

# NEW HORIZONS

— *in the* ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH —

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*by Stephen J. Tracey*

AUG-SEPT 2016

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2016

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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## New Horizons

in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church

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Robert and Martha Coie are pictured here at the Eighty-third General Assembly speaking with John Terpstra (ruling elder at South Austin Presbyterian Church in Austin, Texas). Bob, an elder at Westminster OPC in Westminster, California, was honored with a resolution of appreciation by the Assembly for his years of service on the Committee on Chaplains and Military Personnel. He was also the moderator of the General Assembly in 2003.



# 2016 GENERAL ASSEMBLY: NOTHING OUT OF THE ORDINARY



**D. G. HART // Roman Catholics may have extraordinary synods like the last two called by Pope Francis to consider marriage and the family, but Presbyterians have ordinary assemblies. And for good reason. During the fifteenth-century crisis of the papacy, when rival popes in Avignon and Rome vied for supremacy,**

bishops and theologians called for church reform by council. Instead of locating church authority in one bishop (the pope), conciliarists advocated gatherings of bishops to oversee the work and ministry of the church.

Not until the sixteenth century did that call for church government by committee blossom with John Calvin's *Ecclesiastical Ordinances*, the original proposal for Presbyterian polity. Ever since 1541, Reformed Protestants have made committee meetings an ordinary part of church life, from the monthly assembly of sessions to the seasonal meetings of presbyteries and the annual gatherings for general assemblies.

The routine nature of Presbyterian meetings sometimes leaves onlookers wondering where all the drama went. Orthodox Presbyterians who know the origins of their church remember pivotal general assemblies that were turning points in American Presbyterianism. (This year's commissioners may be less familiar with that history, since their average age was fifty-five and a majority were ordained in the 1990s and

2000s.) Orthodox Presbyterians know about the PCUSA General Assembly of 1925 that established a committee to investigate Princeton Seminary. They also remember the Assembly of 1929 that ratified the reorganization of Princeton and led J. Gresham Machen to found Westminster Seminary as the true successor to Old Princeton. They especially note the significance of the 1936 General Assembly, when commissioners voted to uphold guilty verdicts against Machen and other members of the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions. What we forget is that these decisive moments took place among the clutter of committee reports, budget reviews, missionary news, motions, substitute motions, points of order, and ballots. Only in hindsight do specific general assemblies stand out. For most commissioners and observers, the duties are singularly ordinary.

Not even anniversaries or scenery can distract presbyters from their appointed rounds of conducting the work of ecclesiastical oversight decently and in order. (Having a Committee on Ar-

rangements that makes the comings and goings, and care and feeding of commissioners, run like clockwork is also imperative for an assembly to complete its work.) This year witnessed the eightieth anniversary of the OPC, and the Committee for the Historian produced handsome mugs to commemorate the occasion. But the Eighty-third General Assembly gathered less to remember than to conduct the important work of oversight. Although the setting was attractive, commissioners did not let the beauty of the North East River (at the northern tip of the Chesapeake Bay) or the comforts of the Sandy Cove conference center prevent them from working most days (except Sunday) from 8:30 in the morning until 8:30 at night.

## **A Small Communion with International Connections**

The Assembly is a representative body with rules governing how many pastors and elders attend. The maximum number each year is 150 commissioners. That number varies little, even when the church grows or declines in



Ryan McGraw (left) with Paul Tavares, moderator of the Assembly

membership. This year, the statistician, Luke Brown, reported that the OPC made modest gains. Total church membership rose by sixty-seven to 31,191, a record high for the OPC. The total number of congregations and mission works increased by two to 325. On average, morning worship attendance rose by 548 to 24,648 (in the month of November, one of the statistician's reference points). Sunday school attendance dipped by 120 to 12,218. Total offerings rose to \$56.9 million, an increase of 4.4 percent per communicant member. The total number of ministers remained virtually the same as last year, up one to 535 (The OPC received eighteen new ministers, while seeing seventeen leave for various reasons.)

Those numbers certainly will not turn the heads of religion journalists who cover the Vatican (which boasts a membership of 1.2 billion), but if they observed the OPC's General Assembly, they would learn that this small communion has an international footprint that justifies the OPC's own claims to catholicity. In fact, one of the first orders of business, once commissioners completed their work in advisory committees (groups of commissioners selected to pay attention to specified reports or business) on Thursday afternoon, was a fraternal greeting from the Presbyterian

Church in America's delegate, Marvin Padgett.

This was the first of eleven communications (ten in person) from churches in fellowship with the OPC. Of those delegates, six were from denominations outside the United States—for instance, one from South Africa, one from Australia, one from New Zealand, and one from Switzerland. At present, the Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations conducts "foreign relations" with forty-one different Reformed and Presbyterian communions around the world. Although fraternal delegates are

almost always polite and say flattering things about their hosts, the presence of fraternal delegates, many of whom stay the entire week, confirms what many of them say in their addresses, namely, that Reformed churches around the world look to the OPC for edification and support as one of the older communions that has resisted the compromises that have so often afflicted churches in North America, Europe, and around the world. Even if reporters have never heard of the OPC, in Reformed circles the OPC has an international reputation, thanks both to its ecumenical endeavors and to the presence of OPC missionaries (who are sometimes at the forefront of maintaining fraternal relations with other communions). As Swiss pastor Kurt Vetterli, from the Evangelical Reformed Church—Westminster Confession, said, "Little sister is watching you."

### Church Business Deliberated

One way to find drama at the General Assembly is to notice the time devoted to specific business. Truth be told, the agenda may overwhelm first-time and even veteran commissioners. This year's agenda included nineteen separate reports, along with communications, appeals, and complaints. Two reports came from special (temporary) committees of the Assembly, with tasks



Stephen Chong, Ross Graham (stated clerk), and Larry Mininger at opening worship service



*Jim Stevenson introducing his best friend to the moderator*

to study specific topics of concern to the wider church. The agenda this year included forty-three items, which is almost four times the number this correspondent usually sees during monthly session meetings. It ran to almost two hundred pages, which is about forty times the length of documents a clerk normally processes for a normal session meeting. Part of the reason for the length of the agenda is that this is the one time when each standing committee can present the full scope of its work to the whole church.

In many cases, reports are informational. In some cases, committees attach recommendations that require deliberation. Every time the reports of standing committees are considered, there is a time for the elections of members, who generally serve terms of three years. Owing to this procedure of presentations, discussions, and elections, assemblies are rarely suspenseful. Even if a longtime member of a standing committee fails to be elected for another term (which happened this year, to some surprise), the demand of the agenda rarely allows commissioners or observers to notice the significance of what happened.

Even the election of a moderator—the first item of business after the Wednesday-evening worship service—

comes without fanfare, and this year all the more so. Unlike the President of the United States or the Pope, a moderator has no real power other than to facilitate discussion and hold commissioners responsible for a proper use of time. Also unlike the election of a pope in the Sistine Chapel, when smoke (either white or black) issues from its chimney as a signal of the cardinals' vote, the selection of a General Assembly moderator involves nominations and a few speeches, followed by votes. This year commissioners did not experience any of the intrigue that sometimes comes when more than three men receive nominations and when elections can take several ballots. They nominated only one man, Mr. Paul Tavares, an elder from Covenant OPC in Grove City, Pennsylvania. With no competition, Mr. Tavares became moderator by acclamation.

With gavel in hand, Mr. Tavares had the unenviable task of supervising what is in effect a committee of roughly 150 members. One of the appeals of episcopacy is that rule by bishops cuts through the time and clutter of large groups conducting the business of the church. Indeed, anyone who has been present at a congregational meeting knows how easily a couple of comments can sidetrack church members from

their assigned business.

What helps elders, pastors, and moderators, especially with the unwieldy nature of an Assembly, is *Robert's Rules of Order*, a remarkable set of guidelines for engaging and managing debate. Longtime commissioners are generally familiar with the rules, but younger or new commissioners may not always understand the guidelines for motions, substitutions, debate, and voting. Even so, the rules provide the best mechanism for so large a number of officers to have a voice in the Assembly's work. Every commissioner has an opportunity to speak, not only because of *Robert's Rules*, but also because of the OPC's tradition of encouraging debate to avoid the tyranny of the majority.

### **The Assembly's Many Moods**

Commissioners and observers learn fairly quickly that the General Assembly is not just one thing. It is not just a business meeting, nor exclusively the highest court of appeal within the OPC, or a body charged to oversee the denomination's financial resources, or a time for praise and thanksgiving for God's blessings. It is all of these and requires commissioners to bring several hats to the meeting.

Many Orthodox Presbyterians, especially the theologically inclined, looked forward to the 2016 Assembly because of the report of the Committee to Study Republication. This special committee's work was intimately connected to the assignment of the Special Committee to Visit the Presbytery of the Northwest (PNW), since the doctrine of republication was at least partially responsible for tensions in that presbytery. Both of those reports came on the last day of the Assembly (Monday), with the visitation committee reporting first. Although the committee that visited the PNW acknowledged that the doctrine of republication was the "presenting cause" of conflict, their report also indicated that the "more fundamental cause" was the failure of the PNW to use the pastoral and ecclesiastical means available for addressing



Michael Diercks, Stephen Chong, Allen Harris (standing), and David Gregg

differences. In so many words, the visitation committee discovered a failure among presbyters to communicate adequately either the nature of concerns or answers to objections.

Some of the reason for a failure of communication, as the Report on Republication indicated, was the challenge of understanding this doctrine's particular way of understanding the relationship between the covenant of works, the covenant of grace, the covenant of redemption, the Mosaic covenant, and the work of Christ. In particular, the doctrine of republication attempts to explain the legal aspects of the Mosaic law (which resonate with the commands and sanctions of God's original covenant with Adam), while also understanding God's relationship with the Israelites as gracious. The committee's report took its bearings from the Confession of Faith's teaching about the covenants and the distinction between substance and administration. The *substance* of the covenant of grace is Christ (WCF 7.6). But God *administered* that covenant "under various dispensations" (7.6). This distinction provided room for the committee to categorize the variety of interpretations of the Mosaic covenant, from the Puritans down to Meredith Kline and John Murray, as falling on a spectrum of interpretations

of the covenant of grace and the differences and continuities between the Old and New Testaments.

If readers have difficulty with this summary of the matter, imagine how much more challenging was an almost 100-page report that resurrected views of theologians that even some historical theologians would not recognize. In fact, the Assembly's discussion of the report included remarks about the novelty of these views. At the same time, the report provided valuable assistance by showing that discussions of the

doctrine of republication, though revealing no consensus, were part and parcel of the development of Reformed theology from the Reformation to the nineteenth century. Part of the controversy surrounding the recent resurrection of republication may have been due to an unfamiliarity with older orthodox voices on the Mosaic covenant and the covenant of grace. Be that as it may, the commissioners received the report, and after mild discussion about disseminating it, concluded their consideration of the doctrine of republication. The PNW has this report in its ongoing efforts to achieve harmony, and the visitation committee was retained by the Assembly in a stand-by capacity if the presbytery should need additional assistance.

If the doctrine of republication and debates over it at the presbytery level tested the Assembly's theological and pastoral skills, four complaints from Grace OPC in Sewickley, Pennsylvania, against the Presbytery of Ohio sent commissioners scrambling for their judicial hats. The first complaint involved grievances by the session of Grace OPC against presbytery for its handling of their complaint against another session. Because the stated clerk of the Assembly received the other three complaints from the session of Grace OPC after



In front: John Terpstra, David Mahaffy, and Robert Tarullo

the deadline for filing, commissioners needed to decide whether to make an exception. The Assembly eventually ruled the first complaint “in order,” but then remanded it back to the Presbytery of Ohio. The Assembly then determined that the other complaints had been submitted too late and advised the session of Grace OPC that they could submit their complaints on appeal to the Eighty-fourth General Assembly.

In addition to being responsible for theological, pastoral, and judicial matters, commissioners also oversee the OPC’s finances. Usually this involves reviewing and approving the various committees’ budgets. But this year the Assembly received reports from both the Committee on Pensions and the Committee to Study the Care of Ministers that addressed more than the performance of OPC retirement funds. They also recommended more mechanisms to offer advice and assistance to pastors in preparation for retirement. The upshot of these reports was the creation of a new Committee on Ministerial Care that absorbs the work of the Committee on Pensions and adds a number of other measures for “strengthening the care of ministers.”

### Singing with Gusto

For all of the difficult questions commissioners tackled, Reformed Protestant piety was evident at every session. Before reconvening the Assembly after a break, meal, or overnight recess, commissioners opened the revised *Trinity Hymnal* to sing a hymn or psalm selected by the moderator. Reports on Roman Catholic synods rarely mention whether bishops sing hymns when they gather, but any account of an OPC General Assembly needs to mention not simply the phenomenon of singing but also the gusto with which commissioners sing. Indeed, one of the delights of the Assembly is the opportunity to sing often (at least five times a day) and to hear male voices united in song. If visitors to Muslim countries notice the odd-sounding songs that call Muslims to prayer, observers of the OPC



*Listening to David Nakhla (Committee on Diaconal Ministries administrator): Ronald Pearce and Nathan Trice (committee members), Paul Tavares (GA moderator)*



*Richard Gaffin and Danny Olinger checking over a report*



*Matthew Holst congratulating Fred Baum, whom the Assembly recognized for his longtime service to the OPC, having first been a GA commissioner in 1962*

General Assembly might also detect the frequency and vigor of the hymn singing in which Presbyterians engage, even as they review, debate, and vote on church business.

The presence of song at the Assembly made all the more sense of the commissioners' approval of the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal* for publication. The Committee on Christian Education indicated that pending the receipt of copyright permissions, the cooperative endeavor with the United Reformed Churches in North America, coedited by Alan Strange and Derrick Vander Meulen, should be ready in the fall of 2017, thus giving commissioners at the 2018 Assembly the opportunity to sing from the new psalter hymnal. The new book of song will also include the doctrinal standards of both communions: the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, the Canons of Dordt, and the Confession of Faith and Catechisms of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

### Milestones

As mentioned above, this Assembly marked the eightieth anniversary of the OPC's founding. That milestone made less of a dent on the proceedings than several other historical markers. On Friday night in recess, commissioners stayed in the meeting room to hear Cal and Edie Cummings reflect on their years of service as missionaries to Japan and then attended a reception hosted by the Committee on Foreign Missions to honor the Cummingses.

The next day, during the report from the Committee on Chaplains and Military Personnel, the members honored Robert Coie, who was leaving the committee, with a resolution of appreciation for his years of service.

Meanwhile, the Committee for the Historian treated commissioners each day to video vignettes about the work and service of women in the OPC: Charlotte Kuschke, Mabel Danzeizen,



Cal and Edie Cummings being honored by the Assembly

Dora Duff, Betty Andrews, and Grace Hard. (The vignettes are available on OPC.org). Several of these stalwarts labored with their husbands on the mission field, while others worked in local congregations and Christian day

schools in selfless ways.

Even as commissioners watched reminders of faithful servants in the OPC's past, they also observed a new generation of pastors and elders who are emerging as voices of stability and wisdom in the affairs of the General Assembly. The larger impression left by these videos, along with the selfless labors of commissioners and church staff, was the way that God uses ordinary means to accomplish his extraordinary

ends. □

*The author is a ruling elder at Hillsdale OPC in Hillsdale, Mich. Photos by Tricia Stevenson, Rachel Stevenson, Katharine Olinger, and Danny Olinger.*

## GA COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

Class of 2019

*Appeals and Complaints:* John W. Mallin III; Thomas C. Crumpler (alternate)

*Chaplains and Military Personnel:* Richard M. Dickinson, Christopher H. Wisdom

*Christian Education:* ministers Glen J. Clary, David J. Harr, Alan D. Strange; ruling elders James S. Gidley, John R. Muether

*Coordination:* minister Donald J. Duff; ruling elder John D. Mazunik

*Diaconal Ministries:* minister Ronald E. Pearce; ruling elder Alexander A. Zarek; deacon John J. Voss, Jr.

*Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations:* George R. Cottenden, L. Anthony Curto, Stephen J. Tracey

*Foreign Missions:* ministers William B. Kessler, Philip T. Proctor, John D. Van Meerbeke; ruling elders John S. Emmett, Hayo "Joe" Jagor

*General Assembly Arrangements:* Robert E. Tarullo; Jesse A. Montgomery (alternate)

*Historian:* Brian L. De Jong

*Home Missions and Church Extension:* ministers James J. Cassidy, John Currie, Donald M. Poundstone; ruling elders Gregory S. DeJong, Garret A. Hoogerhyde

*Pensions:* minister Darren S. Thole; ruling elders Bruce A. Stahl, David Winslow, Jr.

*Trustees of the OPC:* minister Richard N. Ellis; ruling elder Edward K. Tress



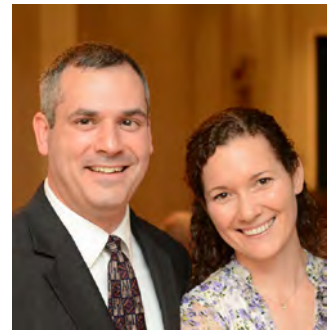
## AUG-SEPT

*Items pertaining specifically to events in September are in italics.*

1. Retired missionaries **Betty Andrews, Cal and Edie Cummings, Greet Rietkerk, and Young and Mary Lou Son**. Pray for the encouragement they offer those on their former fields of service. / **Paul and Sarah Mourreale**, St. Louis, Mo. Pray for the Lord to provide an accompanist for Gateway OPC. / **Jim Gidley**, president of the Subcommittee on Ministerial Training.
2. **Josh and Kristen McKamy**, Chambersburg, Pa. Pray that the Lord would add three new families to Covenant OPC this year. / Affiliated missionaries **Jerry and Marilyn Farnik**, Prague, Czech Republic. Pray for their efforts to witness for Christ in their community. / **Mark Lowrey**, director of publications at Great Commission Publications.
3. Missionary associates **Kathleen Winslow**, Czech Republic, and **Rebecca Call**, Uruguay. / **Brad and Cinamon Peppo**, Springfield, Ohio. Pray that God would bring unbelievers to Living Water OPC's evangelistic Bible study this weekend. / *New Horizons*: managing editor **Jim Scott** and cover designer **Chris Tobias**.
4. **Mark and Karissa Soud**, Birmingham, Ala. Pray for fruit from Redeemer Presbyterian Church's outreach activities. / **Ray and Michele Call**, Montevideo, Uruguay. Pray for blessings on the church-planting work. / Short-term Missions Coordinator **David Nakhla**. Pray for fruit from this summer's short-term missions efforts, both on the field and in the lives of the missionaries.
5. Missionary associates **Markus and Sharon Jeromin**, Montevideo, Uruguay. Pray for fruitful contacts with their neighbors. / **Tim and Deborah Herndon**, West Lebanon, N.H. Pray that God would save local families and bring them to worship at Providence Presbyterian Church. / **Richard (and Erin) Chung**, yearlong intern at Theophilus OPC in Anaheim, Calif.
6. Home Missions staff administrator **Sean Gregg**. / **Mark and Jeni Richline**, Montevideo, Uruguay (on furlough). Pray for balance in scheduling travel, time for study, and rest with the family. / Committee on Coordination: **Jan Gregson**, assistant to the finance director; **Charlene Tipton**, database administrator; **Mark Stumpff**, office assistant.
7. **Ben and Melanie Westerveld**, Quebec, Canada. Pray that families whose children attended English Bible camps will come to church. / **Mika and Christina Edmondson**, Grand Rapids, Mich. Pray for continued development in the ministry of New City Fellowship. / **Janet Birkmann**, Diaconal Ministries administrative assistant.
8. **Joshua and Jessica Lyon**, Carson, Calif. Pray for ac-

tive participation in Grace OPC's summer outreach programs. / Missionary associate **Jennifer Nelson**, Quebec, Canada. Pray for a new missionary associate as Jennifer completes her term of service. / *Ordained Servant*: editor **Greg Reynolds** and proofreader **Diane Olinger**.

9. **Heero and Anya Hacquebord**, L'viv, Ukraine. Pray for follow-up with contacts who attended last month's English/Bible camp. / **Kim and Barbara Kuhfuss**, Eau Claire, Wis. Pray that visitors to Providence Reformed Church will desire to join in communicant fellowship. / Navy chaplains **Tim (and Janine) Power** and **John (and Linda) Carter**.
10. **Chris and Megan Hartshorn**, Anaheim Hills, Calif. Pray for boldness in inviting people to Anaheim Hills Presbyterian Church, and for conversions and adult baptisms. / **Ben and Heather Hopp**, Haiti (on furlough). Pray for good visits in OP churches. / **Wayne (and Suzanne) Veenstra**, year-long intern at Harvest OPC in Wyoming, Mich.
11. Associate missionaries **Octavius and Marie Delfils**, Haiti. Pray for the preaching of the Word in Haiti. / **Lowell and Mae Ivey**, Virginia Beach, Va. Pray for wisdom as Reformation Presbyterian Church considers ways to reach out to their community. / *New Horizons*: editorial assistant **Pat Clawson** and proofreader **Sarah Pederson**.
12. Home Missions general secretary **John Shaw**. / **Mr. and Mrs. F.**, Asia. Pray for the continued growth and development of the two young churches in the city where they work. / Pray for Christian Education general secretary **Danny Olinger** as he serves as director of the Ministerial Training Institute of the OPC.
13. Pray for missionary associates **D. V. and S. Z.**, Asia. / Pray for **David Crum**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of Southern California, as he regularly visits mission works and organized congregations in the region. / **Andrew (and Cyndi) Myers**, summer intern at Calvary OPC in Glenside, Pa.
14. **Andrew and Billie Moody**, San Antonio, Tex. Pray for officers at San Antonio Reformed Church. / Tentmaker missionary **T. L. L.**, Asia (on furlough). Pray that her time of furlough will refresh and strengthen her for future service. / **Adam (and Noelle) Wells**, summer intern at Lakeview OPC in Rockport, Maine.



Lowell and Mae Ivey

- 15.** Pray for **Mr. and Mrs. M.**, Asia, as they move to a different city to pursue another avenue of ministry. / **Jim and Bonnie Hoekstra**, Andover, Minn. Pray that the Lord would add four new families to Immanuel OPC by the end of the year. / Summer interns **William (and Kelly) Wood** at Trinity OPC in Easton, Pa., and **Zachary (and Annie) Simmons** at Grace OPC in Vienna, Va.
- 16.** **Jim and Eve Cassidy**, Austin, Tex. Pray that the Lord would add several new families to South Austin Presbyterian Church. / Missionary associates **Mr. and Mrs. C.**, Asia. Pray that the Lord would provide additional workers to assist the Mission. / Army chaplain **David (and Jenna) DeRienzo**.
- 17.** Pray for tentmaker missionary **T. D.**, Asia, as she assists a missionary family with their children's education. / **Phil Strong**, Lander, Wyo. Pray that Grace Reformed Fellowship will know the love of Christ. / **Daniel (and Marcy) Borvan**, yearlong intern at Merrimack Valley Presbyterian Church in North Andover, Mass.
- 18.** **Ron and Carol Beabout**, Gaithersburg, Md. Pray that Trinity Reformed Church will effectively reach out to its community. / Pray for a quick adjustment to life on the field for new missionary associates **E. K. and D. M.**, Asia. / **Adrian (and Rachel) Crum**, yearlong intern at Bayview OPC in Chula Vista, Calif.
- 19.** **Brian and Dorothy Wingard**, South Africa. Pray for their efforts to present Christ through their teaching. / **John and Wenny Ro**, Chicago, Ill. (downtown). Pray that God would bring new people to Gospel Life Presbyterian Church through its outreach activities. / **Doug Watson**, part-time staff accountant, and **Kathy Bube**, Loan Fund administrator.
- 20.** **Robert and Christy Arendale**, Houston, Tex. Pray for God's Spirit to direct and empower Cornerstone OPC's gospel witness. / **David and Sunshine Okken**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for the teaching ministries in the local villages. / Yearlong interns **Bulut Yasar** at New Life OPC in Montoursville (Williamsport), Pa., and **Joseph Johnson** at Trinity OPC in Hatboro, Pa.
- 21.** Missionary associates **Heather Foss** and **Christopher and Chloe Verdick**, Nakaale, Uganda. / **Mike and Katy Myers**, Royston, Ga. Pray that God would change the hearts of people in Royston to love and serve Jesus Christ, and bring them to Heritage Presbyterian Church. / **Andy (and Anna) Smith**, yearlong intern at Bethel Presbyterian Church in Wheaton, Ill.
- 22.** **Tom and Martha Albaugh**, Pittsburgh, Pa. Pray for new visitors to come to Redeemer OPC Mission. / **David and Rashel Robbins**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for David as he presents the gospel to those who come to the clinic for treatment. / **Ryan (and Rochelle) Cavanaugh**, yearlong intern at Prescott Presbyterian Church in Prescott, Arizona.
- 23.** **Eric and Dianna Tuininga**, Mbale, Uganda. Pray for the family as they begin a six-month furlough in the U.S. / **Jay and Andrea Bennett**, Neon, Ky. Pray for the Lord to organize Neon Reformed Presbyterian Church into a local congregation by 2020. / **David Haney**, director of finance and planned giving.
- 24.** **Christopher and Ann Malamisuro**, Cincinnati, Ohio. Pray that God would bless Good Shepherd OPC's two summer outreach Bible studies. / Missionary associates **John and Alice Steenhof**, Mbale, Uganda. Pray that new believers will grow in grace. / **Jon (and Kim) Beall**, summer intern at New Covenant Community Church in Joliet, Ill.
- 25.** Pray for Foreign Missions general secretary **Mark Bube** as he reports to the Committee on Foreign Missions meeting this week. / **Jim and Tricia Stevenson**, Tulsa, Okla. Pray for Providence OPC, that God's elect will be brought in. / Pray for stated clerk **Ross Graham** as he works on the minutes and yearbook of the 83rd General Assembly.
- 26.** Pray for **Dave Holmlund**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of Philadelphia, as he follows up on contacts and begins Bible studies. / Foreign Missions administrative assistant **Linda Posthuma** and secretary **Katrina Zartman**. / **Miller (and Stephanie) Ansell**, yearlong intern at Faith Presbyterian Church in Garland, Tex.
- 27.** Pray for Foreign Missions associate general secretary **Douglas Clawson** as the Committee begins two days of meetings. / **Brian and Sara Chang**, Cottonwood, Ariz. Pray that Christ Reformed Presbyterian Church will have new opportunities to make known the name of Christ. / **Bryan (and Heidi) Dage**, yearlong intern at Covenant OPC in Komoka, Ontario.
- 28.** Home Missions associate general secretary **Al Tricarico**. / **Charles and Connie Jackson**, Mbale, Uganda. Pray for the training of church leaders. / Pray for the **Subcommittee on Internet Ministries**, which oversees the OPC website.
- 29.** Missionary associates **Leah Hopp** and **Sarah Jantzen**, Uganda. / **Jonathan and Kristin Moersch**, Capistrano Beach, Calif. Pray that the saints of Trinity Presbyterian Church will continue to grow in their love for God and neighbor. / **Alan Strange** and **Derrick Vander Meulen**, coeditors of the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal*.
- 30.** **Eric and Donna Hausler**, Naples, Fla. Praise God for his continued blessing on Christ the King Presbyterian Church, and pray that it will continue. / **Bob and Martha Wright**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for Martha as she directs the Karamoja Education Outreach for preschoolers. / **Ryan (and Rachel) Heaton**, yearlong intern at Tyler Presbyterian Church in Tyler, Tex.
- 31.** Affiliated missionaries **Craig and Ree Coulbourne** and **Linda Karner**, Japan. Pray for the teaching and outreach ministries with which they work. / **Bill and Sessie Welzien**, Key West, Fla. Pray that the Lord would add people to Keys Presbyterian Church. / **Michael (and Melissa) Spangler**, summer intern at Providence Presbyterian Church in Greensboro, N.C.

# THE ESSENCE AND HEART OF LIFE

// JOSEPH A. KELLER

A large number of brothers and sisters have lived their adult lives in harmony and friendship with one another. They have brought their families together for family reunions and Christmas gatherings. They have helped one another fix things and have given advice and counsel to one another. They have visited frequently with each another.

But then one event hits them that comes to all families, and as a result of their reaction to it, they are torn apart. They stop going to family reunions and Christmas gatherings. They stop visiting each other and refuse to speak with each other. Some even say that they do not want to see the others ever again.

What one event happens to all families and so often irreparably damages them? It is the death of their parents and the dividing of the inheritance. The fights over who gets the money and goods that have been left behind are often so acrimonious and so hurtful that families are torn apart for the rest of their lives. It has been said, "When there is an inheritance, 99 percent of the people become wolves."

Luke 12:13-15 appears to describe just such a situation. A man came up to Jesus and said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me." There were courts to handle such matters, but this man wanted Jesus to override all authority and give to him what he wanted. It does not appear that the man's brother was even present to give his side of the story.

Jesus replied, "Man, who made me a judge or arbitrator over you?" Then Jesus went on to teach us all a vital lesson. He said, "Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the

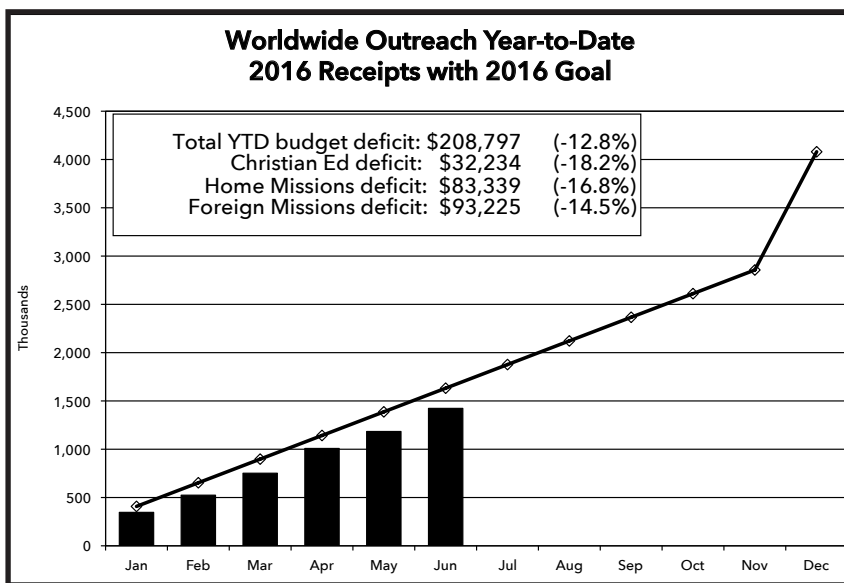
abundance of his possessions."

How common it is for us to think that our lives will be happier and more full if we just have more things, but this is greed. Greed is the worship of a false god, a god that drives us to always want more and more things. It is an inner attitude that drives us to do things that are sinful and hurtful to other people in order to get more things. And feeding greed only creates more greed. Trying to find contentedness in a life of things is like trying to quench our thirst by drinking more and more salt water.

The essence and heart of life is not to be found in things, but in a saving relationship with God and in loving relationships with people. A life of fulfillment and peace comes from knowing God, from having precious relationships with God and with people, and from using the things God has given us in order to serve God and people. A greedy heart seeks happiness where it can never be found, in things. A greedy heart uses people and abuses people in order to get things. But true godliness, thankfulness, contentment, and joy in giving come from using the things and resources that God has given to us in order to glorify God and minister to people.

Jesus went on to tell the Parable of the Rich Fool, which reminds us that we do not know how long we will live to enjoy the things we have saved up. Rather than seeking to lay up treasures on earth, Jesus exhorts us to seek to be "rich toward God" (v. 21). He means that a life that is honoring to God is a life that is generous in giving of our money, time, talents, and energies, to advance the glory of God in the world and help those who are in need.

*The author is the pastor of Christ Covenant Church in Dallas, Tex.*



## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

# DOROTHY ANDERSON BARKER: WRITER

// ANN H. HART



Dorothy Anderson (later Barker) showing education materials to ministers

Dorothy Anderson Barker recalled the first time she was contacted about working for the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC). She was a recent college grad, teaching at a Christian school north of Boston.

“I received a letter that began: ‘You have been chosen ...’ It had a nice Presbyterian ring to it,” she added wryly.

She accepted the volunteer writing assignment, believing that she could draw on her own Christian education growing up in the church. Over time, her writing labors proved among the most widely read Sunday school materials in the OPC. At retirement in 1987, Dorothy had worked for 33 years for the Committee on Christian Education (CCE), and was curriculum project editor with Great Commission Publications—the joint initiative with the Presbyterian Church in America.

The daughter of Hillis and Florence Partington, Dorothy grew up with her sister in Westfield, New Jersey. Mr. Partington served as an elder in the mainline Presbyterian church in Westfield. However, he and his wife grew increasingly dissatisfied with some of the denomination’s decisions. Dorothy remembers they objected to the denomination’s liberal tendencies and were disheartened by the direction of foreign missions and of Pearl Buck’s writings on missions.

And so it was that Dorothy found herself helping her parents set up rows of chairs at the local Masonic Temple for a special event featuring speaker J. Gresham Machen. Looking back on the event decades later, Dorothy found it ironic that she was exhausted that night and fell asleep on one of the back rows.

Her parents, however, were awake to Machen’s message. The Partingtons became charter members of Grace OPC in Westfield, founded in 1936. Providentially, the OPC was destined to be central to this pre-teen’s life in ways she could not have imagined.

In 1940, Rev. John Galbraith was called as pastor of

Grace OPC. He remembers Dorothy fondly. “She was a smart young woman, serious about her studies and the things of the Lord. If the church was open, Dorothy was there,” he recalls. The young people of the church, he recounted, were passionate about their faith. “They would take the train up to New York City to serve at a mission in the Bowery,” he said.

Dorothy excelled in school and entered Wheaton College at age 15. After her freshman year, she moved home for two years and then transferred to Barnard College, where she earned a BA in English. After college, she taught in a Christian school in Cambridge, Massachusetts. In her spare time, she also completed a master’s in education at Harvard University.

When Rev. Edmund Clowney was called as pastor at Grace OPC in Westfield in 1950, he recognized Dorothy as a gifted writer and editor. Clowney then enlisted her to help him write Sunday school curriculum for the CCE. In 1954, under his supervision, she produced a study of the Shorter Catechism for junior high school students. The original two-volume *Bible Doctrine: A Workbook Based on the Westminster Shorter Catechism* of the Westminster Assembly was compiled in a modest, spiral-bound notebook, selling for \$1.25 each. And yet the content was rich. The series divided the catechism into four parts: first, God and man; second, Christ; third, the law; and fourth, the means of grace. Never forgetting her young teen audience, Dorothy skillfully translated complicated material into concepts that teenagers could begin to grasp. The first printing of *Bible Doctrine* quickly sold out.

Undoubtedly, Dorothy drew on her skills as a teacher to communicate effectively. Consider her introduction to the workbook: “Nothing in life can be separated from God and His revelation of Himself.” With this in mind, she married artwork from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Yale University Art Gallery, and the Philadelphia Museum of Art with her copy to express the creativity of God and the creative gifts he has bestowed on man.

She also was alert to the needs of teachers: “The danger in

using workbooks is that the child will merely complete exercises in mechanical fashion and never see the lesson in its total message. The teacher's job is to keep the students from getting lost in the details."

In 1954 she also worked on a vacation Bible school course junior workbook called *Our Bible*, with lesson titles like "Moses the Prophet," "David the Psalmist," "Isaiah and Immanuel," "Jeremiah," and "Daniel." Moving to the New Testament, she wrote on "The Apostle Paul and Dr. Luke," on "Peter," and a review of the New Testament books.

While Dorothy believed that some materials already published by evangelical presses were appropriate, she was especially motivated to write catechetical materials on the riches of the Reformed faith. If she had a question or needed to know more, she visited Dr. Clowney's office and listened to "an hour lecture on biblical theology," she recalled.

Outside of work, Dorothy met Robert W. Anderson, a graduate of both Wheaton College and Westminster Seminary. They shared many interests, as well as a love of the gospel. On October 1, 1955, the couple were married, and Bob was ordained the next year. They soon were blessed with two sons, Jonathan and Peter.

After years of struggling with sermons, Bob left the pastoral ministry in 1968. The Andersons moved back to the greater Philadelphia area, where Bob served faithfully as an elder at Trinity OPC in Hatboro, Pennsylvania, and Dorothy played the organ for worship services.

Linda Posthuma, a friend who taught the Anderson sons at Philadelphia-Montgomery Christian Academy, recalls this period. "Bob Anderson was quiet and studious. The family lived in an older home in suburban Jenkintown. Dorothy was always a gracious hostess, a good cook, and a great conversationalist." Sadly, Robert died suddenly on April 4, 1977, at age 49.

In 1984, Dorothy married widower Richard Barker, the clerk of session at Grace OPC in Westfield. She had known Richard since their days as classmates at Westfield High School, where they both were members of the chess club. Mr. Galbraith commented that "Dorothy's father and Richard's father were elders together on the Westfield session when I was pastor."

In 2009, the Barkers moved from Westfield, New Jersey, and moved into the Quarryville Presbyterian Retirement Community. Richard died in 2012, leaving Dorothy a widow for a second time.

Friends who visit Dorothy these days say she welcomes them warmly. Although clearly slowing down at age 89, Dorothy still has a love of words and the Word, as well as an interest in others—qualities which have characterized her long, well-lived life.

*The author is a member of Hillsdale OPC in Hillsdale, Mich. This article is adapted from Choosing the Good Portion: Women of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (forthcoming).*

## ABCs of PRESBYTERIANISM

### An Extended Church Family

Larry Wilson

Independency recognizes no visible church of Christ on earth except separate, local churches. In contrast, Presbyterianism affirms that there is one visible church of Christ on earth, with every particular church as a part of the whole. As Edmund Clowney explains,

The unity of the church is fully recognized at both the local (parish) and the area (city) level. The New Testament presents a church that shows unity at local, regional, and ecumenical levels (Rom 16:5; 1 Cor 16:19; 2 Cor 11:8; 12:13; Acts 8:1; 11:22, 26; 13:1; Acts 9:31; 1 Cor 10:32; 12:28; Gal 1:13; Eph 1:22; Col 1:18).

Underlying this flexibility is the heavenly reality of the church of Christ which is manifested in the world. The doctrine of the church in Scripture is centered upon the Lord of the covenant, the Savior. It is in its structure theological through and through. Many of the problems that plague polity discussions are false problems because they are not theologically grounded. If the church is approached from a sociological rather than a theological standpoint the individual will be sundered from the community, and authority will become magisterial rather than ministerial. The confusion about the relation of the aspects of visibility and invisibility of the church can only grow until it is again recognized that the church as invisible is not some abstract ideal, but simply the church as God sees it, in contrast with the church as we see it. So also the church cannot be initially defined in terms either of the local congregation or the church universal. ("Distinctive Emphases in Presbyterian Church Polity," in *Pressing toward the Mark*, pp. 106–7)

This brings us right back to where we started—there is one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church gathered around our Savior in the heavenly places. She comes to more or less visible expression here on earth. She does so in broadening circles. We embrace her by faith, not by sight.

## ● Out of the Mouth . . .

During lunch, my nine-year-old daughter sank lower and lower into her chair until she was practically lying down while eating. When told to please sit up, she responded, "Why? Jesus reclined at table."

—Celeste Jenkins  
Madison, Wis.

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

# MARY SHAW: CHURCH PLANTING AS A WAY OF LIFE

// ANNE SHAW



*Bill and Mary (LeMahieu) Shaw on their wedding day in 1958*

Mary, a small brunette with large brown eyes, pushed her overflowing grocery cart through piles of slush, grim determination etched on her weary face. Twin boys, no more than two years old, sat squished together in the cart, chubby fists gripping the same bar she wrestled. She reached her car, a wood-paneled station wagon, lifted the rear door, and sighed. The trunk was full; there was no space for groceries.

Weeks ago, she and her husband, Bill, had volunteered to transport the hymnals and keyboard to and from the small bank building where a church plant of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church was meeting. Nothing could be left there during the week, and there was no one else to volunteer, except perhaps the pastor, but he traveled an hour to and from worship each Lord's Day and needed no more tasks.

And so Mary, undaunted, buckled the twins into their car seats, fit the groceries on the floor and between seats, and drove home.

The woman in this apocryphal story is my mother-in-law, Mary Lou LeMahieu Shaw, and one of those chubby-fisted twins is my husband, Rev. John Shaw, general secretary of Home Missions and Church Extension in the OPC. Perhaps a lack of space in the trunk doesn't count as a great sacrifice for the cause of Christ, but Mary's perseverance in circumstances like this—and in some of far greater weight—has made an impact on the OPC. She and her husband, Elder Bill Shaw, have worshipped and served in five OP mission works. Their example has encouraged many involved in church planting, including John and me. This is Mary's story:

Mary Lou LeMahieu was born on April 11, 1938, the first child born to Lewis LeMahieu and Lenore Van Ess LeMahieu. Mary grew up in Oostburg, Wisconsin, where nearly everyone she knew was either related to her, or went to church with her, or both. Mary's mother, grandparents, and nine aunts and uncles were charter members of Bethel OPC in

Oostburg. Her father, Lewis, grew up in the Reformed Church of America, but joined the OPC when he married Lenore. Mary and her six siblings were each baptized at Bethel OPC.

Mary grew up attending church services, prayer meetings, and Sunday school, went to a Christian elementary school, and was part of a Bible study taught by local pastors in the public high school. In Bethel's high school Sunday school class, she memorized the Westminster Shorter Catechism twice—once through ninth and tenth grades, and again through eleventh and twelfth grades. Before graduation, she and her classmates each went before the session and answered any of the 107 catechism questions they were asked!

In 1958 Mary's horizons broadened when she married her sweetheart, Bill. He had been a trumpet player and athlete from a rival high school. When they played together in the Kohler Company Band—he on trumpet and she on clarinet—they got acquainted and fell in love.

As Bill pursued his romance with Mary, he began attending church with her family. Under the weekly preaching and personal tutelage of Rev. John Verhage, Bill embraced the Reformed faith. At Mary's mother's insistence, Bill joined Bethel OPC before the couple was allowed to marry.

After Bill's graduation in January 1960, he took a job in San Diego, California, far from their families. The move was a little less lonely, though, after the young couple was welcomed by Paradise Hills OPC. Elder Hiram Bellis and his wife, Edna, showed much-needed hospitality, and even allowed them to share their home for a time after the Shaws' lease ran out.

Within the year, the Shaws moved to La Habra, California, where they were welcomed by a church plant, which eventually became Hacienda Heights OPC. Pastor Wilson Albright and his wife, Jane, opened their home to care for Mary after the caesarean section birth of her first child, David, in January 1961.

When David was ten months old, Bill's work took them

back to Oostburg, Wisconsin. Mary quickly became active in Bethel OPC again. She taught ladies' Bible studies and helped to organize hospitality for a presbytery meeting. A second son, Jeffrey, was born during that time.

Happily ensconced in her hometown and her home church, and close to her large extended family, Mary had no desire to move away. Yet, in the spring of 1967, Bill's work once again necessitated a move, this time to Chicago.

The Shaws quickly became involved in a mission work, pastored by Rev. Donald Parker, which would become Forest View OPC in Tinley Park, Illinois. The work met in a small room at Trinity Christian College, providing a challenge for the young mother with two wiggly little boys.

The Shaws moved four years later to Dayton, Ohio, where Rev. Lawrence Eyres pastored a church plant, now Redeemer OPC in Beavercreek. Mary learned much from his wife, Geraldine. Mrs. Eyres was hospitable, intelligent, and an excellent teacher, and she did everything with love: she never had a negative thing to say about anyone.

Not long after the birth of twin boys in 1972, the Shaws moved to Columbus, Ohio, where they found a need for a faithful, Reformed church. With years of church-planting under their belts and a Bible study already started in their home, they approached the session of Redeemer OPC and Rev. Eyres with the idea of starting a mission work. The session agreed to share their pastor's time, and, even while approaching the traditional age for retirement, the Eyres were willing to expend their time and energy on an endeavor which daunts many younger people.

Pastor Eyres travelled to Columbus for weekly Bible studies until the core group called an organizing pastor, Rev. Robert Y. Eckardt. During this time, the Shaws traveled back to Dayton every Sunday, enjoying the hospitality of different church families between morning and evening services. The congregation in Columbus met for a time in a bank building—Sunday school classes were held in stairwells, chairs needed to be set up and torn down weekly, and hymnals and a keyboard were stored at the Shaws' and transported to and from services. The Shaws shouldered as much of the burden as they could, employing their four young sons to carry hymnals, set up chairs, greet visitors, and show hospitality in their own home. Christmas parties and fellowship meals happened in the Shaw home and the homes of other core members. In the Lord's good providence, Grace OPC was established and grew.

But Bill and Mary were not through with church planting. Or, rather, the Lord was not through using them to help plant his church. Well into their retirement years, Bill and

Mary drove 45 minutes across Columbus to Providence OPC in Pickerington, providing invaluable wisdom and encouragement through the ups and downs of church planting.

In 2014 the Shaws moved to Green Bay, Wisconsin, where they worship at New Hope OPC. Mary was happy to retire from her duties as worship accompanist, but she and Bill continue to encourage and build up the church as they always have.

Mary Shaw knows well the difficulties of church planting: the discouragement of core families leaving or moving away, the frustration of expending large amounts of energy for seemingly small results, the worry of wondering who would come to church in a bank building or a smoke-filled bar, the exhaustion and expense of finding outside venues for special events because the worship rental space won't accommodate them, the loneliness of being the only people in your age group, the anxiety of seeing your children lonely because no other families will attend when there is no youth group. She knows well the sacrifices required of those who accept the challenge of church planting.

And yet, she knows the joy of being a part of a pilgrim people; of knowing fellow believers so deeply they become as close as family; of taking on jobs and challenges one might never have considered except for an immediate, pressing need; of enjoying friendships with believers all over the country; and of looking back over the years and seeing the Lord's hand at work in individuals, congregations, and communities.

Mary is known as a leader, most often leading by example: in hospitality and hard work, being willing to take on whatever tasks need to be done (including drawing on two years of piano lessons to accompany countless worship services), maintaining a positive attitude, and resting in God's good providence to provide anything lacking.

Karen Eckardt, wife of Rev. Bob Eckardt, recalled Mary's kindness to her as a young pastor's wife: "She led by her quiet steadiness and godly example." Another daughter in the Lord wrote, "People from her church, her extended family, those from the neighborhood, students from the school where her children attended, and the international community were treated to home-cooked meals and warm fellowship." One of Mary's sons remembered her willingness to play even a Wurlitzer organ more suited to a jazz set than a worship service, and making it fit the service.

Mary Lou LeMahieu Shaw was trained early in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, was called into his glorious light, and was led to serve the Lord in ways she never anticipated—not in dramatic or drastic ways, perhaps, but in steady, kingdom-building ways. From state to state, home to home, congregation to core group to church plant, Mary has used whatever talents and abilities the Lord has given her for the good of the church, for the good of the OPC, and for his glory.

*The author is a member of Calvary OPC in Glenside, Pa. Adapted from Choosing the Good Portion (forthcoming).*

## **Home Missions Today**

For up-to-date Home Missions news and prayer updates, e-mail [HomeMissionsToday@opc.org](mailto:HomeMissionsToday@opc.org).  
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# MARGARET FALK: SPIRITUAL GROWTH IN PRISON

// JAMIE DEAN



*Margaret Falk talking with an Eritrean Christian*

On the last day of her imprisonment in an Eritrean jail, missionary wife Margaret Falk had a surprising realization: “There was no place in the world I would rather have been than in that prison cell.” That 15-foot cell—with concrete floors, no beds, dozens of other women, and a single plastic bucket—had transformed for Margaret during her four days with other Christians jailed for their faith. “It was a taste of heaven,” she says.

It hadn’t seemed that way just a few days earlier. Margaret had arrived at the prison on Sunday, April 29, 2007. That morning, Eritrean authorities rounded up churchgoers after morning worship at the house where her husband, Jonathan, led services as part of his work as an Orthodox Presbyterian Church missionary. Authorities sent the men to one prison, and the women to another. At the last moment, police sent Jonathan to the same prison with his wife and the women they had served in the vibrant church for the last five years.

For Margaret, the week ahead would prove trying and triumphant, as the Lord led her from discouragement in her circumstances to delight in his sovereignty, and blessing in the fellowship of precious saints acquainted with suffering. She would awake in the mornings on the concrete floor with an aching back, but thinking of a refrain that had proved true through many seasons of her life. “Whate’er my God ordains is right,” she sang to her Eritrean cellmates. “Holy his will abideth. I will be still whate’er He doth; and follow where He guideth.”

God’s appointed road for Margaret Graham Falk began in Chico, California, where she was born in 1949. In the ninth grade, a friend invited her to a Baptist revival meeting. Convinced of her sin, she embraced Christ as he was offered in the gospel. “That’s where the journey began,” she says.

Margaret’s journey continued in Santa Barbara, California, at Westmont College—a school she chose from a

college catalog. Within a year, Margaret met Jonathan Falk at a poster-making party, where he was preparing to run for vice president of the sophomore class. (He won.) By the next fall, the pair was dating. They married on June 14, 1970.

After graduation, the newlyweds spent a year overseas, studying Hebrew for a semester in Jerusalem, and then three months on a kibbutz—a communal farming community in northern Israel. The experience was transformative. As Jonathan read the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit convicted Jonathan of his sin and the meaning of Christ’s death on the cross. After they left Israel, the couple spent time at L’Abri, where Margaret first encountered the doctrines of Reformed theology.

After returning to the United States in 1972, Jonathan publicly professed faith in Christ and was baptized. He eventually attended Westminster Seminary. During their years in Philadelphia, the couple attended an OPC church plant. During Jonathan’s final year at Westminster, Margaret gave birth to a son, Christopher. Two years later they welcomed their daughter, Katie. And nine years later the Lord gave them one more daughter, Emily.

After seminary, Jonathan served as pastor of Grace OPC in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, and Pilgrim OPC in Bangor, Maine, for nineteen years. Then, after two short-term trips to assist OPC missionaries in Uganda, Jonathan received an unexpected phone call from the Committee on Foreign Missions: would he consider serving full-time as a missionary in Uganda? Margaret remembers their conversations and prayers about moving to Africa hinged on a simple question: were they willing to go? She says they prayed: “Lord, here’s our willingness, you supply everything else’... and that’s exactly what he did.”

As the family settled into life in Mbale, Uganda, in 1999, Margaret homeschooled their youngest daughter, and found ways to serve. She sat under a tree and taught the story of baby Moses to African children sitting on a papyrus reed mat. She



enjoyed teaching Ugandan women who were often unfamiliar with stories in the Bible. “I could start the story of Esther, and they didn’t know how it was going to end,” she remembers. “It was really, really fun.”

Two and a half years later, another unexpected call came: the CFM asked Jonathan and Margaret if they would join Brian and Dorothy Wingard in the work of starting a theological college in Eritrea, and they accepted.

In Eritrea, Margaret taught English classes, led a women’s Bible study, and tutored a boy with Down syndrome. As the mission work advanced, the restrictions from the government grew. The church wasn’t allowed to display a sign, they had to close the shutters during worship, and the members entered a few at a time through a back door. Despite the restrictions, on most Sundays as many as ninety Eritreans packed into the living room and spilled down the halls to worship the Lord.

Authorities arbitrarily arrested Christians, and conscripted young people into military service. The Falks watched as officials interrogated and expelled foreign workers who had been in the country for decades. They expected a day authorities would tell them to leave too.

Instead a very different day arrived.

On Sunday, April 27, 2007, as the Falks left morning worship in Asmara, authorities arrived at the house. The police packed the men into one set of trucks, and the women into another. As Jonathan and Margaret sat in a prison courtyard that afternoon, Margaret gave the other women items they might be able to use: hand sanitizer, chap stick, tissue, and her Bible. By evening Margaret realized she would be in jail too. Authorities escorted her and Jonathan to adjacent cells, and an extraordinary four days began.

Margaret’s first night in jail was difficult. The 15-foot by 12-foot cell with concrete floors had no beds, no blankets, and no bathroom. Jailers escorted the women to three pit toilets outside their cell three times a day.

Space was tight. Twenty-five women from the church filled the cell, but since many had been imprisoned for their faith before, they knew what to do. They organized their few supplies and waited. That evening family members brought blankets, water, and food—the only way Eritrean prisoners obtain supplies.

That night Margaret shared a blanket with five other women on the hard floor, as jailers turned on a bright light that burned all night. Her sympathetic cellmates told Margaret she didn’t deserve to be in jail, since she was an American. Margaret found herself agreeing, and says a cloak of self-pity and pride began to settle over her. She tried to pray, but found herself distracted. She tried to sleep, but found very little rest. She propped herself up against the wall and waited for morning.

When morning came, she formulated a plan. She learned another prisoner had a cell phone. Margaret asked to borrow it, and remembered the phone number to the US embassy. She raced to make a fast call with a fading battery. When Margaret

reached the embassy, the operator put her on hold.

An embassy official finally answered, and said he’d come right away. When the embassy official arrived, he asked to see the Americans. The jailer’s reply: There are no Americans here. Unable to persuade him, the embassy official left. It was a discouraging blow.

That evening the women in her cell huddled for a time of prayer and sharing testimonies. For Margaret, something changed. “It was during that time of prayer that night that the Lord just humbled me—to the core of my pride, of my trusting in myself, trusting in anything but him,” she remembers. “He showed me that he was in control, and I was there because he wanted me to be. That I would be there as long as he wanted me to be there. He just flooded me with peace. It was the most marvelous experience.”

The next three days were full of prayer and praise, as the women in Margaret’s cell shared remarkable testimonies of enduring persecution at the government’s hands. They passed around Bibles, reading favorite passages aloud. They sang hymns—sometimes two or three at a time when jailers demanded they stay quiet. Each morning, Margaret would awake with the three women who slept near her and sing the words of Lamentations 3:22: “The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases.”

On Wednesday authorities interrogated Margaret, asking questions about how long she had been in the country and what kind of visa she possessed. They led her to a room where Jonathan was waiting. He was in good health, and the couple enjoyed a reunion.

The next morning the authorities promised to release the Falks, but also gave a command: Jonathan could no longer preach or teach in Eritrea. The school was closed. The church was closed. With that, they said, “You’re free to go.”

Jonathan and Margaret left, but returned that evening with supplies for those they left behind. They also decided not to leave the country until authorities forced them to go. Mostly, Margaret says, “because the shepherd doesn’t leave the sheep.”

Five days later the order came: they had to leave their beloved Eritrea.

The Falks were sad to see their service ending, but grateful for the years of fruitful work the Lord provided. Their greatest grief: Authorities didn’t release their fellow cellmates until after the Falks left the country. They never got to say good-bye.

Still, they give thanks for their remarkable time in Eritrea, and for the days they spent imprisoned with fellow believers. “If I would have gotten out when I wanted to, I wouldn’t have learned anything that the Lord had to teach me,” says Margaret. “I just needed this very desperately.”

*The author is a member of Matthews OPC in Matthews, N.C. This article is adapted from Choosing the Good Portion: Women of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (Committee for the Historian, forthcoming).*

# MARRIAGE, SEXUALITY, AND FAITHFUL WITNESS



PATRICIA E. CLAWSON // In light of the changing attitudes and laws in America regarding marriage and sexuality, the Committee on Christian Education sponsored a conference before the start of the OPC's Eighty-third General Assembly to address these developments. About 140 pastors, elders, and members attended

the conference, held on June 8 at Glasgow Presbyterian Church (PCA) in Bear, Delaware.

During the four-hour forum, three speakers discussed the cultural, legal, and ministerial issues, joined by a fourth participant for a panel discussion. "The conference's main purpose was to educate the church—and especially office-bearers—for understanding the current cultural climate with respect to sex and marriage and to help equip them for ministering faithfully in this context," said David VanDrunen, chairman of the CCE's Special Committee on Marriage and Sexuality. The Special Committee was set up in 2015 to help the church uphold the biblical teaching on marriage and sexuality in view of increasing antagonism from society.

## The Historical Foundation

Carl R. Trueman, OP pastor and professor at Westminster Theological Seminary, showed how the secular culture's understanding of sexual identity has shifted over the years away from Christian morality. The individual has become the center of the universe, supposedly free to define his or her own truth. "We need to help our congregations understand why we believe as we do and how the world around us is at-



Conference participants Troxel, Marshall, Geiger, Trueman, and Beck

tempting to reshape their thinking," said Trueman. Sigmund Freud identified sex as the center of human identity and equated genital stimulation with happiness, which, according to author Rosaria Butterfield, turned sex from something we *do* into something we *are*.

When sex became a person's identity rather than what a person does, sexuality became a civil rights issue, he said. As a result, said Trueman, "it is virtually impossible to express any dissent with the movement without being immediately categorized as an irrational bigot motivated by hate."

Trueman explained that many of these changing attitudes toward human identity and sexuality came about

through the entertainment industry's movies, TV shows, and commercials. The lead gay character in the sitcom *Will and Grace*, for example, was likable and attractive, which made it seem wrong to criticize him for his sexual "preference." Also, pornography has had a profoundly negative impact by detaching sex from relationships and promoting the importance of immediate gratification.

Trueman warned the church not to underestimate the power of this change in thinking. He urged congregations to receive God's grace in this matter through the Word, the sacrament, and prayer. Pastors must be better prepared to provide guidance on how to respond

to new situations that are arising, such as having transgendered coworkers.

The church also needs to recognize the difficulties facing those who have been redeemed from wicked lifestyles. He cited Rosaria Butterfield, whose life as a professor was destroyed and who was branded a traitor when she forsook her radical lesbian feminism and became a Christian. Trueman challenged local churches to be communities marked by love for God and others.

Recognizing that the battle is lost on a national level, Trueman believes that it can be successful locally. We may be unable to change how the church is portrayed in the mass media, but by showing hospitality to outsiders, we can show that the church doesn't fit how it is being caricatured.

### The Legal Shifts

PCA elder Randy Beck, who teaches constitutional law at the University of Georgia, spoke about the shifts in legal thinking which paved the way for last year's Supreme Court decision upholding same-sex marriage. Beck warned us, as citizens of heaven, that we shouldn't be surprised by laws and rulings "foreign" to our faith.

Citing numerous court decisions over time, Beck showed how the Supreme Court's expansive interpretation of the Fourteenth Amendment has undermined marriage. In 1996, the Supreme Court for the first time viewed homosexuals as a "class," which led the way to them gaining status as a minority group. A 2012 ruling required the federal government to recognize same-sex marriages that are valid under state law. In 2015, the Court ruled that same-sex marriage is a right protected by the Fourteenth Amendment.

This decision raises concern about how religious organizations will be treated if they recognize only traditional marriages, said Beck. He cited Chief Justice Roberts, who noted that the majority on the Court suggested that religious groups may continue to "advocate" and "teach" their views on marriage, but omitted mentioning any

freedom to "exercise" their religious views on this matter. Roberts wondered what would happen, for example, if a religious college denied married housing to same-sex couples. While churches and pastors would probably not be required to violate their religious beliefs, because of their First Amendment protections, Beck suggested that individuals may suffer consequences in the workplace.

### Walking alongside Those in Need

PCA minister Timothy Geiger, executive director of Harvest USA, outlined ways for the church to minister to those struggling with same-sex attraction and gender dysphoria (i.e., feeling one's emotional and psychological identity to be the opposite of one's biological gender). Geiger said, "If the church is silent about biblical sexuality, sexual sin, and repentance, and the fact that it is common for those in the church to struggle, it misses an opportunity to address one of the chief ways in which church members and their families are falling into idolatry and unbelief."

Many of those struggling with sexual sin don't reveal their difficulties

because of shame, guilt, and fear of condemnation, exposure, and church discipline. Sexual sin becomes idolatry when the desire for it takes the form of "I *must* have this." While repentance is the answer, including fearing the Lord and fleeing from sin, Geiger warned that it does not change one's sexual desires.

Geiger encouraged the church to help those who struggle to grow in God's grace and to live transparently and with accountability through relationships. He urged pastors and elders to develop strategies to reach out to those in need, preach and teach how God's grace applies, encourage small group relationships, bring mature men alongside younger men (and the same with women), and encourage those who have repented to share their testimony.

"If we are in Christ, we don't have the right to define ourselves (as a gay or transgendered Christian)," said Geiger. "Sexual sin is not only an issue in the culture; it is also impacting the very body of Christ. We are called to walk with, and bear the burdens of, those who need to be restored."

### Panel Discussion

The conference concluded with a panel discussion in which the three speakers were joined by Jennifer A. Marshall from the Heritage Foundation. They answered selected questions raised by audience members after the main presentations and posed by moderator and CCE member Craig Troxel. Citing the federal government's new regulations requiring physicians to offer gender-transforming treatments, Marshall warned that "this is only the tip of the iceberg." She added, however, that "the Reformed view of God's redemptive work in history is a wonderful help in navigating between faith and the public square."

The CCE's Special Committee plans to post resources on [www.opc.org](http://www.opc.org) and address the transgender issue in a future issue of *New Horizons*. □

*The author is the editorial assistant of New Horizons magazine.*



Troxel, Marshall, CCE member Alan Strange

# TOGETHER WITH ONE VOICE



STEPHEN. J. TRACEY // This year the OPC General Assembly and the United Reformed Churches in North America Synod met in two separate locations, chronologically back to back. The OPC finished its business on Monday, June 13, while the URCNA began its business on that same day, with four delegates from the OPC

present: Stephen Tracey, Alan Strange, David Winslow, Jr., and Danny Olinger. Lord willing, the next time the URCNA Synod meets, it will do so concurrently with the OPC General Assembly at Wheaton College in June 2018.

Each body will have its own business to conduct. However, the commissioners will have the privilege, in a small way, of fulfilling the apostolic prayer that we may “live in such harmony with one another ... that *together [we] may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*” (Rom. 15:5–6).

It is no small act of ecumenicity to glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ with one voice, *together*. The steps taken toward the publication of the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal* are not merely an ecumenical gesture, but an important ecumenical action.

Ten years ago the Orthodox Presbyterian Church began working on a psalter hymnal. It crossed a significant threshold when this year’s General Assembly, meeting in Sandy Cove, Maryland, voted to approve the hymn selections (having already approved the Psalm selections at a previous Assembly).

This year, the URCNA Synod, meeting in Wyoming, Michigan, voted without dissent to approve the same

hymn selections. The URCNA has been working on a psalter hymnal since 1999. The two churches combined efforts in 2011, and now both have agreed to move to publication.

The publication of the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal* is deeply significant. Not all agree we should sing all the Psalms, but we are delighted to be allowed to choose for ourselves. The *Trinity Psalter Hymnal* is a statement about worship: that we continue to be committed to theologically rich, scriptural songs in the public worship of God.

The URCNA Synod Wyoming decided not only to accept the hymn recommendations, but also not to insist on

including their liturgical forms in the back of the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal*, as has been their custom. Thus, it will contain all 150 psalms, a selection of 428 hymns, the Westminster Standards as adopted by the OPC, the Three Forms of Unity, and three ecumenical creeds.

It was no small joy to be part of the General Assembly (as a commissioner) and the Synod (as a fraternal delegate) that took these steps. It will be no small joy to meet together in 2018, with our brothers in Christ, to sing the praises of Jesus together. □

*The author is the pastor of Lakeview OPC in Rockport, Maine.*



URCNA pastor Steven Oeverman speaking at the URCNA Synod Wyoming

# NEWS, VIEWS, & REVIEWS

## CLARENCE VELD INSTALLED IN BARTLESVILLE, OKLAHOMA

*Tricia Stevenson*

The ordination and installation service for Clarence E. Veld was held on February 19 at Westminster OPC in Bartlesville, Oklahoma. He was ordained by the Presbytery of the Central U.S. as a minister and installed as pastor of Westminster OPC.

Dr. Joseph A. Pipa, Jr., the president of Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, preached from 1 Peter 4:10–11 on “God’s Provision for His Church.” Rev. Peter C. Van Doodewaard, the pastor of Covenant Community Church (OPC) in Taylors, South Carolina, gave the charge to the minister. Dr. Kevin M. Backus, the pastor of Bible Presbyterian Church in Grand Island, New York, gave the charge to the congregation.

Reverend Veld and his wife, Adriana, have been married for nearly seventeen years. They have been blessed with three sons and a daughter. Clarence is a graduate of Westminster Seminary California (M.Div., 1997) and Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary (M.A., 2014).

## IN MEMORIAM JOHN P. GALBRAITH

*Danny E. Olinger*

The Rev. John Patton Galbraith, a founding member of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the longest-serving minister in the church’s history, went to be with the Lord in glory on June 30, 2016.

Born in Philadelphia on March 10, 1913, Mr. Galbraith graduated from Muskingum College in New Concord, Ohio, in 1934. He then attended Westminster Theological Seminary, where he studied under J. Gresham Machen. Mr. Galbraith would grow close to Dr. Machen as a regular participant in Machen’s “Don’t be a tightwad!” parties and as his football-watching friend at Franklin Field. At Machen’s funeral on January 5, 1937, Mr. Galbraith received, as a gift



*Participants in Clarence Veld's ordination (from the left): Jerold Barnett, Rev. Jim Stevenson, Calvin Veld, Rev. Veld, Ben Veld, Rev. Peter Van Doodewaard, Dr. Joseph A. Pipa, Jr., Dr. Kevin M. Backus, Terry Miller*

from the Machen family, Machen’s handwritten seminary notes from Geerhardus Vos’s Biblical Theology course at Princeton Seminary.

On May 25, 1937, Mr. Galbraith was ordained as a minister of the gospel in the Presbyterian Church of America (renamed the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in 1939) and installed as pastor of Gethsemane Church in Philadelphia. In 1940, he became the pastor of Grace



*John P. Galbraith*

OPC in Westfield, New Jersey. That year he also authored the booklet *Why the Orthodox Presbyterian Church?* which would stay in print into the 1970s.

On October 17, 1941, he married Ada Mae Kievitt. After fifty-three years of marriage, she died in 1994. Mr. Galbraith is survived by their two daughters, Priscilla and Suzanne, three granddaughters, and six great-grandchildren.

As pastor of Kirkwood OPC in Kirkwood, Pennsylvania, from 1942 to 1948, Mr. Galbraith’s status in the OPC rose to the point where he was elected moderator of the Fourteenth (1947) General Assembly, held in Cedar Grove, Wisconsin. In 1948, he became the general secretary of both the Committee on Foreign Missions (1948–1978) and the Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension (1948–1961). In 1949, he established the annual Thank Offering, which continues to this day.

As the general secretary of Foreign Missions, Mr. Galbraith helped oversee mission fields in Korea, Japan, Taiwan, and Eritrea. The missionary work of Bruce and Kathy Hunt in Korea was particularly blessed by the Lord during his tenure. Some have considered it to be the most successful Protestant mission work

of the twentieth century.

After his retirement in 1978 as general secretary of Foreign Missions, Mr. Galbraith remained active in the OPC. He served not only as stated clerk of the General Assembly, but also on the Committees on Reformed Ecumenical Synod Matters (1973–1988), Pensions (1957–1996), Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations (1971–2002), and Christian Education (1990–2005), and on the Board of Trustees of Great Commission Publications (1990–2005). When he stepped down from serving on the Committee on the Revision of the Directory of Public Worship in 2007 at the age of 95, it marked the completion of sixty-three years of continuous service on a committee established by the General Assembly. Mr. Galbraith also attended in person the first seventy-three general assemblies of the OPC.

His service for the Lord and the church was celebrated on June 11, 2011, at the seventy-fifth anniversary celebration of the OPC. Seventy-one years earlier, in *Why the Orthodox Presbyterian Church?* he had written,

A new sun arose on the religious horizon on June 11, 1936. On that historic day the Orthodox Presbyterian Church was born. People and congregations from the shores of New Jersey to the coast of California banded themselves together to form a new church. Their purpose was to stand on the Word of God alone which had been “once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3) and to proclaim that Word to the world.

Addressing those gathered on June 11, 2011, in his last public appearance before a general assembly of the OPC, he said, “Have we maintained the faith? Have we been building the church? Jesus said, ‘I will build my church.’ Whatever we have done to land here seventy-five years later, holding to the same faith, has been by the grace of the Spirit of the living God.” He concluded his remarks by urging the OPC to stand fast on the Word of God and “to give praise to God alone—God, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Prince of Peace, King of kings and Lord of lords. To him be glory forever and ever. Amen.”



The installation of Zecharias Abraham Weldeyesus (front, center) on May 6 as pastor of Redeemer OPC in Doraville (Atlanta), Ga., attracted many pastors and ruling elders.

## UPDATE

### MINISTERS

- Licentiate **Jeffrey Carter** was ordained as a minister and installed as associate pastor of Trinity Reformed OPC in Wilmington, N.C., on June 24.
- **Matthew Holst**, formerly the pastor of Geneva OPC in Marietta, Ga., was installed as pastor of Shiloh Presbyterian Church in Raleigh, N.C., on June 3.

### MILESTONES

- **Elinor Goertz Elder**, 86, widow of OP ruling elder F. Kingsley Elder, Jr., and mother of OP ruling elder Robert Elder, died on May 1 after a period of declining health.
- The Rev. **John Patton Galbraith**, 103, died peacefully on June 30.
- **Gwendolyn Ruth Kellogg Urban**, 77, the daughter of the late Rev. Edward L. Kellogg and the wife of the Rev. Edwin C. Urban, died of cancer on May 30.

## REVIEWS

*J. I. Packer: An Evangelical Life*, by **Leland Ryken**. Crossway, 2015. Hardback, 434 pages, list price \$30.00. Reviewed by **OP pastor Irfon Hughes**.

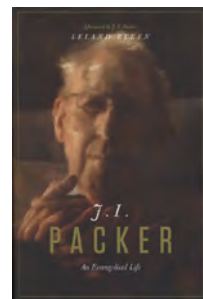
It is a tribute to the contribution that J. I. Packer has made to the evangelical world in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries that two biographies have been written about him. This one, by Leland Ryken, was published in Packer’s ninetieth year.

Ryken deals with three aspects of Packer’s life that are of particular interest to all those who are interested in the global growth of biblical and Reformed Christianity during the last century.

First, Ryken describes Packer’s conversion and embracing of Reformed theology, including the discovery, development, and defense of a Reformed world-and-life view. His Reformed perspective originated, not only with his conversion, but also with his discovery of the Puritans while at Oxford University, a bastion of liberal Christianity in the United Kingdom.

Second, Ryken provides a keyhole look into the man himself. Packer is quintessentially English (although he had the good sense to marry a Welsh girl) and moved to Canada, where he has lived for the past thirty-seven years. We get

a glimpse of this multifaceted man, including his love of music (both Jazz and classical), his study of writing and preaching, the variety of books he has written or edited, and the



magazines to which he has contributed.

The third area which Ryken covers is the abiding theme of Packer's life and work, which illustrates where his passions lie. Throughout his life, Packer has been a man of words, from the Bible to the Puritans to theology to popular publications. He has played a major part in the editing of *Christianity Today*, and was an associate editor of the English Standard Version, which has become the version of choice for most English-speaking congregations in Reformed churches. Some of his books are true classics, such as *Knowing God* (translated into numerous languages), *A Quest for Godliness* (titled *Amongst God's Giants* in the U.S.), and his first book, *Fundamentalism and the Word of God*, which was a best seller way back in the 1950s!

Although a peace-loving man, with a sweet personality, Packer has been, as Eliphaz says in Job 5:7, a man born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards. The chapter on "Controversies" at the end of the book is enthralling, demonstrating this reality. Some of his valiant struggles have remained with him to this day. That chapter shows us that standing for the truth in the public square comes at a cost.

Whilst it is hard to write a biography so close to the subject, Ryken has done well in covering some of the important Christian events in which Packer played a significant part. This is the record of a man whose orthodoxy and intellect make him one of the giants of the last century, without being a hagiography. His example of godly commitment to his denomination is a great example to us. Indeed, he is one of God's giants, a Puritan born out of time, and still valiant for truth!

***The Lord's Supper and the "Popish Mass,"* by Cornelius P. Venema. Reformation Heritage Books, 2015. Paperback, 103 pages, list price \$10.00. Reviewed by OP pastor Geoffrey Willour.**

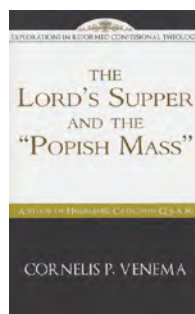
In this short but timely book in the Explorations in Reformed Confessional Theology series, Cornelius Venema defends both the strong language and the continuing validity of Question and Answer 80 of the Heidelberg Catechism. This Q&A

sets forth the perfection and sufficiency of Christ's once-for-all sacrifice for sin in strong polemical language by contrasting the biblical observance of the Lord's Supper, which testifies to that perfect sacrifice, with the "popish mass" of the Roman Catholic Church, which ultimately denigrates and denies that perfect sacrifice, and which the Catechism bluntly condemns as an "accursed idolatry."

In an age when tolerance and niceness are often extolled as the highest virtues, and when the spirit of ecumenism often pressures church bodies to gloss over genuine theological differences in their interactions with one another, this book by Venema stands as a thoughtful example of a better way forward in genuine, ecumenical dialogue—one that does not ignore real differences in order to achieve a semblance of unity, but which instead confronts those differences respectfully yet honestly.

Recent events within the Reformed world have occasioned the writing of this book, thereby making it highly relevant to ecumenical dialogue between Roman Catholics and Reformed Protestants and to relations among professedly Reformed denominations. For example, in recent decades several Reformed denominations that have historically subscribed to the Heidelberg Catechism have officially relegated Q&A 80 to non-confessional status, including the Reformed Church in America and the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA). In chapter 4 (entitled "Assessing the Continued Value of Q&A 80"), Venema offers a brief historical overview of the proceedings of the CRCNA and its reasons for deciding to relegate Q&A 80 to non-confessional status.

At the beginning of this book, Venema clearly states his purpose in writing: "My purpose ... is to help clarify why the Catechism's condemnation of the Mass was appropriate in its original setting and remains an important testimony to the truth today" (p. ix). In my opinion, his book achieves its purpose. He offers an overview of the historical occasion,



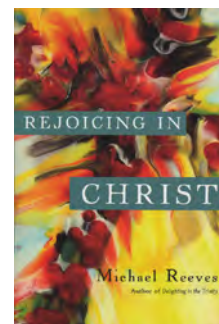
authorship, and purposes of the Heidelberg Catechism, which helps to put the inclusion of Q&A 80 into proper historical context, especially for those unfamiliar with the history of the Catechism. He devotes chapters to assessing both the original and the continued validity of this Q&A. Venema's well-developed argument climaxes in

his final chapter, where he makes a compelling case for the benefits of retaining Q&A 80.

I highly recommend this book for any who are interested in current trends and issues within confessional Reformed thought.

***Rejoicing in Christ*, by Michael Reeves. InterVarsity, 2015. Paperback, 135 pages, list price \$17.00. Reviewed by OP pastor Daniel J. Dillard.**

*Rejoicing in Christ* has become for me a tool of choice for helping both new and mature believers grow in Christ. In this book, British evangelical Michael Reeves aims to teach the



reader not only *about* Christ, which he does with excellence, but far more *to delight and rejoice in him*. The opening paragraph serves as an appetizer for the whole spiritual feast that Reeves spreads before the reader:

Jesus Christ, God's perfect Son, is the Beloved of the Father, the Song of the angels, the Logic of creation, the great Mystery of godliness, the bottomless Spring of life, comfort and joy. We were made to find our satisfaction, our heart's rest, in him. Quite simply, this book will be about enjoying him, reveling in his all-sufficiency for us, and considering all that he is: how he reveals such an unexpectedly kind God, how he makes, defines—how he is—the good news, and how he not only

gives shape to but is himself the shape of the Christian life. (p. 9)

You can see from that paragraph that Reeves himself is enchanted with and delighted in Christ—and he wants us to be as well! Chapter 1, “In the Beginning,” discusses the deity of Christ, his role in creating the world, and his pre-incarnate, mediatorial ministry in Israel. Chapter 2, “Behold the Man!” presents the glory of Christ’s incarnation and mediation, his deity and humanity, and his role as the second Adam. Chapter 3, “There and Back Again,” presents the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, and explains how he is our atonement and our righteousness. Chapter 4, “Life in Christ,” discusses our life in union with Christ, through the Spirit of sonship. Chapter 5, “Come, Lord Jesus!” presents the second coming of Christ and the consummation of all things in him.

Besides quoting the Scriptures, Reeves gives memorable quotes from church fathers, Reformers and Puritans, and modern writers. An attractive feature is the numerous pictures (such as Rembrandt’s *The Storm on the Sea of Galilee*). There are also short, panel-style essays on such things as the meaning of *homoousios* (pp. 19–21), the Incarnation and the Trinity (p. 23), “Good News for the Bruised” (pp. 37–38), and “I Am the Vine; You Are the Branches” (pp. 98–100).

There is also a Kindle edition, in which the pictures are in color, and which includes ready-made tweets, such as: “The loving relationship that the Son has always enjoyed with his Father *he now brings to us*” (p. 52). Both versions will aid readers to rejoice in Christ.

### A NEW PLACE OF WORSHIP IN ST. AUGUSTINE, FLORIDA

*Eric B. Watkins*

By God’s grace, Covenant Presbyterian Church in St. Augustine, Florida, celebrated its first Sunday in its new church property on May 1. In God’s providence, that happened to be the eighth anniversary of when the church began to meet. The church first met in a hotel lobby, followed by an elementary school, and now in its new home.

The church’s six-acre property, located on highway 16 (just east of I-95), was purchased from the Allied Veterans of America over a year ago. It came with two buildings. The church has made major renovations to the first building, which is now a beautiful, traditionally styled sanctuary with a vaulted ceiling, marbled tile walking areas, and carpet under the refurbished pews. The music and singing sound amazing in the sanctuary and is piped into the nautically themed cry room and nursery. The open area behind the buildings backs up to trees and two ponds, one of

which is occupied by a family of alligators!

It has been a wonderful testimony to God’s grace and faithfulness to see him provide the church with this new facility. Even more, it has been a great joy to see new families coming for worship. In May, the church was quite busy with a funeral and two baptisms. Various outreach efforts to the community are also underway. Please rejoice with Covenant and pray that God would bless its ministries of worship, evangelism, and discipleship.



*The new sanctuary of Covenant Presbyterian Church in St. Augustine, Florida, with Pastor Eric Watkins preaching*