

NEW HORIZONS

≡ *in the* ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ≡

6 Truth As It Is in Jesus //
by Archibald A. Allison

APRIL 2015

8 Church Membership and
Participation in the Lord's
Supper // *by Brett A. McNeill*

THE TRINITY AND CHRIST'S RESURRECTION

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New Horizons

in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church

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Danny Olinger, general secretary of the Committee on Christian Education, spoke to students on the campus of Westminster Seminary California who are interested in ministry in the OPC at a monthly luncheon hosted by Escondido OPC in Escondido, California.



THE TRINITY AND CHRIST'S RESURRECTION



RYAN M. MCGRAW // Most of us appreciate the sun. We enjoy its warmth as the flowers bloom in spring and turn their faces toward it, as to a faithful and life-giving benefactor. Yet the sun often serves as a backdrop to our day. We do not often actively meditate on how necessary it is to sustain our lives and how greatly it

proclaims God's glory to us (Ps. 19:4–6). One of my fellow elders at First OPC in Sunnyvale, California, is a solar physicist. He spends a great deal of his time studying the glory of the sun, and, as a faithful believer in Christ, he strives to do so to the glory of his Creator. He sees wonders in this part of God's creation that few of us are aware of, even though we all enjoy its benefits.

So it is with the doctrine of the Trinity for most Christians. God's triunity ties together all of the strands of the gospel in the person and work of Jesus Christ, including his resurrection. The Trinity is the tapestry into which the doctrines of the New Testament are woven, and without which our salvation would fall to pieces. However, just as we rarely contemplate the glory of the sun in creation, many believers underappreciate the trinitarian

ROMANS 8:9–11

9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. 10 And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

backdrop of their redemption. We need to bring the Trinity, which often stands in the background of our faith and life as Christians, into the foreground of our Christian experience and worship.

Developing a self-conscious Trinitarian devotion can help us greatly in contemplating the glorious significance

of Christ's resurrection. Romans 8:9–11 teaches us several precious truths about the work of the entire Trinity in connection with Christ's resurrection and in our lives as believers. By his resurrection, Christ lives to his Father by the power of the Spirit. Through his resurrection, believers also live to the Father by the power of the Spirit. This sets the pattern for Christian life and experience, both in this life and in the life to come. Believers live to God by the Spirit because Christ lives to God by the Spirit. They do so in their personal holiness in this life and in the resurrection of the body in the next life.

Our relation to each divine person in verses 9–11 corresponds to the blessings described in verses 12–17, giving us a full picture of how the triune God works both in Christ's resurrection and in ours. The following meditations are

designed to stir up your faith, love, and hope in the Father, who raised his Son from the dead on your behalf, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Indwelling Spirit

The Spirit of God and of Christ dwells in believers by virtue of Christ's resurrection (Rom. 8:9–11a). The apostle Paul presents this as the fundamental reason why we must serve and obey God. While gratitude is the primary motive for our personal holiness, the indwelling of the Spirit of Christ makes our personal holiness possible. If we are believers, then we have been crucified with Christ and have been raised in him to walk in newness of life (Gal. 2:20; Rom. 6:4; Col. 3:1). This is a past action in relation to Christ's resurrection, not a prediction of a future bodily resurrection.

As a result of union with Christ in his resurrection, believers are, Paul says, no longer “in the flesh.” This means that they are no longer driven by the impulses of their sinful nature. For this reason, he exhorts us elsewhere, “Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God” (Rom. 6:13).

Believers live in the Spirit of God, and the Spirit of God lives in them. There is a mutual interpenetration between believers and the Spirit that mimics, in a dim way, the interpenetration of the persons of the Godhead. Christ applied this teaching to our relation to the Father and to the Son as well in John 14–17 (see especially John 14:20, 23; 17:23). The Spirit is the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ. The Father sent the Spirit to dwell in believers through his Son, who purchased the gift of the Spirit for them. In his indwelling presence, the Spirit of God is the life of God manifested in the regenerate soul. This is why Paul says that if we do not have the Spirit of God, then we are “none of his.”

These truths correspond to what Romans 8:13–14 says about the Spirit's

work in mortifying sin. When Christ rose from the dead, he was “justified in the Spirit” (1 Tim. 3:16). The Spirit who declared him righteous now declares believers righteous in Christ because they are united to Christ by faith (Phil. 3:9). But the Father does not only declare us righteous in Christ. The Spirit makes us righteous in practice by conforming us to the image of Christ. Does the Spirit of God who dwelt in Christ dwell in you? Is he directing your life to the Father in obedience to Christ? Obedience is the true mark of the Spirit-filled life.

Christ's Life in Us

Christ dwells in believers and manifests his resurrected life in them (Rom. 8:10). He enables the Spirit of life to dwell in them. The indwelling Spirit makes it possible to love and obey God because he unites us to Christ, who is our life (Col. 3:4). We draw spiritual vitality from Christ as branches draw life and bear fruit from the vine (John 15:1ff.).

The Christian's life in Christ entails death, as well as life. If you are alive in Christ, then “the body is dead because of sin.” Previously you were dead to God and alive to sin (Rom. 7:9, implied). But now, in Christ, you are dead to sin and alive to God (Rom. 6:11). You carry the remnants of sin with you, and they taint everything you do. This is why Question 82 of our Shorter Catechism asserts, “No mere man, since the fall, is able in this life perfectly to keep the commandments of God, but doth daily break them in thought, word, and deed.”

However, the “old man” in you is both dead and dying (Rom. 6:6; Eph. 4:22). This is why Question 35 in the catechism also asserts, “Sanctification is the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness.” The old man died when you were united to Christ and when you were relieved from all condemnation. Yet sin remains, and we must put

to death and put off the old man and his sinful deeds (Col. 3:5).

The indwelling of Christ corresponds to our being joint heirs with Christ in Romans 8:17. Because the resurrected Christ dwells within believers, they are identified with him in his exaltation and partake of his inheritance. This is why Paul refers to our own resurrection in Christ and the accompanying transformation of our world as eagerly awaiting our adoption (Rom. 8:23).

Does the risen Christ dwell in you? Is the life of the Spirit manifested in you by producing righteousness in you? Do you show this by hating sin for Christ's sake? The life of Christ in us should lead us to hate the fact that sin is against God more than we hate the consequences of sin against us. Does the life that is in you through the power of God long and strive for conformity to the resurrected Christ, who is both the source and pattern of that life? The mortification of sin and obedience to God's law are the primary ways that you manifest the life and presence of the glorified Christ in you.

The Father's Grant of Life

The Father grants life to believers on the basis of Christ's resurrection (Rom. 8:11). This verse explicitly mentions all three persons of the Godhead. While the Father's personal name does not appear in the text, Paul refers to the Holy Spirit as “the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead.” Paul indicates that the Father raised Christ from the dead. Similarly, Jesus indicates elsewhere that it is the Father who sends the indwelling Spirit to believers in Christ's name (John 14:26). He sends the Spirit to believers in Christ's name because the Spirit's work in believers is secured by, and grounded on, the finished work of Christ.

It is in light of such truths that Paul argues that he who raised Christ from the dead by the Spirit will raise Christ's people from the dead by the Spirit as well. The same Spirit who breathes spiritual life into our souls at the new

birth will breathe physical life into our “mortal bodies” at the resurrection. We benefit from Christ’s resurrection right now through living godly lives. The resurrection of our bodies at the last day will be the final consummation of the benefits we receive from being united to Christ in his resurrection. Life in Christ now will give way to a perfected life in body and soul in glory.

Our Motive for Holy Living

If verses 9–10 in Romans 8 demonstrate the power of the Spirit of Christ, who enables us to live holy lives, then verse 11 provides us with a motive to live in light of his powerful work in us. This is where gratitude comes into holy living and where verses 9–11 receive their complement in verses 12–17, which read:

12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. **13** For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. **14** For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. **15** For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. **16** The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: **17** And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

The Spirit of him who raised Christ Jesus from the dead (v. 11) corresponds in this passage to the Spirit of adoption dwelling in our hearts, through whom we cry, “Abba, Father” (vv. 15–16). The awareness of adoption that we have in this life in communion with the Spirit will culminate in the full experience and revelation of our adoption in a perfected and resurrected world (vv. 21–23).

Do you not have the highest motives to persevere in a godly life? Does this not furnish you with more than adequate grounds to be assured that if the

Spirit of Christ is in you, and if Christ himself is in you, and if the Father will resurrect you, then you can persevere by faith and obedience in fellowship with God? Truly, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?” (v. 35). Let us persevere joyfully in faith and obedience to Christ, for “he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you” (v. 11).

Celebrating the Resurrection

Not all ministers and churches in the OPC celebrate the holiday known as Easter (myself included among them, in case you are wondering). Leaving off the question of the merits or demerits of observing special days for worship not mandated in Scripture, do we not see that Paul’s teaching on the Trinity in relation to Christ’s resurrection and in relation to the believer highlights the fact that we should not need a holiday to live in light of the resurrection? The power of the triune God in relation to Christ’s resurrection and as applied to us by the Spirit touches every day and every moment of the Christian life, from the new birth to the day of judgment.

We ought to celebrate the resurrection every Lord’s Day, but this should be only the beginning. Even when we remember the Sabbath day, we do so “partly, because of the great benefit of remembering it, we being thereby helped in our preparation to keep it, and, in keeping it, ... better to keep all the rest of the commandments, and to continue a thankful remembrance of the two great benefits of creation and redemption, which contain a short abridgment of religion” (Larger Catechism, Q. 121). Our celebration of the Trinity and of Christ’s resurrection on the Lord’s Day should spill over into living godly lives through faith in Christ’s resurrection, as we look in hope to the perfect and final sanctification of our souls and bodies at the last day.

Just as my friend and fellow elder can better appreciate the benefits of living under the sun because he is a so-

lar physicist, so we as Christians ought better to appreciate and to love Christ’s resurrection as we dwell in communion with the Father, through his Son, by his Spirit.

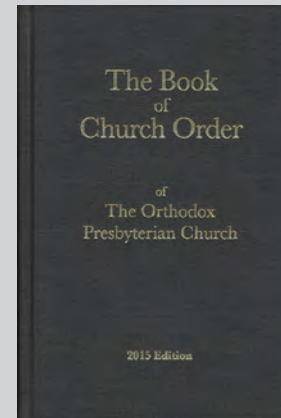
Let us live a holy life to God, by the Spirit, in union with Christ. This is the fruit of Christ’s resurrection and the product of communion with the entire Trinity. □

The author is the pastor of First OPC in Sunnyvale, Calif. His Bible quotations come from the KJV.



BCO 2015

The 2015 edition of *The Book of Church Order* is now available. BCO 2015 includes all revisions effective January 1, 2015. It features a new preface, two changes to the Form of Government, and a few corrections. It will be up to date until 2020.



Every officer in the OPC should have a copy of *The Book of Church Order*. It contains our standards of government, discipline, and worship—together with other useful documents.

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TRUTH AS IT IS IN JESUS



ARCHIBALD A. ALLISON // After describing the ungodly in Ephesians 4:17–19, the apostle Paul suddenly exclaims in verse 20, “But you have not so learned Christ.” Then in the subsequent verses he vividly describes the tremendous contrast between believers and unbelievers.

The ungodly walk in sinful and wicked lusts, in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, and being alienated from the life of God, because of ignorance and the blindness of their heart.

Those who learn Christ should live differently. The doctrine of Christ in Scripture teaches us to renounce the sinful desires and inclinations of our fallen nature. If our lives are not different, we have not learned Christ. Knowing Christ means putting to death our sin.

God reproves the fleeting knowledge of the gospel that vainly fills many people whom the Holy Spirit has not made alive. Knowledge of Christ that does not produce dying to sin and godly living is neither true nor sincere. Knowledge of doctrine that does not produce godliness is of the devil, who appears as an angel of light, eager to interest us in doctrine if it does not make us godly, but proud and unloving.

If an increasing knowledge of doctrine does not produce an increasing knowledge of Christ himself and

conform us more to Christ, something is terribly wrong.

In verse 21, Paul explains what he means by *learning Christ*. We know truth as it is in Jesus. Truth is only in him. Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6). In Christ are “hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col. 2:3). All truth is in Jesus. There is no truth apart from him.

Unlike the ungodly, we have learned truth, which is in Jesus alone. God forbid that we should ever separate doctrine and knowledge of the truth from the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. God forbid that we should ever become theoretical and detached, and forget that salvation has come in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Deliverance from Sin

Jesus Christ delivers you from the bondage of sin. He changes your whole condition and your whole life. The Holy Spirit takes you from the vanity of the world, joins you to Christ and his

church, and makes you God’s child and an heir of everlasting life and glory.

If you know truth as it is in Jesus, you cannot continue living like the ungodly. It is ridiculous to say, “I can be justified without being sanctified. I can believe in Christ and be saved without holy living.” Knowing Christ must lead to holiness and godliness.

To know truth as it is in Jesus means that you know the historic person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. You rest in him and his work to save you from your sins. You know and believe that Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God, our Lord, who was born of the virgin Mary. He suffered in your place all the wrath of God due to your sins, for which you would have otherwise suffered in hell for all eternity. He died, was buried, rose from the dead on the third day, ascended into heaven, is sitting at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, and shall come to judge the living and the dead.

The historical person of Jesus is truth. The historical work of Jesus to redeem us from our sins is truth. The

historical word of Jesus, written in the Bible, is truth. If we lose any of these, we lose truth as it is in Jesus. We lose salvation. We lose everything. Peter says of Jesus, “Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

Knowing Truth

Do you believe the truth about the Lord Jesus Christ revealed in the Bible, or the false teaching that you can be saved and still live an ungodly life? Ungodly men in the church “turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ” (Jude 4). The truth as it is in Jesus is that salvation always leads to godly living. Your daily life as a believer must correspond with truth as it is in Jesus. Everything about Christ leads to holiness.

The apostle John writes that Christ came to declare or reveal or expound the Father. Christ came to bear witness to the truth. What is that truth? Jesus taught us to pray, “Our Father in heaven, *hallowed be Your name.*” Just mentioning God’s name teaches holiness. Therefore, we come humbly and reverently into the holy presence of our holy God in prayer and worship.

The Lord’s Prayer continues: “Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” God is holy. His kingdom is coming and shall have no end. His will is being done on earth as he subdues his people to himself. Jesus is holy. Born of Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit, he is sinless and holy to the Lord. You cannot mention Jesus’ name without realizing that he directs you to holiness, righteousness, and new life in him. You cannot preach Christ without preaching holiness and righteousness. You can have peace, happiness, and comfort only by trusting in Christ and learning to love holiness and righteousness and hate lawlessness as Jesus does.

In the beatitudes, Jesus begins with repentance: “Blessed are the poor in spirit.... Blessed are those who mourn.”

(Matt. 5:3–4). Blessed are those who realize how spiritually weak and helpless they are. Blessed are those who mourn over their sin. “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.... Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God” (5:6, 8). Jesus is not interested in religion that is only outward, superficial, on the lips, while the heart is far from God. Jesus says, in effect, “Give me your heart.” He knows the deepest secrets and darkest recesses of your heart.

We need to know Christ, so that the truth that is in Christ will be revealed to us, embodied in us, and lived out by us. *Truth as it is in Jesus* means we put every lie far from us and banish all guile, deceit, dishonesty, and hypocrisy. We become pure, simple, true, transparent, candid, honest, and upright. We become Christlike men, women, and children.

Two Necessary Things

Two things are necessary in order to know truth as it is in Jesus. First, we must hear Christ. The Corinthians heard Paul, as the ambassador of Christ, preach the gospel to them, imploring them on Christ’s behalf, “Be reconciled to God” (2 Cor. 5:20). Hearing Christ means hearing the gospel of Christ.

Listening is not the same thing as truly hearing. The Lord opened Lydia’s heart to heed the things spoken by Paul (Acts 16:14). You can listen to the preaching of the gospel and read the Scriptures without hearing Christ. To hear Christ is to have the anointing of the Holy Spirit, so that you understand the things of God and they transform your heart, mind, and person.

You realize that God’s truth is the most important thing. You let everything else go, rather than God’s truth. You are willing to give up everything to know Christ and have eternal life. “But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them

as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him” (Phil. 3:7–9). Christ and his word become the chief things in your life. They govern and control you. You surrender yourself to them. You live to obey Christ and the gospel.

Second, in order to know truth as it is in Jesus, we must be taught by Christ. The Holy Spirit subdues our hearts to Christ. He replaces our heart of stone that will not learn Christ with a heart of flesh that is tender, obedient, and malleable, so that we learn to know, believe, and obey Christ, live by every word that comes from his mouth, and observe all that he has commanded. This is the result of the Spirit of God dwelling in us and transforming us by renewing our minds and feeding our souls with the bread from heaven. If we are taught by Christ, we cannot continue living as ungodly and worldly people do, because we humble ourselves before God, repent of our sins, surrender to Christ, and live according to his word.

You never know Christ merely by hearing men speak of him. You must hear Christ himself! Jesus said, “My sheep hear my voice.” They not only hear the voice of the under-shepherd, but hear the voice of the Chief Shepherd, who laid down his life for them! You will never know Christ unless you hear him speaking personally to you in the words of Scripture as they are applied by the Holy Spirit. Scripture is the very word of the living Christ, spoken afresh to you each time you read it. You can only know Christ as the Spirit causes the printed letter to be the voice of Christ himself to you.

To learn more of Christ, you must be in fellowship with him and live with him. He must be your choice companion from morning to night. When you awake at night, you say, “I am still with you.” You can only learn Christ through humility worked by the Spirit in your heart, so that you sit at the feet of Christ, ready to hear him and be taught by him as truth is in Jesus. □

The author is the pastor of Emmaus OPC in Fort Collins, Colo. He quotes the NKJV.

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION IN THE LORD'S SUPPER



BRETT A. McNEILL // You may wonder why we in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church believe that a person must be a member in good standing in a Bible-believing, evangelical church before he or she may partake of the Lord's Supper. That's a good question, and one that I've been asked many times. Our practice strikes many

people as new and unusual because the more common practice in North American churches is to leave the decision whether to participate up to each individual.

Why then do we require people to be members in a local church before they may come to the Lord's Table? In a nutshell, we believe that is what God requires. That may seem to be a bold claim, so let me try briefly to defend it. If this answer is a bit long, I apologize, but a good question deserves a good answer.

Christians and the Local Church

First of all, consider that membership in a local church is a necessary part of scriptural Christian living. In Hebrews 13:17, God commands, "Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you." This command is not describing some vague sort of relationship. It is describing a relationship

that is clear-cut both to the sheep and to the shepherds.

It is this clear-cut relationship that enables a Christian to be a good sheep. How can a Christian obey this command unless he or she knows exactly which leaders watch over his or her soul as those who must give an account?

It is this clear-cut relationship that enables a leader to be a good shepherd. A good shepherd must be like the Good Shepherd and know his sheep by name (John 10:3). He must be able to number them, so that he can see when one is missing, in order that he might lovingly pursue that wandering sheep (Matt. 18:12; Luke 15:4; cf. Acts 20:28).

And it is this clear-cut relationship that helps to protect the sheep from the Evil One. A sheep that gets separated from the flock is in grave danger.

The Supper and the Local Church

God's Word not only binds Christian living to the visible local church, but also binds the Lord's Supper to the visible local church. 1 Corinthians 11 may well be the best known and

clearest passage that gives instructions on the Lord's Supper. Many, however, tend to skim over the beginning of that passage. Paul begins his treatment of the Supper by saying, "But in the following instructions I do not commend you, because when you come together it is not for the better but for the worse. For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you. And I believe it in part, for there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognized. When you come together, it is not the Lord's supper that you eat" (vv. 17–20).

We could say a lot about these few verses, but for now notice especially how Paul says that when the church gathers for worship, it is necessary for there to be a visible identification of those who are "genuine" and those who are not. The word "genuine" has lost much of its significance in modern parlance, but it means "tested, approved, or certified by an authority." Paul is saying that one big reason why the Lord's Supper exists is to make clear who it is who has been

certified by those in authority. In other words, a big reason why the Lord's Supper exists is to visibly manifest those whom the elders deem to have a credible profession of faith.

The problem with the believers in the church at Corinth was that they were using the Supper to distinguish between those who were rich and those who were poor, rather than those who were formally recognized to be genuine and those who were not. To be sure, the passage does go on to say that the individual must also examine himself (v. 28), and he *must* certainly do so, but we must not take that out of context by overlooking how this passage begins. The Lord intends for his Supper to manifest those who have been approved by the leaders of a true church to be credibly professing believers.

The Supper and Discipline

In that light, notice how God's Word closely ties the Lord's Supper to church discipline. Matthew 18:15–20 lays out the process of church discipline for us. If a professing Christian is believed to be in sin, the brother or sister who has an issue with that believer is first to go privately to that person and plead for repentance (v. 15). If that believer will not listen, then the one with the issue is to return with one or two witnesses (v. 16). But if that person still won't listen, the matter is to be taken to the church (v. 17). The question, however, is, "Which church?" The only reasonable answer is the church to which that person is accountable.

The consequence for not listening to the church is to be treated like a Gentile or a tax collector (v. 17)—or, as 1 Corinthians 5:9–13 puts it, to refuse to eat (the Lord's Supper) with such a person. We are not subject to the decree or discipline of every local church, but only to the decree or discipline of the church to which we are in submission (i.e., of those leaders who watch over our soul). It should be a great comfort to each of us to know that the Arminian church down the street does not have the authority to excommunicate us.



Brett McNeill administering the Lord's Supper at Reformation OPC in Olympia, Wash.

This, however, also means that every believer who comes to the Lord's Table must have a church that can make such a pronouncement. There must be a way to follow this process outlined in Matthew 18, or else that person is beyond the discipline of the Lord and can only remove himself or herself from the Lord's Table. But the Bible does not allow that option.

To summarize: God says that each follower of Christ must be in some sort of official submission to leaders (where both parties have agreed to the relationship), must have been approved by the leadership of a local church in order to participate in the Lord's Supper, and must be currently under the accountability of a church, so that discipline can be followed if needed (in accord with what the Lord instructs in his Word).

Churches of varying denominations held to this understanding and practice for centuries. Sadly, this view has gradually faded until it has all but disappeared from the church in our day. It is so much easier for churches just to leave it up to the individual. We know the temptation all too well—even having seen folks get upset and leave over this very issue.

But the deciding factor is not what is easier. We are bound by conscience to submit to what we are persuaded is God's clear teaching in Scripture. We know that our practice goes against the

grain of the common practice of most modern churches. That makes it all the more challenging, not only for us to adhere to it, but also for many to submit to it. It takes a firm trust in the Lord to submit to this, while waiting to go through the membership process.

If you are waiting to be received into the membership of a local church, I pray that the Lord will sufficiently strengthen you during this time. He is our comfort and our strength, and he promises to be with us in the midst of hard times. □

The author is the pastor of Reformation OPC in Olympia, Wash.



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WHAT'S THE REAL DANGER IN HAITI?

// BENJAMIN K. HOPP

The apostle Paul says that he is “in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers” (2 Cor. 11:26).

As a missionary in an underdeveloped country, I find it difficult at times not to think about the dangers. We experience them every day in Haiti. Some dangers are visible. Some dangers are not. But each of the dangers we encounter is real. As I reflect on my primary work as a preacher of the good news of Jesus Christ in the midst of these dangers, it brings me back to this question: what's the real danger?

The physical dangers of life in Haiti often take center stage. Traveling on the road poses the most danger. We encounter overloaded trucks with wobbly tires on the highway. *Tap-taps* (small pickup trucks used as public transportation) drive at night without headlights or taillights. Motorcycles crisscross the roads, picking up and dropping off passengers. People and loose cows, horses, goats, and dogs meander across the road. But little concern is given by the police to these everyday dangers.

So imagine my surprise when I was stopped by the police on our way to the airport last year. We were turning left at the airport intersection to check in for a flight. A police officer made a vague hand signal. Was he telling me to stop? I assumed he didn't need me to stop as I had done nothing illegal. But I was wrong! He jumped on a motorcycle and followed us a short distance to the airport. While Heather checked everyone in, I was required to return to the corner to talk with the police.

After thirty minutes of discussions with two officers, it was finally revealed that I was pulled over because the officer had seen a child in the front seat of the truck. The truck has three seats and three seat belts in the front. Didn't I watch TV?



A fully loaded tap-tap on a road in Haiti

he asked me. Didn't I see the new campaign warning against children traveling in the front seats of vehicles? Yes, except that was for people holding babies on their lap in the front. But Emma, whom the officer saw in the front seat, is nearly a teenager. She was wearing a seat belt. Finally, the officers realized I had broken no laws and let me go. By God's grace, I even made the flight.

Real dangers do abound in Haiti. People die in accidents because they are not wearing seat belts. People sit on top of buses flying down the highway at seventy miles per hour. I meet *tap-taps* that are accidents waiting to happen. A blown tire could easily result in a whole truckload swerving into the ditch. Overloading vehicles and boats with cargo and people can have devastating consequences. Over nineteen people lost their lives a few years ago because the boat they were on was overloaded. It split in two and sank in the middle of the Gulf of Gonave channel.

The reality is that many dangers are overlooked because people are straining out a gnat while swallowing a camel. A fellow missionary here shared this story. He was in Port-au-Prince running some errands on his motorbike. He left home in a rush and had mistakenly grabbed his wife's keys, not realizing that her pepper spray was attached to the key ring. Pepper spray sounds like prudence in a chaotic, sometimes lawless, city like Port-au-Prince. But here is what happened.

He came up to a police checkpoint and was stopped. The

police asked for his license and registration. Then one of the officers noticed the small, red canister on his key ring. When he told the officer it was pepper spray, he was asked for the authorization papers to carry this “weapon of mass destruction.” The police escorted the missionary to the station for interrogation because he was carrying this dangerous weapon, which, by the way, he had purchased at his local corner store. After a considerable detention, he was finally released with the pepper spray in hand—as long as he kept it in his pocket!

A gnat for a camel? No doubt, pepper spray is dangerous. But does an individual carrying pepper spray for personal safety pose a real threat? Or are more significant risks posed by the country’s political instability, gangs running drugs, and the many tropical diseases endemic to the island?

In the verse quoted from 2 Corinthians 11 above, Paul uses the word *danger* eight times. He acknowledges the real dangers on the path of life that God has set before him. But, in Paul’s mind, are the dangers of shipwreck and stoning actually the most dangerous? Eight years of living in Haiti have shown us, like Paul, that the true danger we face is a spiritual one. What’s the real danger? It’s something you usually cannot see with your eyes.

During the first five years of living in Kaliko Beach, we got to know our Haitian neighbors well. Our children played together, we celebrated birthdays, and we helped them in small ways. One day, we caught them stealing building materials from our property. Our five-year relationship was fractured. Their anger toward us was growing, but we continued to pray for them.

On a return trip from the island of La Gonave, we discovered a piece of paper with powder in it placed in front of our gate. We realized this had to be magic powder used by *vodou* (voodoo) practitioners to place a curse on people. Our neighbors, closely connected by family relationships to the

local witch doctor, were threatening us with death. In spite of their confidence in the *vodou* spirits to bring us harm, they did not realize the spiritual danger they were under. *Vodou* brings only death, but Christ brings life.

We under-



Ben Hopp with newly baptized members of the Nan Mangot congregation on La Gonave

stand that Christians are never in real danger from false religions and their gods. We continue to pray for our neighbors, who live in the darkness of sin. After our discovery of the magic powder in front of our gate, we “returned” it to them. Soon, the whole distraught clan was congregating in front of our gate. By their wide eyes, we could tell they were petrified by their own powder. They feared that they would be cursed instead of us. They even called the local judge to come and lecture us about the dangers of magic powder because we had put it back in front of their property.

This incident highlighted for us the nature of the spiritual dangers for people in Haiti. For those without true faith, dabbling with false spirits is dangerous. For true Christians, we have nothing to fear from this magic powder and its supposed ability to kill. The true danger lies not in the powder, but in rejecting the grace of God shown in the gospel. This spiritual danger is something of which many in Haiti are ignorant. They do not realize that by serving false gods they fall under the judgment of God. This is why we live in Haiti and preach the gospel of peace. When we have peace with God, no danger can separate us from the love of Christ.



Ben Hopp teaching church leaders in Haiti

What’s New

// Comings/Goings

Missionary associate **Miss Amanda L. McCrina** (Covenant OPC, LaGrange, Ga.) returned to the U.S. on March 12, after serving for one year in Sendai, Japan.

Missionary associate **Miss Allison R. Zylstra** (Grace Reformed Church, OPC, Walkerton, Ind.) has concluded three months of service in Montevideo, Uruguay, and returned to the U.S.

MAKING THE GOSPEL CLEAR (PART 2)

// JEREMIAH MONTGOMERY



Jeremiah Montgomery (at the left) seeking to engage Penn State students with the gospel, with his assistant doing the same at the right

When my children were young, one of the books that we enjoyed together was Doreen Cronin's *Duck for President*. As the title suggests, the story is about a duck who got tired of farm life and decided to run for political office. As Duck campaigns, the narrator tells us that "he gave speeches that only other ducks could understand."

In its own amusing way, this story raises a real problem. What happens when any person or group begins to communicate in ways that are intelligible only to the like-minded or their own members? They forfeit the opportunity to connect in any meaningful way with outsiders.

Meaningful connection in gospel communication is the subject of these articles. In Part 1, we observed that the culture around us no longer takes its moral or spiritual assumptions from the teachings of Christianity. Consequently, we are faced with a tremendous challenge: how do we make the gospel clear to people whose notions of biblical truth are either completely lacking or seriously flawed?

As a preliminary step in answering this question, we



Jeremiah Montgomery "discussing your faith" at Penn State

looked at how the Protestant Reformers dealt with similar challenges in their own day. In addition to Bible translation, we saw that the Reformers crafted confessions and catechisms that articulated the teachings of Scripture using *clear definitions* and *real-life connections*. We concluded that clarity of communication is an integral part of our Reformed heritage.

But is such clarity an integral part of our identity today in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church? When we speak to non-Christians, or when they read our literature or surf our websites, does our content connect? When they listen to our preaching, do they hear an intelligible presentation of the gospel, even if they ultimately scoff? In short: is the Orthodox Presbyterian Church known for *making the gospel clear* or do we tend to communicate in ways "that only other ducks could understand"?

It's not just non-Christians who may struggle to understand our message. Early on in my ministry in State College, a serious believer from a non-Reformed tradition pointed out to me that while all branches of the church use a certain amount of "Christianese," Presbyterians seem to have a special love for technical terminology!

If we are willing to be honest and constructively self-critical, I believe we will find that this observation holds true. So what should be done?

The solution is *not* to sacrifice theological precision. Biblical distinctions are important. The differences between "inerrant" and "infallible," between "justification" and "sanctification," and between "temporal" and "eschatological" are all very important—and should be utilized in our ministry. Words like "covenant" and phrases such as "the means of grace" belong in our vocabularies. Yet we must recognize that *precise terms mean precisely nothing unless people understand precisely what they mean*. Theological precision is intended to make things clear, not make them more abstract.

Our own Reformed heritage shows us a better way than theological fuzziness. Rather than *discard* theological terms,

we should *define* them. There is nothing wrong with using a precise, complex term, so long as we always couple it with a concise, simple definition. When we speak of “the covenant of grace,” we can immediately explain it as “God’s rescue plan.” When we teach on “the means of grace,” why not briefly remind our listeners that these are “the ways God works in us”? Even such an ominous-sounding expression as “the regulative principle of worship” becomes accessible when we explain that it simply means that “God tells us how to worship him.” Good definitions go a long way toward making the gospel clear.

Beyond definitions, we can again follow our Reformed heritage and labor to make *real-life connections*. In addition to being clear with others about *what we mean*, we should show them *why it matters*. Martyn Lloyd-Jones has said it well:

You have to show that this is not some academic or theoretical matter which may be of interest to people who take up that particular hobby, as others take up crossword puzzles or something of that type. You are to show that this message is vitally important for them, and they must listen with the whole of their being, because this really is going to help them to live. (*Preaching and Preachers*, p. 76)

How do we put these things together in practice?

As a first step, let me suggest that we all learn to share what we might call a “today” testimony. How would we answer if a stranger asked us, “What does Jesus mean to you today?” Let us learn to answer that question clearly—without resorting to any special terminology—and you will learn to make the gospel clear, both to yourself and others.

Beyond this, I regularly ask myself to consider how I would explain a Bible text to three distinct groups. First, how would I explain it to *kids*? This has proven immensely helpful in forcing me to use clear definitions. Second, how would I explain it to *skeptics*? How can I show respect for their objections, while challenging the underlying assumptions? Third, how would I explain it to *pagans*? Here I try to imagine what it would be like to be a missionary in the Dark Ages. How would I explain the gospel to a Viking? (This may seem far-fetched to some, but I have actually met a person in State College who professes to follow Norse pagan religion.)

Clarity of *confession* is part of who we are in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. May the Lord preserve this, while adding to us increasing clarity of *communication*. Who Jesus is, what he did to rescue us, and how we must respond is far too important a matter *not* to make clear.

The author is the pastor of Resurrection OPC in State College, Pa.

☆ Congratulations

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

• **Enoch Wang**, Providence OPC, Temecula, CA

ABCs of PRESBYTERIANISM

Guidance from the Lord (2)

Larry Wilson

If the Head of the church guides his people to discern whom he has chosen for church office, then how does he do it?

Remember what the apostle Paul said to the elders at Ephesus: “The Holy Spirit has made you overseers” (Acts 20:28). The true vicar of Christ, the Holy Spirit, guides the church. How? By using the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God.

We see an example of the Holy Spirit guiding the church to the officers of the Lord’s choice in Acts 6. Likewise today the Holy Spirit, speaking through God’s Word, guides the people of the church to recognize and choose the officers of Christ’s choice.

So, in light of God’s mercies in Christ, in light of your faith in God acting for you by the work of Jesus and your faith in God acting in you by the work of the Holy Spirit, “present your bodies as a living sacrifice” and “be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect” (Rom. 12:1–2).

As God’s people seek their Lord in faith, following him in submission to his Word, he gives them discernment concerning his will. He does so by enabling the people in the congregation to recognize the gifts and qualifications that he gives to certain men.

He guides his people by specifying what those who bear office are to be like. For one thing, he says that these leaders are to be male (1 Tim. 2:8–15; 1 Cor. 11:2–16; 14:33b–38). He spells out the qualifications for overseers (elders) in 1 Timothy 3:1–7 (compare Titus 1:5–9) and deacons in 1 Timothy 3:8–13 (compare Acts 6:3).

God’s Word teaches the assembly of God’s people prayerfully to examine the qualifications of men for office, looking especially for mature, godly character, gifts, and ability to lead. In this way, our Lord himself guides his people to select the leaders of his choice.

● Out of the Mouth . . .

Giving an example of idolatry to our boys, my husband, Josh, said it would be sinful for him to cut down a tree and carve it into a cow to worship. Later our son Titus prayed, “Dear God, please help Daddy not to cut down a tree, so that he doesn’t have a cow.”

—Kristen Stedman
Stoughton, Wisc.

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

GRATITUDE AND CELEBRATION IN MELROSE

// RICHARD R. GERBER



People of Igreja Presbiteriana Brasileira em Melrose taking vows during the service of organization

On January 25, the people of Igreja Presbiteriana Brasileira em Melrose (IPB Melrose), together with presbyters and friends from New York and New England, gathered to worship God on the occasion of the mission work being organized as a new and separate congregation of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

IPB Melrose is a congregation of Brazilian-Americans in Massachusetts. So Portuguese and English were the languages used in the service. All spoken words were immediately translated into the other language. The people sang in both languages. Organizational services are normally long. With everything being said twice, this service was two and a half hours long. But no one complained. Throughout the preaching, charges, praying, singing, ordinations, and installations, gratitude and celebration prevailed. God has done a wonderful work in establishing IPB Melrose, and that work continues.

In 2006, sixteen Brazilian-Americans approached the Presbytery of New York and New England, seeking to be received as a Portuguese-speaking mission work. In April 2007, Pastor Roberto Laranjo, a minister of the Presbyterian Church of Brazil, together with his wife and two daughters, emigrated from Brazil at the invitation of the

people and the presbytery to serve the mission work. The work proceeded in earnest in Lowell, Massachusetts.

He diligently cared for the flock and ministered God's Word faithfully. He also applied himself to become more fluent in English, so that he could function in his new English-speaking presbytery. Even as he and his family were getting acclimated to the United States, he often counseled people in the flock facing challenges in getting used to a new home and a new culture.

His wife, Marieta, worked as a certified nursing assistant. To meet the financial challenges, Roberto started his own cleaning company. This allowed him to work nights, giving him time for studying and shepherding. His daughters often worked in the cleaning company with him.

The mission work had its ups and downs. People came and went. Some returned to Brazil. Others moved to other places in the U.S. Only two of the original sixteen are still part of the congregation. At the organizational service, they were recognized for their faithful service over the years.

Through all the departures, the Lord preserved the congregation and helped it develop. The body is still small. The membership consists of twenty-four communicant members and ten covenant children. Worship attendance averages forty.

In late 2013, the congregation moved



IPB Melrose officers (from the left): ruling elders Antonio Assis and Celio Rezende; deacons Romildo Da Silva and Israel Assis

about a half-hour drive from Lowell to Melrose. After looking at forty-five possible meeting sites in this more promising area, IPB began to meet in the building of a Church of the Nazarene congregation. This congregation and its pastors have welcomed IPB warmly. In this new location, more visitors have been attending worship.

A key aspect of the church's development is God's provision of able officers. In addition to Pastor Laranjo, there are now two ruling elders and two deacons. In the organizational service, there was much praise and gratitude to God for his faithfulness in establishing this new congregation.

The congregation is gaining in financial stability. Pastor Laranjo has been able to reduce his cleaning hours.

IPB Melrose expressed its gratitude to two presbyters who had served with Pastor Laranjo as the overseeing session—Dr. Carlos Pereira, a Portuguese-speaking ruling elder at the Presbyterian Church of Cape Cod (OPC) in West Barnstable, and Rev. Greg Hills, lead pastor of First Presbyterian Church, North Shore (OPC) in Ipswich. These men provided invaluable service over the years.

Representatives of the Presbytery who participated in the service included: Rev. Paul Anderson (who preached), Rev. Mark Marquis (who moderated), Rev. Hills (who charged the officers), and Rev. David Holmlund (who charged the congregation). The fellowship and celebration continued after worship over a scrumptious roast beef dinner.

Please keep praying for the continued development and faithfulness of Igreja Presbiteriana Brasileira em Melrose.

OPPORTUNITIES IN PUERTO RICO

John S. Shaw

Warm sea breezes, swaying palm trees—it's hard to imagine as our temperatures dip below zero in Pennsylvania, but this is Puerto Rico at any time of year. Even better than beautiful scenery and tropical warmth, doors of opportunity for the Orthodox Presbyterian Church are being opened by the Lord in Puerto Rico.

In 2006, the Presbytery of New Jersey received Milton Villanueva as an evangelist to serve at a mission work in San Juan. That congregation now meets in their own building. It is a joyful congregation with a special opportunity to teach the gospel to young children in several surrounding neigh-

borhoods. What a blessing it was to hear the cheerful voices of those children singing with the congregation on the Lord's Day.

In 2008, the Presbytery of New Jersey received Carlos Cruz as an evangelist to serve at another mission work in San Juan. That congregation now meets in their own building, as well, as the Lord continues to bless them with growth. Many young singles and married couples have been added to their number. This congregation also supports a mission work of the Pres-



Old San Juan, Puerto Rico

bytery that meets in Ponce, on the southern coast of the island.

Early in his ministry in the OPC, Rev. Villanueva expressed a desire to obtain training for officers in Puerto Rico, something along the lines of the Ministerial Training Institute (MTIOPC) courses. This January that desire became reality.

On January 15–17, Professor Alan Strange of Mid-America Reformed Seminary provided instruction concerning the Form of Government. Dr. Strange has taught similar courses at the seminary and for MTIOPC, and he adapted that material to meet the needs of these particular congregations. Miguel Flower, a local elder, served skillfully as a translator. When the technical language proved difficult, he had many able assistants in the class.

More than forty people participated in the classes, including all of the OP elders and deacons in Puerto Rico. Both congregations took turns hosting the classes, providing warm hospitality and wonderful food with joy. They communicated clearly—by their words, by their fellowship, and by their careful attention to the teaching of the Word—a commitment to vibrant church life as the people of God.

On Sunday, both Rev. Strange and I enjoyed the privilege of proclaiming the Word of God in the San Juan congregations. We also worshipped with the church plant in Ponce. The Lord has abundantly provided for these congregations with growth in numbers and maturity. He continues to provide contacts with groups meeting in other communities throughout the island. These locations may provide the opportunity for more new works in Puerto Rico.

Pray for our brothers and sisters in Puerto Rico: that the Lord would gather more into the fold, that he would continue to raise up officers, and that the opportunity for kingdom work would continue to grow. If you pass through the island on vacation, take the time to meet some of our friends. You will be encouraged by their love for God and for his church.

Home Missions Today

For up-to-date Home Missions news and prayer updates, e-mail HomeMissionsToday@opc.org.
New editions: April 8, 22.

PRIVATE INVESTMENTS

// TIMOTHY H. GREGSON

In Matthew 6:3–4, Jesus says, “Do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly” (NKJV). Jesus is teaching us to make our gifts and offerings a private investment, a transaction between us and God alone. In contrast to this, our Lord pointed out the hypocrites in the synagogue, because they wanted to be noticed by other men for their generosity, even going so far as to sound a trumpet to gather attention.

Of course, there are many ways of trying to be noticed by others that are less ostentatious. Certainly in a worship setting, people are not looking to see how much money we put in the offering plate. Yet the public setting itself calls for conformity to expressed (or unexpressed) expectations. Nearly everybody puts something in the offering plate. But how about in a private setting? Would we feel equally inclined at home to send an anonymous charitable gift to someone in need, or support a church cause simply because we know that on this occasion our contribution would please God? The question we should be asking ourselves is, Am I not satisfied in giving unless someone knows about it?

Yet it is not enough to avoid the praise of others. Jesus also says we must avoid all praise from oneself. If it is the *right hand* that extends the gift, the *left hand* must not be apprised of the deed (v. 3). It is possible to turn an act of mercy into an act of vanity, even while keeping others from knowing about it.

The value of an action is determined by our motive behind it. For instance, to give in order that we may be appreciated by others is simply to gratify our pride. Or to give to the poor simply because it is customary is merely

an expression of common humanity. But if I contribute to a ministry or need so as to call no attention to myself, but only to God’s great grace, then I am moved by love for God. “He who has pity on the poor lends to the LORD” (Prov. 19:17).

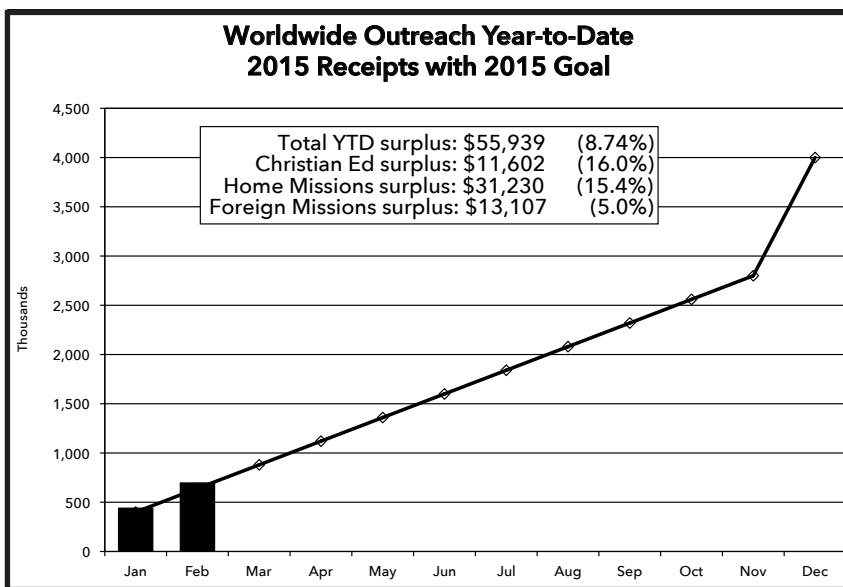
This is the way of Christ, who lived in a spirit of uncalculating generosity and mercy, even to the point of giving his life for our salvation. Although he explained to his disciples why he came, his gift was a personal matter—a covenant—between himself and his Father alone.

Now here is the remarkable result of making private investments with God. When we are moved by such a conviction, our giving itself tends to be more selfless and generous. The Macedonian Christians demonstrated the difference it makes. They actually gave more than Paul had expected, in spite of their poverty and trials. Where did the Macedonians come up with this sacrificial spirit? Second Corinthians 8:5 says, “They first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God.”

Whatever our assets may be, when our hearts are moved by a personal interest in the glory of God, even the crumbs we have gathered under the table have a place in God’s storehouse; for he is able to “multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness” (2 Cor. 9:10).

We have many opportunities to make private investments: personal gifts of mercy, church offerings (general and benevolence), and contributions to Worldwide Outreach, which support the ministries of Christian Education, Home Missions, and Foreign Missions. When these private investments are offered to God, he multiplies them into a worldwide outreach.

The author is pastor of Covenant Presby. Ch. in Amsterdam, N.Y.



APRIL

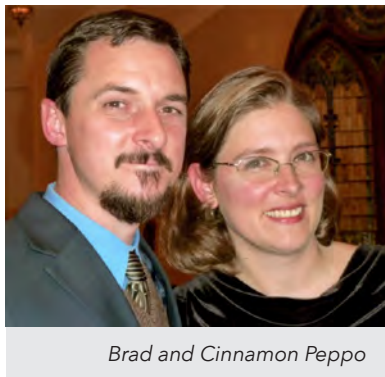
1. **Woody and Laurie Lauer**, Numazu, Japan. Pray that the Lord would provide faithful men for the offices of elder and deacon at Numazu Chapel. / **Carlos and Diana Cruz**, Ponce, P.R. Pray for the development of Misi3n de Ponce, OPC. / Air Force chaplain **C. Phillip (and Melanie) Hollstein III**.
2. **Brian and Sara Chang**, Cottonwood, Ariz. Pray for new local growth at Verde Valley Reformed Chapel. / Pray for **Cal and Edie Cummings**, Sendai, Japan, who will be on home leave through June before returning to the field for a final four months. / **Roberto (and Irma) Qui3ones**, yearlong intern at Primera Iglesia Presbiteriana in San Juan, P.R.
3. **Kaz and Katie Yaegashi**, Yamagata, Japan. Pray that seekers at Yamagata Chapel will be brought to profess their faith in Christ. / **Jonathan and Kristin Moersch**, Capistrano Beach, Calif. Give thanks for recent growth at Trinity Presbyterian Church. / **Matthew (and Trina) Patton**, yearlong intern at Bethel Presbyterian Church in Wheaton, Ill.
4. **Bill and Sessie Welzien**, Key West, Fla. Pray that the Lord would add more people to Keys Presbyterian Church. / Pray for affiliated missionaries **Craig and Ree Coulbourne**, Urayasu, Japan, returning to the U.S. later this month for a six-month home assignment. / Air Force chaplain **Cornelius (and Deidre) Johnson**.
5. **Mark and Jeni Richline**, Montevideo, Uruguay. Pray that God would guide and equip them for their ministry. / **Eric and Donna Hausler**, Naples, Fla. Pray that the Lord would bring more families to Christ the King Presbyterian Church. / **Pat Clawson**, *New Horizons* editorial assistant and CCE secretary.
6. **Ron and Carol Beabout**, Gaithersburg, Md. Pray for the continued growth and spiritual development of the congregation of Trinity Reformed Church. / **Ray and Michele Call**, Montevideo, Uruguay. Pray for their efforts to witness for Christ in their community. / **Alan Strange**, chairman of the Psalter-Hymnal Committee.
7. Pray for Foreign Missions general secretary **Mark Bube** as he speaks at the Missionary Training Institute in Korea this week. / **Jim and Bonnie Hoekstra**, Andover, Minn. Pray for Immanuel OPC as it moves from a morning to an afternoon worship service. / **Jeffrey (and Maryfrances) Carter**, yearlong intern at Calvary OPC in Glenside, Pa.
8. **Joshua and Jessica Lyon**, Carson, Calif. Pray that visitors to Grace OPC will desire to join in communicant fellowship. / Pray for Foreign Missions associate general secretary **Douglas Clawson**, in Haiti to assist with the training of church leaders. / Pray for Short-Term Missions Coordinator **David Nakhla** as he visits the Lord's works in several places in Asia until April 21.
9. Foreign Missions administrative assistant **Linda Posthuma** and secretary **Abigail Yates**. / **Tony and Mica Garbarino**, Morgan Hill, Calif. Pray for Providence Presbyterian Church as they seek to bring people under the ministry of God's Word. / **Jim Scott**, *New Horizons* managing editor and CCE publications coordinator.
10. **Joseph and Carla Fowler**, Gastonia, N.C. Pray for the continued growth and spiritual development of the congregation of Reformation OPC. / **Heero and Anya Hacquebord**, L'viv, Ukraine. Pray that the church in L'viv will continue to grow as God's Word is faithfully preached. / **Charlene Tipton**, database administrator.
11. **Mr. and Mrs. M.**, Asia (on furlough). Pray for Mr. M. as he speaks to churches in the Presbytery of the South during the next week. / Home Missions general secretary **John Shaw**. / **Robert (and Adelinda) Canode**, yearlong intern at Providence Presbyterian Church in Pflugerville, Tex.



Mike and Lili McCabe and family

12. **Jeremiah and Elizabeth Montgomery**, State College, Pa. Pray for intentional evangelism within the congregation of Resurrection OPC. / **Ben and Melanie Westerveld**, Quebec, Canada. Pray that God would work in the lives of unbelievers who visit St-Marc Church. / *Ordained Servant* proofreader **Diane Olinger**.
13. Missionary associate **Jennifer Nelson**, Quebec, Canada, asks prayer for continued development in her French-language skills. / **Kim and Barbara Kuhfuss**, Eau Claire, Wis. Pray that Providence Reformed Church's outreach efforts will bear fruit. / **Matthew (and Melinda) Cole**, yearlong intern at Immanuel Presbyterian Church in Bellmawr, N.J.
14. Pray for **Larry and Kalynn Oldaker**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of Ohio, as Larry follows up with contacts and visits groups in the presbytery. / **Ben and Heather Hopp**, Haiti. Pray for wisdom for church leaders as they minister to the needy in Haiti. / **Kathy Bube**, Loan Fund administrator.

- 15.** Associate missionaries **Octavius and Marie Delfils**, Haiti. Pray for the work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of the youth in the Port-au-Prince church. / **Drew and Sonya Adcock**, Williamsport, Pa. Pray that Omega OPC's outreach efforts will bear fruit. / **Caleb T. Nelson**, yearlong intern at First Church of Merrimack in Merrimack, N.H.
- 16.** **Jim and Eve Cassidy**, Austin, Tex. Pray that South Austin Presbyterian Church will be faithful in evangelism. / Affiliated missionaries **Jerry and Marilyn Farnik**, Prague, Czech Republic. Pray for Jerry's outreach to men in the community. / Pray for **Danny Olinger**, Christian Education general secretary, as he prepares for the meeting of the General Assembly in June.
- 17.** Missionary associate **Mary York**, Prague, Czech Republic. Pray that the Lord would use her in reaching young people with the gospel. / **Ben and Sarah Miller**, Huntington, N.Y. Pray that God would use Trinity Church to convert at least twelve people in 2015. / Pray for the **Subcommittee for Internet Ministries** as it oversees OPC.org.
- 18.** **Everett and Kimberly Henes**, Hillsdale, Mich. Pray that the Spirit would draw many to Christ through the preaching of the gospel at Hillsdale OPC. / **Mr. and Mrs. F.**, Asia. Pray for Mr. F. as he handles the responsibilities of leading the ministry team. / **Janet Birkmann**, Diaconal Ministries administrative assistant.
- 19.** Missionary associates **Mr. and Mrs. C.**, Asia. Pray for their efforts to present Christ through their teaching. / **Jonathan and Lauryn Shishko**, Queens, N.Y. Pray that God would bless Reformation Presbyterian Church's officer candidates. / **Jeff (and Diane) Downs**, yearlong intern at Covenant OPC in Orland Park, Ill.
- 20.** **Brad and Cinnamon Peppo**, Springfield, Ohio. Pray for the outreach and evangelism of Living Water OPC, that the Lord would bring some to faith in Jesus. / Tent-maker missionary **T. L. L.**, Asia. Pray for opportunities to talk to students about Christ. / **Janet Gregson**, assistant to the finance director.
- 21.** Missionary associates **J. B. and T. DeJ.**, Asia. Pray for fruitful contacts with their students. / **Andrew and Billie Moody**, San Antonio, Tex. Pray that San Antonio Reformed Church's new meeting place will be a blessing to the congregation. / **James Jordan**, yearlong intern at Church of the Covenant in Hacketts-town, N.J.
- 22.** Pray for Home Missions staff administrator **Sean Gregg**. / **Brian and Dorothy Wingard**, South Africa. Pray for



Brad and Cinnamon Peppo

- their witness to the students they teach at Mukhanyo Theological College. / Pray for **the students who are taking a course** offered by the Ministerial Training Institute of the OPC.
- 23.** Pray for the health and well-being of our retired missionaries **Betty Andrews, Greet Rietkerk, Young and Mary Lou Son**, and **Fumi Uomoto**. / **Phil Strong**, Lander, Wyo. Pray that Grace Reformed Fellowship will see the Lord in his Word and be refreshed from on high. / **Andrew (and Samantha) Fortenberry**, yearlong intern at Trinity OPC in Hatboro, Pa.
- 24.** **John and Wenny Ro**, Chicago, Ill. (downtown). Pray that more people will attend Gospel Life Presbyterian Church's outreach Bible studies. / **Al and Laurie Tricarico**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for the many meetings each week where the gospel message is presented. / Part-time staff accountant **Doug Watson**.
- 25.** Missionary associates **Erika Bulthuis, Taryn Dieckmann**, and **Christopher and Chloe Verdick**, Nakaale, Uganda. / **Mike and Christina Edmondson**, Grand Rapids, Mich. Pray that God will raise up local leaders at New City Fellowship. / Pray for stated clerk **Ross Graham** as he prepares the agenda for the 82nd General Assembly.
- 26.** **Jim and Tricia Stevenson**, Tulsa, Okla. Pray that God would bless Providence OPC's officer training class. / **Jim and Jenny Knox**, M.D. and R.N., Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for wisdom and physical strength for Jim as he faces the demands of his work at the clinic. / Pray for **the Board of Trustees of Great Commission Publications** as it meets tomorrow.
- 27.** **David and Sunshine Okken**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for the spiritual growth of Nakaale Presbyterian Church. / **Chris and Megan Hartshorn**, Anaheim Hills, Calif. Pray for more disciples at Anaheim Hills Presbyterian Church and faithfulness in ministering to families that God brings. / **Sarah Pederson**, *New Horizons* proof-reader.
- 28.** **Brandon and Laurie Wilkins**, Crystal Lake, Ill. Pray that God will bless Christ Covenant Presbyterian Church's witness and add new families. / Pray for missionary associates **Leah Hopp** and **Hannah Keller**, Nakaale, Uganda, as they assist with various programs of the Uganda Mission. / Army chaplain **Paul (and Mary) Berghaus**.
- 29.** **Bob and Martha Wright**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray that the evangelistic materials distributed in local villages will touch many. / **Mike and Katy Myers**, Hartwell, Ga. Pray that Heritage Presbyterian Church will honor God by reaching out to those in need. / **David Haney**, director of finance and planned giving for the Committee on Coordination.
- 30.** Pray for **Glenn Jerrell**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of Michigan and Ontario, as he visits mission works and organized congregations. / **Eric and Dianna Tuininga**, Mbale, Uganda. Pray for Dianna as she helps lead a weekly women's Bible study.

NEWS, VIEWS, & REVIEWS

IN MEMORIAM MARGIE DUNN

Margaret Hunt Dunn was born June 23, 1909, at the Presbyterian Mission compound in ChaiRyung, Korea, to Anna Lloyd and William Brewster Hunt. Her brother, Bruce Hunt, was a longtime missionary to Korea. She died in Green Bay, Wisconsin, on February 14, 2015.

While attending Wilson College in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, Margie came to know the Lord personally. After graduating from Wilson and then Moody Bible Institute, she returned to Korea and worked at the Pyeongyang Foreign School. She had some harrowing experiences there and in Manchuria when World War II broke out, but managed to get out of the war zone safely.

Back in America, she met Leslie Dunn, pastor of Calvary Church in Wildwood, New Jersey. They were married on May 11, 1946, and served together at a number of churches. They were equally matched in their enthusiasm to serve the Lord. They retired to Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, in the 1980s, and Les died in 2001.

In her later years, Margie enjoyed the fellowship at Bethel Church in Oostburg, Wisconsin. She particularly enjoyed singing hymns from memory with the women of the church who came to visit her.

She is survived by two of her three children and many grandchildren and great grandchildren.



Margie Dunn at 100

New England on January 25.

- On January 16, the Presbytery of Michigan and Ontario dissolved Mill Creek OPC in Grand Rapids, Mich., effective December 31.
- South Austin Presbyterian Church in Austin, Tex., was received as an organized congregation by the Presbytery of the Southwest on February 27.

MINISTERS

- Former organizing pastor James J. Cassidy was installed as pastor of South Austin Presbyterian Church in Austin, Tex., on February 27.
- Former organizing pastor Roberto Laranjo was installed as pastor of Igreja Presbiteriana Brasileira em Melrose in Melrose, Mass., on January 25.
- The Presbytery of Central Pennsylvania on January 23 ordained and installed Joshua L. McKamy as an evangelist of Living Hope OPC in Gettysburg, Pa., to serve as organizing pastor of Chambersburg OPC in Chambersburg, Pa.

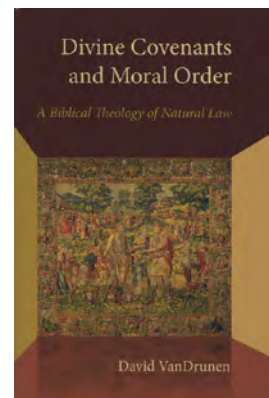
Correction

In the March issue, p. 24, a Liz Tolson book title should have been given as *Daisies Are Forever*.

REVIEWS

Divine Covenants and Moral Order: A Biblical Theology of Natural Law, by David VanDrunen. Published by Eerdmans, 2014. Paperback, 582 pages, list price \$45.00. Reviewed by OP pastor Brenton Ferry.

In 2002, T. David Gordon wrote “How My Mind Has Changed: The Insufficiency of Scripture” in *Modern Reformation*



(online). He argued that an exaggerated view of the sufficiency of Scripture kept evangelicals from seeing that wisdom derives from natural law as well as Scripture. VanDrunen does not refer to this obscure article, but he and Gordon could be read together. If Gordon presented a problem, VanDrunen develops a solution: “Perhaps the key human attribute necessary for understanding the natural law ... and putting it into practice is *wisdom*” (p. 15).

The book is exegetical, biblical theology. The author’s purpose is to write about natural law from a “specifically Reformed” foundation (p. 9). “The natural,” he writes, “is a covenantal reality” (p. 13). He defines natural law as “the obligation and consequences incumbent upon and known by human beings as image-bearers of God and participants in the protological [original] moral order” (p. 15). All people know natural law’s moral obligations apart from special revelation “in some way and to some degree” (p. 18), even apart from “a set of discrete rules” (p. 486).

The book is in two parts. Part one looks at natural law in relation to the covenant of creation. Part two considers natural law in relation to the covenant of grace.

In the covenant of creation, natural law

UPDATE

CHURCHES

- Emmanuel Chapel in Philadelphia, Pa. (including the Emmanuel Indonesian Protestant congregation), withdrew from the OPC on January 27.
- Igreja Presbiteriana Brasileira em Melrose in Melrose, Mass. (formerly in Lowell), was received as an organized congregation by the Presbytery of New York and

is a consequence of the divine image (ch. 1). In the Noahic covenant of common grace, natural law is “at least a basic, minimal ethic designed for the preservation of the social order” (p. 19) in light of the fall, focusing on procreation, food, and justice (ch. 2). The folly of Sodom, the wisdom of Abimelech (ch. 3), the prophetic oracles about the nations (ch. 4), and Romans 1–2 (ch. 5) exemplify the common grace ethic of the Noahic covenant.

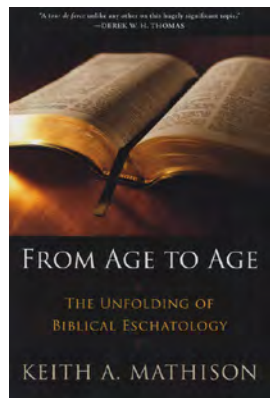
In the covenant of grace, Abraham was subject to natural law as a sojourner (ch. 6). The Mosaic covenant “reflected both the substance and the sanctions of the natural law” (p. 21) in a qualified way (ch. 7). Wisdom literature demonstrates that natural law is not unique to those in the covenant of grace (ch. 8). “Under the new covenant Christians have been released from the protological natural law at an ultimate level.... Yet at a penultimate level they must continue to live within the structures of this present world, and thus under the authority of ... natural law” (p. 22, ch. 9).

The author concludes by noting the limitation of his work. “What I have attempted here is not an all-comprehensive natural law theory, but a biblical framework for Christian thinking about natural law that leaves room for ... further philosophical, biological, and sociological investigation of the subject” (p. 480).

***From Age to Age: The Unfolding of Biblical Eschatology*, by Keith A. Mathison. P&R, 2014. Paperback, 832 pages, list price \$29.99. Reviewed by OP pastor Ken Montgomery.**

P&R Publishing has recently released this title in a quality paperback edition, and it would serve as a handy and helpful one-volume companion for any who may be engaged in a Bible overview study or instructional setting.

Mathison’s approach fits comfortably within the “acorn to oak tree” model of God’s unfolding revelation in Scripture, as he writes out of a studied



commitment to the principle that there is both *unity* and *development* in the story line of redemption. The author persuasively demonstrates how glimmers of the full-grown oak tree can be traced on each leaf and branch in all phases of the growth of the kingdom of God (cf. Luke 13:19). Thus, the term “eschatology” in the title refers not simply to the “last things” associated with Jesus’ second coming, but also to Christ’s first-advent fulfillment of what came prior to him in the prophetic word: “Eschatology does include a study of the consummation of God’s purposes at the end of history, but it also includes a study of the stages in the unfolding of these purposes” (p. 2).

Mathison supplies his own summary of the texts for each section of Scripture—especially those that narrate formative events and turning points—and then relates how each part of the Word prepares for (OT) or confirms (NT) redemptive realities that have taken place in “the fullness of time.” I found here a thoughtful and accessible mix of linguistic analysis, historical explanation, and reasoned theological interpretation. Throughout his work, Mathison interacts with the contributions of other writers, while never straying far from the main trail of the biblical text.

His treatment of Genesis as a stage-setting book is valuable, and his explication of the remainder of the Pentateuch captures well the covenantal dynamic at work. In the pages devoted to the Psalms and the Wisdom literature (whose eschatological shaping have arguably been underappreciated), the reader will find many suggestive and edifying gleanings.

The chapters on the Prophets (treated in chronological order) are full of substance and insight. Mathison maintains that Adam’s exile from the garden of Eden in Genesis 3 foreshadows Israel’s banishment from the land of Canaan (p. 27). He goes on to explain that within the framework of the old covenant, “exile was the ultimate judgment because it was, in

effect, a death sentence for Israel” (p. 152). In this context, the prophetic images and descriptions of restoration are ripe with resurrection significance.

The remaining half of *Age to Age* continues into the New Testament books with the same solid exposition. Mathison expands on many of the kingdom themes found in the first portion, now concentrated on the arrival of Christ the King, who “comes clothed in the garments of the gospel,” as some of our forefathers have so memorably said.

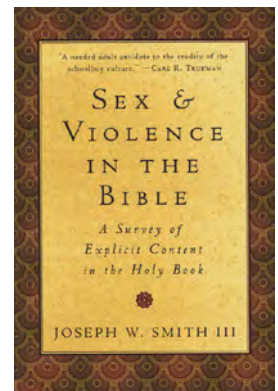
It is encouraging to see within the wider Christian community a keen interest in grasping the overarching narrative of the Bible, as indicated by the publication of several big-picture presentations and summaries of Scripture. For those who are seeking to delve more deeply and gain a clearer sense of the lines that connect as well as distinguish various dispensations of the covenant of grace, *Age to Age* is a good place to turn. It underscores that Scripture is indeed “written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come” (1 Cor. 10:11).

***Sex & Violence in the Bible: A Survey of Explicit Content in the Holy Book*, by Joseph W. Smith III. P&R Publishing, 2014. Paperback, 256 pages, list price \$16.99. Reviewed by OP pastor Paul Browne.**

Would it surprise you that the author of this book is a faithful ruling elder in the OPC? I can attest to that because I serve on the same session with him!

But why should an elder of the church write about sex and violence? The answer is that all Christians need to understand the sins of their culture and present biblical antidotes—and it is the shepherds who must equip the sheep for this work.

Our culture is sinfully obsessed with sex and violence, and it is only getting



worse. Smith is a public high school English teacher and a movie critic for the local newspaper. He grapples with these issues daily in the classroom and in the literary realm. What is to be our guide, if not God's own book? The Bible always sets the norm for God's people in a shifting and off-kilter world. Accordingly, our brother has searched all the Scriptures in an exhaustive study of how it deals with sex and violence, so we can be sane and offer sanity to our neighbors.

The book is divided into three sections: on sex, violence, and then "other blunt or unsavory material," mostly of a scatological nature. If much of this is new to the reader, it can be surprising, horrible, and fascinating! One of the eye-openers may simply be how much English translations launder what is felt to be the objectionable realism of Scripture.

In this bracing jaunt through biblical grittiness, Smith organizes 700 Bible verses in twenty-one well-written chapters. Most chapters begin by mentioning the biblical laws forbidding the sinful behavior described in the chapter. In every place, Smith writes from his commitment to the infallibility of Scripture. Notably, he describes the torture and crucifixion of Christ compellingly in two different chapters, but then presses us to remember that far worse for Christ than the rending of flesh was the bearing of God's wrath for our sin.

In his helpful concluding chapter, Smith says about the Bible:

Its approach to indecent matters is not that of a twenty-first century schoolboy, nor is it that of a nineteenth-century Victorian housewife. The Bible is, in fact, refreshingly matter-of-fact in its approach, freely acknowledging what we all know: these things are an important part of life, and by no means to be ignored or overlooked.... In any case, it certainly has not been my aim to 'pander' to our culture's seemingly insatiable appetite for outlandish gore and sex. On the contrary, one does not seek to repair a depraved and lascivious society by becoming even more stuffy and standoffish.... Rather, one restores sanity in these matters by dealing with them biblically.... In my book, I have

tried to show that this careful interface of frankness and restraint is exactly how the Bible approaches sex and violence. That probably ought to be our approach as well.

***You Lift Me Up: Overcoming Ministry Challenges*, by Albert N. Martin. Mentor (Christian Focus Publications), 2013. Paperback, 143 pages, list price \$16.99. Reviewed by OP pastor Ryan M. McGraw.**

Who we are as Christians is the decisive factor in determining our usefulness to others as servants of Christ. Al Martin's *You Lift Me Up* shows how

a conscientious and consistent application of the principles of Christian living is connected to perseverance and usefulness in the ministry. This is one of the best books that I have ever read on the Christian ministry. The reason for this is that it grounds an effective ministry in the general contours and disciplines of the Christian life. Martin shows that ineffectiveness and burnout in the ministry



almost always stem from neglect of the basic components of godly living.

The title of this book is misleading. It might suggest that the author addresses depressed ministers or presents case studies of pastoral dilemmas. Instead, he treats the all-too-common problems of ministerial backsliding, burnout, and what he calls "washout." Martin addresses vital topics and common pitfalls, such as being distracted in our devotions, neglecting "generic Christian duties," maintaining a good conscience, isolating ourselves from the friendship of the congregation, becoming enslaved to people who are overly dependent on us, limiting our studies to sermon preparation, hiding our genuine humanity, obesity, and neglecting exercise and proper diet. This reviewer wishes that every chapter of this book and virtually every line of its pages could be burned into the hearts of every seminary student and minister of the gospel. Almost all of these areas are commonly neglected, and all of them are essential to a healthy Christian life, let alone an effective Christian ministry.

People often want to know how to be good spouses, godly parents, faithful students, diligent employees, and effective Christians in other roles. While it is useful to target all kinds of roles and apply the Word to them specifically, the secret of godly living lies in learning to apply one set of biblical principles to every area



A luncheon for Westminster Seminary California students interested in the OPC

Spring Women's Conference

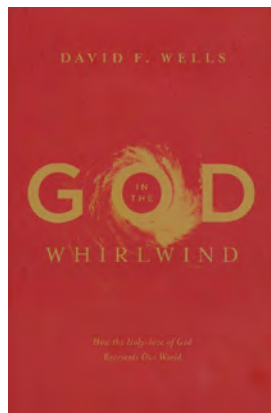
April 24-25 • Green Bay, Wisc.

- Friday, 6:30 p.m. to Saturday, 2:00 p.m.
- Venue: New Hope OPC, Green Bay
- Donna Armes, "A Legacy of Faith"
- Cost \$20 (high school and college students, \$15), including dessert on Friday, and breakfast and lunch on Saturday
- Register online by April 17
- Further information at www.nhopc.org and 920-468-8565 or office@nhopc.org

of life. A man's character in relation to the triune God determines how he will serve as a minister. This makes this book profitable to everyone, not only to ministers. This reviewer must say of *You Lift Me Up*, among modern works on pastoral theology, what David said of Goliath's sword: "There is none like it, give it to me." Read it and buy a copy for a friend in the ministry whom you care for and love dearly.

***God in the Whirlwind: How the Holy-love of God Reorients Our World*, by David F. Wells. Crossway, 2014. Hardback, 272 pages, list price \$24.99. Reviewed by OP pastor William M. Hobbs.**

David Wells has written books on the person of Christ, the work of the Holy Spirit, conversion, and Vatican II theology, but he is best known for his studies on the modern cultural accommodation of American evangelicalism (or, as he puts it, "the loss of the church's theological character"). There were five of these, beginning in 1993 with *No Place for Truth* and finishing in 2008 with *The Courage to Be Protestant*. Some felt that while Wells rightly dissected the demise of orthodoxy



in thought and practice, he failed to offer a corrective. *God in the Whirlwind* responds to that criticism by providing a prescription for a church whose vision has dimmed.

As theology reads go, this is a good one. Wells writes beautifully, and the book is warm and devotional. The reader is in the hands of a sharp and precise mind (Wells originally trained as an architect) wedded to a heart filled with love for Christ and his church. While this is a page-turner for the lover of God, be warned: there are over seven hundred

Scripture references, some involving close looks at text and context.

What is Wells's prescription? It is a God-centered life ("We have become preoccupied with the horizontal"). If the church is to be "the outpost of eternity in this wounded world," then we Christians must cease from cultural conformity and distraction ("Our minds are choked"). Instead, we should be "carving out space for ourselves in which we can daily attend to God's Word, to study it, mark it, learn it, and inwardly digest its truth."

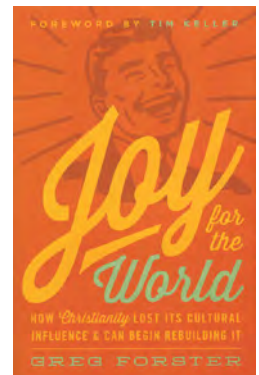
Wells's method is to consider God's perfections as a duality: holiness and love—or, as he puts it, God's "holy-love." Holiness is "that righteousness that will one day sweep the universe clean." Wells laments that evangelicals have slipped into seeing the world from a psychological or therapeutic—rather than a moral—perspective. On the other hand, God's love keeps the church from lapsing into legalism, "the accountant's old ledger book." So while love "unhitched from holiness ... becomes benign, culturally at home, racy, politically correct, and endlessly tolerant," holiness without love can result in "an unwillingness to fully accept

God's grace" and a self-assurance that "parts company with mercy, kindness, and forbearance." After carefully defending his thesis by looking at redemptive history and then the doctrine of justification ("a sight too glorious"), Wells applies his remedy to the Christian's life (we are to live in this culture as "outposts of the age to come"), worship ("an expression of the worth of God"), and service (a life that is "Christ-centered not self-centered").

It would be easy to think that the book lends itself to gloating by those outside of mainstream evangelicalism. Not so. Wells is clearly grieving, not gloating.

***Joy for the World: How Christianity Lost Its Cultural Influence and Can Begin Rebuilding It*, by Greg Forster. Crossway, 2014. Paperback, 320 pages, list price \$18.99. Reviewed by OP pastor Charles R. Biggs.**

Greg Forster's *Joy for the World* is a welcome, winsome, and wise discussion of how Christians can make a real difference in the world. After tracing how Christian-



ity has lost much of its cultural influence (very interesting!), Forster invites us to seek to influence culture primarily by being joyful Christians as we humbly fulfill our callings in our homes, workplaces, and communities.

Forster defines joy in this way: "I'm not talking about an emotion. I mean the state of flourishing in mind, heart, and life that Christians experience by the Holy Spirit." What makes us different as Christians is the radical reality that we have Jesus' joy through the Spirit, and this joy changes the atmosphere in which we live and work—and this is good. He writes: "We've been so anxious to influence society in the past century that we've ended up going after a lot of shortcuts. For some it's politics, for some it's education, for

Mid-Atlantic Men's Retreat

April 10-12 • South Jersey

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- Speaker: Rev. Mark Sallade
- Fishing, shooting, soccer, basketball, softball, golf, games, ham radio
- For men 16 or older; cost \$132
- Register: immanuelonline.org/events/mens-retreat-2015. Or mail check payable to Immanuel OPC, Park Dr. at Market St., Bellmawr, NJ 08031
- Questions? Call 851-931-2436

some it's evangelism. We've been pulling a lot of levers. The common thread is that we're pulling levers so hard, we leave no space for people to encounter the joy of God." Forster desires Christians to avoid unhealthy triumphalism in our approach to culture, while also steering clear of unhealthy separationism from the culture around us.

Forster emphasizes that the church is both an organization and an organism, and that these should be distinguished in our cultural engagement. The church as an organization must be faithful in preaching God's Word, administering the sacraments, encouraging fellowship, and discipline. The church as an organism consists of living, embodied people who are citizens of two worlds, two cities, or two kingdoms, who are called to live out their different vocations in an infectious and joyful manner, doing all for the glory of God.

While Forster reiterates some of the important arguments of other Christian writers, he uniquely suggests practical ways in which Christians can engage culture in their everyday lives. Forster is clearly an expert on this subject, and he teaches in a very humble and thoughtful manner. In fact, the joy that he encourages Christians to display comes through in his writing. I agree with others who have reviewed this book that it should be on required reading lists in colleges, used

in worldview and cultural seminars, and be on book tables at local congregations.

My only criticism would be that this important book should have had a more appropriate cover. While we're taught not to judge a book by its cover, we often will. This cover gives a sort of pop-culture feel to the book that may undermine the importance and depth of its message.

The Godly Shepherd Chronicles: The Pilgrimage (The Shepherd of Kedar: Book 1), by DeLacy A. Andrews, Jr.

Westbow Press, 2014. Hardback, 278 pages, list price 35.95; paperback, \$19.95. Reviewed by OP minister Richard R. Gerber.

In his first novel, DeLacy Andrews (regional home missionary for the Presbytery of the Southeast) has given us a story worth reading about a righteous Jew, a shepherd, longing for the Messiah.

In this work of historical fiction, we meet Josiah, a Jew living in Kedar, far from the Promised Land. Psalm 120:5-7 sets the backdrop for the novel:

Woe to me, that I sojourn in Meshech,
that I dwell among the tents of Kedar!

Too long have I had my dwelling
among those who hate peace.

I am for peace,
but when I speak, they are for war!

Andrews weaves a tale of friendship, blossoming love, murder, heartbreak, spiritual rebellion, and redemption. We get to know Josiah and his wife Deborah, who love the Lord and his Word. Amid the daily routines and challenges of life, they prayerfully labor to instill their deep-seated faith in their eleven children.

The Songs of Ascents, Psalms 120-

134, are a focal point of their family worship as they prepare to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the Passover. Josiah and his older sons ponder the texts of Scriptures and discuss them with others within their tribe. As they make their pilgrimage, they meet others with whom they discuss the Scriptures. Questions about the messianic implications of the texts begin to trouble Josiah more and more.

Josiah has not been to Jerusalem in thirty years. His only other pilgrimage took place when he was a boy of ten. An incident in the temple during that pilgrimage has stayed with him and puzzled him all through the intervening years.

The Pilgrimage ends before the object of the family's pilgrimage is realized, but you don't have to be kept in suspense. Book 2, *Ascending Mount Zion*, has already been published. (Four books are intended in this series.)

One of the strong points of the book is the biblical-theological approach to the Hebrew Scriptures that begins to in-

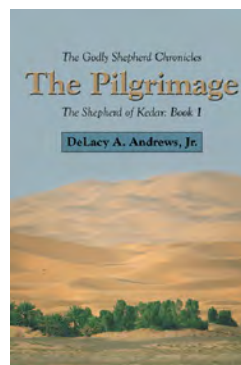
form Josiah's understanding. Andrews does a good job of giving us a window into the inner turmoil that a God-fearing Jew might have had as he wrestled with integrating in one person the texts that speak of the coming Messiah.

The character development is reasonably well done. Each lead character has his or her own personality, and

each one's interactions fit with that personality. For my taste, though, too much of the personalities is revealed in character descriptions, rather than in their interactions.

Overall, the historical details seem accurate. I do wonder, however, about the number of scrolls of Scripture that Josiah owns. Even though he does not possess the whole of the Hebrew canon, and even though some of the scrolls have been handed down in his family, acquiring them would have been a very costly endeavor.

The Pilgrimage (and *Ascending Mount Zion*) is interesting, imaginative, and reasonably well written. It is suitable for both teens and adults.



A NETWORK OF DEACONS*David P. Nakhla*

Donnie approached a church member one Sunday morning, and following a brief conversation, was encouraged to speak to one of the deacons about his need for financial assistance. Donnie explained to the deacon that he was having difficulty finding work, but didn't want charity. He was hoping he could do some work around the church building to earn money for food and gas. He offered to do cleaning, painting, organizing of storage closets, yard work—saying he was not afraid of hard work.

While Donnie suggested a possible answer to his own problem as he presented it, diaconal needs are not usually so directly met. Deacons receive a wide range of personal requests from visitors, regular attendees, and members of their local church. A diaconate's ability to respond to such needs ordinarily depends upon the resources available to them in their own church. Some congregations are blessed with a deep pool of funds and diaconal time, skills, and energies from which to draw. For other congregations, the pool is not so deep. Yet deacons are called to "show forth the compassion of Christ in a manifold ministry of mercy," as the OPC's *Book of Church Order* describes it, and must find a way to do so.

To help meet the challenge, each presbytery has a Presbytery Diaconal Committee (PDC) to which local diaconates can appeal for help when a diaconal situation exceeds the capacity of their congregation. The PDC is able to mobilize the regional church to help meet the needs



David Haney speaking at the D17 Diaconal Summit in November 2014

of a local church. Likewise, each PDC is welcome to appeal to our denominational Committee on Diaconal Ministries (CDM) when regional needs exceed the capacity of the presbytery. For example, when two presbyteries were particularly hard hit by Hurricane Sandy in 2012, gifts and resources from throughout the denomination were received and distributed by the CDM in cooperation with affected presbyteries and churches.

This system represents the CDM's goal to not only strengthen its relationship with each PDC, but to foster communication and collaboration among all deacons locally, regionally, and nationally. Just as each presbytery provides our ministers and elders with a network of brothers with whom they can fellowship, work, and share in the spiritual accountability that epitomizes the Presbyterian church, so too a network of deacons is being established in the OPC.

One of the ways in which this network has been built up in recent years is through the CDM's D17 Diaconal

Summits (to which each of our seventeen presbyteries is invited to send two diaconal representatives), the second of which was held in San Antonio, Texas, in November 2014. The summit gave presbytery diaconal committee representatives the opportunity to get to know others from around the country, receive instruction on a variety of topics, be encouraged in their labors, and be challenged with ways in which each PDC can expand its role as a vital component of the OPC's network of deacons. All those who took part in the summit were inspired by the fellowship and exchange of ideas that took place during their time together.

Please pray for our deacons, that the Lord might bless them with abundant wisdom, skill, and energy with which to lead the church in carrying out its manifold ministry of mercy. Pray also for the presbytery diaconal committees, that each one might grow in its capacity to be a resource for the local diaconates, in order to further develop our network of deacons for the good of the church.