times a little overdrawn (p. 122). Several seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Reformed theologians

connected "limited" to "atonement" and "satisfaction." Whatever theological or rhetorical objections might be leveled against this term, one cannot argue that it was not part of the older debates.

Second, the essays are inconsistent in their presentation of hypothetical universalism in relation to the Reformed confessions. Some accurately position it as a form of inconsistent Calvinism. Both J. Gibson and Letham provide an able critique of various versions of the doctrine and its potential compromise of orthodox Christology and Trinitarianism (pp. 368–69, 440–44). Others, like Gatiss and Blacketer (following

Richard Muller), position it squarely (albeit somewhat uncomfortably) within the Reformed confessional tradition. Letham goes so far as to say that the views of the English hypothetical universalists at the Westminster Assembly "were not seen as posing a major threat to the sovereign particularism of the decrees nor to the nature or intent of the atonement" (p. 439). This was certainly not the view of Edward Reynolds, the chairman of the committee that drafted the chapter on the decree. Upon hearing Calamy articulate his position, Reynolds responded: "This opinion cannot be asserted by any that can say he is not of the Remonstrants' position" (*Minutes*, Sess. 522). It was also not the view of George Gillespie, who saw Calamy's hypothetical universalism as an implicit compromise of absolute reprobation: "I cannot understand how there can be such a universal love of God as is maintained. Those that will say it must needs deny the absolute reprobation" (*ibid.*). These brief quotations should raise some doubt as to whether hypothetical universalism was "viewed as a threat" to sovereign particularism or the nature of the atonement.

This debate mirrors the one between Warfield and Briggs at the turn of the twentieth century, and it reappeared in a different form in the debate over which version of the Westminster Standards the OPC would adopt in its infancy. In our own denomination, figures like John

Murray and Cornelius Van Til were self-conscious heirs of the Old Princeton tradition, defending a strictly particularist understanding of the faith of the church.

A careful study of this book will certainly aid us in continuing that important work. The weaknesses noted above should not detract from the overall helpful analysis it provides of this important doctrine. Definite atonement is certainly not the whole substance of Calvinism. But it is an integral part of the Reformed faith as it is confessed, taught, believed, and lived to the glory of our triune God.

WILLIAMSONS CELEBRATE 70TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

G. I. Williamson

It is not easy to summarize what we have experienced over the last several days.

Doris and I were married on May 3, 1944, in the church office of the Rev. John Calvin Reid in Columbus, Georgia. It was wartime, of course, and—wouldn't you know it—all of Doris's luggage was lost somewhere between Iowa and Georgia. So there were only five people at the wedding: Doris, me, my mother, the minister, and his secretary. But that did not diminish that memorable day, then or now.

Our youngest daughter, Cathy, determined to have an open house celebration seventy years later. The consistory of the Sanborn United Reformed Church (where we are associate members) offered us the use of the fellowship hall, and the wives of consistory members even acted as servers! So, between 6:30 and 9:00 p.m. on May 2, there was a wonderful gathering of our children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, along with many from our church family. Some family members came from as far away as California. And it was overwhelmingly wonderful.

Grandson-in-law Vincent De Groot had prepared a montage from our life story, which was projected on a large screen. There were all sorts of pictures from old albums. And there were little reunions going on, right and left, as relatives who had not seen each other for years renewed their familiarity with each other—brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles, and little



ones that we had only heard about.

And then, under the stern command of Twila De Groot (the oldest daughter of our deceased daughter, Sandra), all of our descendants who were present were assembled for a picture at the front of the church (see below).

The whole evening was simply awesome. It made us realize more than ever how blessed we have been as Christians. When we look back at what we were to begin with (two young unbelievers, full of worldly ambitions)—and remember the shock and stress that came when the Lord brought us to conversion (first me, and then Doris four years later)—and then think of the privilege of serving him for sixty years in pastoral ministry, we are really astounded. God has blessed us so very much. To him alone be the praise and glory.

SISTERS EXCEL IN REFORMATION WRITING COMPETITION

Brenda Davis

The Scottish Reformation Society (www.scottishreformationssociety.org) has an annual writing and project competition for students across the Christian world. The winning essays of the older age groups appear in *The Bulwark*, the official magazine of the society. For 2013–2014, Haley Robles, age 13, won first prize in the 13–15 age group for her Magdalen Chapel Essay. Her sister Amanda, age 9, won second prize in the 12 and under competition for her Monarchy Project.



Haley and Amanda Robles

Their parents, Lyle and Joanne Robles, and family are members of Delta Oaks Presbyterian Church (OPC) in Pittsburg (formerly Antioch), California. The girls did all the work themselves at Paideia Academy, a Christian school in Antioch.

For the Magdalen Chapel Essay, entrants were asked to “pretend you are an old Christian who has lived through the times of the persecuted Covenanters.” Haley imagined herself a Covenanter in hiding, hearing the preachers at secret conventicles and having close calls and narrow escapes.

For the Monarchy Project, entrants were asked to “make a time line, or illustrated plaque, of “The Most Notable Events in the Life of John Knox.” Amanda illustrated her time line in watercolor, and then added dimension by building up the paper.

Amanda said the project helped her learn the importance of her religion from brave people like John Knox. Haley learned that much of the Reformation took place in old Scotland and that it helps to explain what we stand for today.



The Williamson clan on G. I. and Doris's 70th anniversary