

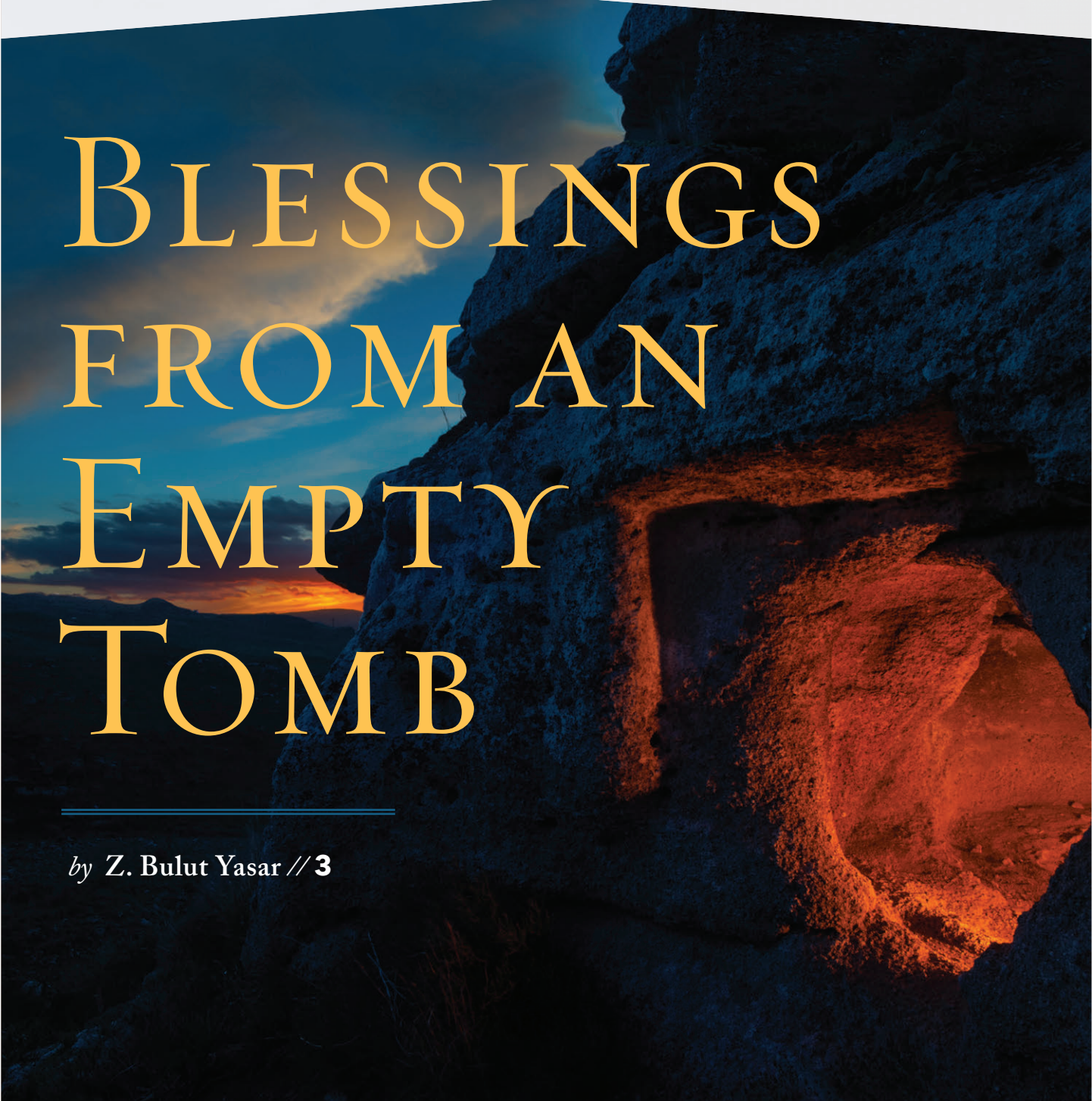
# NEW HORIZONS

in the ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

5 Don't Seek the Living  
Among the Dead //  
*by Robert Russell Drake*

APRIL 2020

9 John M. Fikkert,  
New Director of  
Ministerial Care



## BLESSINGS FROM AN EMPTY TOMB

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*by* Z. Bulut Yasar // 3

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On February 21-22, the Presbytery of Philadelphia hosted the Winterlight Youth Retreat for eighth through twelfth graders at Covenant OPC in Sinking Spring, Pennsylvania. The event was attended by fifty-three young people and twenty-one staff from four different presbyteries (Philadelphia, New Jersey, Central Pennsylvania, and Connecticut and Southern New York). Rev. John Van Meerbeke spoke on "Living as Children of the Light."



## New Horizons

in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church

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**Managing Editor:** Judith M. Dinsmore  
**Editorial Assistant:** Diane L. Olinger  
**Proofreader:** Sarah Pederson  
**Cover Designer:** Christopher Tobias  
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Send inquiries, letters to the editor, and other correspondence to the editor at [danny.olinger@opc.org](mailto:danny.olinger@opc.org).

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# BLESSINGS FROM AN EMPTY TOMB



Z. BULUT YASAR // In Edgar Allan Poe's story "The Masque of the Red Death," Prince Prospero and his nobles, in an attempt to escape a rampaging plague, lock themselves in a large, well-guarded castle. Thinking they have escaped death, they begin to revel and feast. The prince even stages a masked ball to entertain his friends.

At the ball, however, a mysterious figure emerges, dressed horribly as a corpse. When Prince Prospero, enraged at the blasphemous costume, chases the figure down with a dagger, it is the prince who grotesquely falls dead. The figure is finally revealed to be the plague itself, the Red Death. Death was in the castle with the revelers all along. Death came for all.

In this short story, Poe illustrates what we all understand: death is inevitable. There is no hiding or escaping from it. It towers over everyone, declaring its unchallenged dominion. It is a black hole that swallows all things, and we are utterly powerless. Death is by far humanity's greatest fear.

There is, however, something in the human heart that corresponds to this fear: a yearning to overcome death or a longing for someone to defeat it for us. In his famous essay "On Fairy-Stories," J. R. R. Tolkien explains that one reason why we love reading fairy tales is because we want to defeat death. Our hearts have this deep longing to witness the death of death, and fairy tales offer

us a taste of such immortality. Fairy tales create an alternate world where there is the possibility of overcoming death and attaining everlasting life.

To both our terror of death and our longing for life, Christ's empty tomb speaks volumes. The resurrection of Jesus is the ultimate response to death and the true antidote to the restlessness of our hearts. The resurrection dispels our common fear and satisfies our shared yearning by declaring victory over death, by signaling the arrival of a new age, by giving us time, and by providing us comfort.

## Resurrection Declares Victory over Death

When a famous athlete dies unexpectedly, we are shocked and deeply affected. Certainly we may feel somehow connected to the person, but isn't our shock also because we thought that such an athlete, with such stunning physical prowess, was invincible? Athletes play through injuries and come back from all kinds of adversities. They are the heroes we want to follow, and we think they

can lead us. Yet death irrevocably takes them, too.

Christ, however, in his resurrection, gives us what we have been looking for in our earthly heroes. He is the true hero who goes to war with our greatest foe and comes back victorious. He goes into that black hole of death but reemerges. Just as David stood over Goliath the giant, Jesus stands over our great enemy, declaring his victory. He is the first one who battled death and *won*.

Paul exclaims this victory with these rhetorical questions, "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" (1 Cor. 15:55).

Moreover, we are truly connected to our hero, and not from following his Twitter account. He is our Head, we are his body (Col. 1:18); he is the Bridegroom, we are the bride (Eph. 5:25-32); he is the Shepherd, we are the sheep (John 10:11). He is so identified with us that when we are persecuted, he is persecuted (Acts 9:4); when someone gives us food, that one feeds Jesus (Matt. 25:31-40). We are united to him.

That is why Paul says, "But thanks

be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15:57). His victory is our victory! His battle won is our battle won. He is the worthy one who can lead us. He is the worthy one whom we can trust. In the words of Balin from *The Hobbit*, "There is one I could follow. There is one I could call King."

### Resurrection Signals the Arrival of the New Age

Everyone realizes that there is something wrong with this world. There is corruption, decay, and death. We are depressed by the fear of evil in the present age, and we deeply respond to hope for change. Even creation is groaning for a renewal (Rom. 8:22).

The resurrection of Jesus shows us that the operation of fixing, redeeming, and renewing this world has already begun. A new age has been initiated by the Messiah's victory over death. Unlike Lazarus who was raised from the dead but would again die, Jesus was raised from the dead with an imperishable body. Paul calls it the spiritual body (1 Cor. 15:44). It is a body that is fitting for the age to come. This body, which is holy and incorruptible, was also fit to be at his Father's side. Therefore, Jesus was able to ascend to his Father's side as the righteous and holy Son who fulfilled his mission.

When Jesus left and ascended into heaven, he opened up a hole, as it were, between heaven and earth, from which the Spirit rushed into our world. It was as if a rocket launched and opened a window in the sky. From this "window" came the Helper. "Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you," Jesus said (John 16:7).

Jesus had to leave to open that window to send his Spirit, and this Spirit has begun saving and renewing dead hearts. A new era has begun. As Christ said, he is making all things new (Rev. 21:5). Eventually, he will set the whole creation free (Rom. 8:21). Once this

renewing is complete, toil will turn into delight; tears will turn into joy; death itself will die; and the fresh aroma of life will dominate.

### Resurrection Gives Us Time

*Carpe diem*, the saying goes. Seize the day, for there is no sequel to this life. Unfortunately, we can Christianize this motto by thinking that the real fun happens here on earth and that heaven will be boring. We rush through our lives, grabbing what we can. We fear missing out. We want to taste every food, travel to every country, and experience every new thing.

But the resurrection of Christ gives us another perspective. When Jesus was raised from the dead, Thomas touched Jesus's wounds, confirming a physical body (John 20:24–29). What does this tell us? That the new creation, the life in New Jerusalem, is a physical existence as well as a spiritual one. The first person of the everlasting world has a body. So we won't be friendly ghosts floating around. We will be living with the fountain of all good things (James 1:17). The book of Revelation is full of references to music, feasts, and amazing views in the world to come (Rev. 15:1–4; 19:9; 21:9–22:5). Instead of seizing this life, we should live with open hands, realizing that all the good things in this creation are only foretastes of what is to come. We don't have to rush. We have ample time. The best is yet to come. (Of course, this does not mean that we should not fully enjoy common grace blessings. Not at all! We can certainly go and experience the whole wide world but must never think that this is our only chance.)

### Resurrection Provides Comfort

Children's earliest fear is often losing their parents. The fear can become so obsessive that it leads to vivid nightmares. As we grow up and our lives fill with daily responsibilities, we might become less consumed by the fear of loss, but it doesn't disappear. It still haunts us, just perhaps less obviously. We still fear losing our loved ones. We fear

separation from or pain coming to our loved ones. We are reminded frequently of our own mortality.

The resurrection of Christ provides the comfort that we need in this life and the life to come. First, the resurrection of Jesus assures us that we will be united bodily with our loved ones who are Christians. At last, we will be together without the fear of goodbyes, and our loved ones will be more truly themselves even than when they were here on earth. When Jesus was raised from the dead, though he had an incorruptible and imperishable body, he was still Jesus.

Second, the resurrection gives us a living hope (1 Pet. 1:3). This is the sure hope that at his coming Jesus will transform our lowly bodies to be like his glorious body (Phil. 3:20–21). Speaking of resurrection, Paul says, "But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ" (1 Cor. 15:23). What our Head now has, we will have.

Finally, the resurrection of Christ promises that we will be with the source of all comfort, Christ Jesus, who will make all things right. We will see him face to face (1 Cor. 13:12). We will be with the Lord forever (1 Thess. 4:17). This source of all comfort, as C. S. Lewis puts it, "will turn every agony into glory" (*The Great Divorce*).

The resurrection of Jesus truly takes away all the fears that are related to death. Whether it is the fear of the present evil age, of not having enough time, or of losing our loved ones, the resurrection provides the perspective and the understanding to be free of these fears.

And as we meditate on Christ's resurrection, we are not just emboldened but also fully satisfied, because it gives us the victorious hero who has initiated the new age and given us the hope and the comfort that we will be with him forever and ever. Through the resurrection, the promise that there will be "a spring of water welling up to eternal life" (John 4:14) comes true. □

*The author is a pastor of New Life OPC in Williamsport, Pennsylvania.*

# DON'T SEEK THE LIVING AMONG THE DEAD



ROBERT RUSSELL DRAKE // Luke says that, on Easter morning, women went to the tomb of Jesus with spices (24:12). That means they expected to find Jesus dead. They weren't just honoring him with their spices. They wanted to help preserve his body from disintegrating and going the way of all flesh.

The women went seeking the dead one among the dead, which is perfectly natural. They thought he was dead and going to stay dead. Instead, they found the body of Jesus gone from that already opened tomb and heard two men asking a profound question and making a profound declaration: "Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen" (vv. 5–6).

Of course, these men at the tomb were actually angels. They were angels who knew what Jesus had said. They were even able to say to the women, "Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be...crucified and on the third day rise" (vv. 6–7).

I think my initial response to the angels would have been, "If you know what Jesus had said and how his words have been fulfilled, why don't you angels go tell everyone? After all, who will people be more likely to believe: a group of women or angelic beings?"

So, why don't angels preach, and why has that assignment been given to us?

## What Angels Do

In the Gospels, angels do three things. They are *messengers*, from the beginning of the story until the end. They tell Zacharias, Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds that the Christ will be born. They also tell the women that Christ has risen from the grave.

Angels are also *servants* to Christ. They minister to him in the wilderness after he resisted Satan and again in the garden of Gethsemane after he determined to go to the cross.

Angels are *escorts* for those in Christ. They take a person's soul to heaven, and they round up the believers in the last day.

They are also like members of the heavenly court, hearing the testimony of Christ about who has confessed him.

What they are *not* are preachers.

## What We Are Chosen to Do

In Luke 24, the angels function as messengers. In fact, they are very impressive messengers. It seems to me that this whole witnessing thing would

have been more successful if God had just sent angels like these to preach to the nations and skipped human beings. After all, the angels at the tomb of Jesus appear in dazzling apparel (v. 4), which frightens the women. I can just see some guy coming around a corner downtown and *bam!* There is a dazzling angel. Odds are that guy would be afraid enough to listen. I know I would.

But maybe fear was exactly the issue. God ordained not to use fearsome beings. He uses beings like you and me, and nobody is afraid of us. The gospel will not go forth from fearsome messengers but from those who resemble the crucified.

God ordained that the only ones who will get to witness to redemption are those who claim to be the redeemed. There will be no secondhand testimonies. Angels can't say, "I was lost but now I am found." Only fallen human beings, image-bearers of God, can say that. Humans will hear preaching from other humans. The disciples hear it for the first time not from angels but from women, the ones at that time on the low

end of the social ladder of esteem.

Think about it for a moment. Who first told you the message that Jesus was alive? Odds are it wasn't some senator or governor. For me, it was my Sunday school teacher, a little old lady who sold shoes in the bargain basement of a department store in Minneapolis. God uses lowly people before he uses great people—and then brings the great people low so that they can tell the message. That is how God has determined to work. It is why not many noble and not many wise in the eyes of the world are called (1 Cor. 1:26). We represent the humility of God that he displayed in his incarnation and crucifixion.

Was not the heart of God revealed right from the beginning on Christmas Eve? One angel appeared to the shepherds, and those men were terrified as the “glory of the Lord shone around them” (Luke 2:9). That one angel said,

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger. (vv. 11–12)

And as soon as that one angel said the word “manger,” Luke says, “suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest!’” (vv. 13–14). May I respectfully say that the angels were beside themselves? They burst out in worship because the Lord God Almighty was in a manger! They knew what this humiliation signified: a great Savior coming for his people.

Christ's humility is praised by the angels, but it is not represented by them. Angels won't be assigned to preach, because they don't know redemption and because they just are not lowly enough. They are servants, but their glory is too obvious. Ours isn't.

### What Angels Said

So, if angels can't preach, what *can* they say? At Jesus's tomb, they began

with that profound question: “Why do you seek the living among the dead?”

They mean, of course, why do you look among the tombs for the one who said that he was going to rise from the dead the third day? That question was a rebuke, because the women were not looking for a living Jesus, only a dead one. They brought spices for the dead body. They hadn't believed Christ's own words.

The women had the “facts.” Jesus of Nazareth, a prophet, was crucified. He was thought to be the redeemer of Israel. He said something special would happen on the third day. But now he's

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dead, and death ends things. It yields sadness. You can't build anything on rumors.

“Why do you seek the living among the dead?” That angelic question may still be asked today, because many people are still looking for Jesus among the dead, in at least two senses.

Some think that they can understand Jesus the way that they understand the other dead people of history. They think that the history channel will find his corpse. Religion courses at secular universities, if they acknowledge the historical reality of Jesus at all, assign him a place among the other dead religious leaders, like Buddha and Muhammad. They'll never find the living one among the dead ones.

There is another sense to looking for Jesus among the dead. The word “dead” doesn't just refer to those in the

physical tombs. In the parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15, the father says, “My son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found” (v. 24). If one is looking for life, a source of life, a new and better life, why would one seek that life among the spiritually dead and lost? They don't know about life. We may think that our cool neighbors can tell us about life or that the kids at school who claim to be having more fun than we are can be the source of our enjoyable life. But looking to them is looking for the living among the dead.

We need to listen to the angels' profound declaration: He is not here. He has risen.

Did you notice that the angels don't give new information? They just call us to recall what Jesus had said. The angels did not go on to say that forgiveness of sins is proclaimed in Jesus's name. Their job was to call attention to the resurrection and the fact that Jesus means what he says. And if he promised he would rise and he did, then you can believe everything else he promised. If he promised to forgive you, you can believe him.

Luke says that the women remembered Christ's words. They became the first human witnesses to the resurrection. When they told the men, however, the masculine response was something like, “Aw, go on now.” For some, it takes more time. It took more time for Peter, who went back among the dead to see if the living one was there. The women were seeking the dead and were surprised by life; Peter was seeking the living and had to first eliminate the dead.

When Jesus later appeared to the disciples, he said, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you” (Luke 24:44). Yet no one in the Easter accounts sees the empty tomb and just believes that Jesus is alive. An angel must remind them of Jesus's words. Jesus himself must tell them. It is God who says that Jesus is alive. And if you believe, you yourself have heard from the Living One. □

*The author is a retired minister in the PCA (and former minister in the OPC).*

# PREACHING THE BEAUTY OF THE GOSPEL



STEPHEN A. HOOGERHYDE // I recently heard a sermon in which the preacher spent much more time detailing the wickedness of man's heart than displaying the grace of the God who saves. Given the text of the sermon, I could understand his emphasis, if not his balance.

Some who heard it thought the proportions wrong; others thought it was a good corrective against always talking about grace and never about holiness.

The experience got me thinking: what is the correct balance between grace and holiness? What is the correct balance for an individual sermon, and for the preacher's body of work overall? How much should the preacher talk about the bad news of sin, and how much about the good news of grace? How best can the preacher portray the beauty of the gospel of Jesus Christ?

## Major and Minor Themes of the Christian Worldview

Francis Schaeffer, that well-known Reformed apologist of the previous century, states in *Art and the Bible* that the Christian worldview can be divided into a major and a minor theme. The minor theme is the "abnormality of the revolting world" (83), which includes both unregenerate sinners revolting against God and redeemed sinners struggling against sin in their lives. The major theme is

the "meaningfulness and purposefulness of life" (84). This theme expresses itself both in a metaphysical sense—that is, God exists and man as made in his image has significance—and in a moral sense—that is, God's character exposes man's sinfulness but also provides the solution through Christ's redeeming work.

The gospel tells us the bad news of sin before it gives us the good news of salvation. See, for example, 1 Corinthians 15:3, where Paul states what is of first importance in the gospel he has preached, that Christ died for our sins. The good news of the Savior—the necessity for a Savior—is set against the backdrop of the bad news of our sin. The Bible certainly displays the sinfulness and lost estate of man. Read Genesis 6:5, Exodus 32 (the account of Israel worshipping a golden calf), the book of Judges (especially chapters 19–21), 2 Kings 17:7–23 (which lists the reasons why Israel was exiled), Romans 1:18–32 (cataloging the downward spiral of sin), 2 Timothy 3:1–7 (the godlessness of the last days), and verses 4–13 of Jude.

Certainly the minor theme is news to sinners, who do not naturally notice their sin. As Donald Grey Barnhouse states,

The fundamental difference between man's natural opinion of himself and God's declarations concerning humanity is that man starts off with the premise that there is something good in himself that can be polished and perfected, while the Word of God starts off with the premise that everything in man must be condemned and that God must begin with a new creation within the human heart. (*God's Wrath*, 232)

And that leads us directly to the major theme: God loves and redeems sinners. All is not lost! Life is not meaningless! God will remove hearts of stone and implant hearts of flesh (Ezek. 36:26). The Redeemer will come! It will no longer be always winter and never Christmas. The winter of discontent and death will yield to the spring of joy and resurrection. "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made

alive” (1 Cor. 15:22).

As the Bible shows us the depth of man’s depravity, even more it shows us the height of God’s love for his fallen creation, and particularly for man. God will crush Satan (Gen. 3:15). He will preserve human life (9:8–17). Through the line of Abraham (Gen. 17) and David (2 Sam. 7), God will bring his Messiah to save his people from their sins (Matt. 1:21). Because Jesus takes upon himself the penalty for the sins of all his people (Isa. 53), because the debt we could never pay is now paid (John 19:30), because Jesus bore on our behalf the just wrath of God against sin (Rom. 3:24–25), we who have been given the grace of faith (Eph. 2:8–9) and who have been redeemed, have peace with God (Rom. 5:1). God will engrave the names of his people on his hands (Isa. 49:15–16), he will rejoice over us with songs of love (Zeph. 3:17), he will never leave us nor forsake us (Heb. 13:5), and he will one day bring us to glory (Ps. 73:25; Rom. 8:30).

Hallelujah, what a Savior!

### Why the Minor Theme?

Why then must the minor theme of rebellion be present in the presentation of the gospel at all? Why must faithful preachers use words like “sin” and “hell” and “wrath”? Why must the sinfulness of sin be displayed so vividly? Why can’t we just focus on the grace and love of God?

First and foremost, the faithful preacher must talk about sin because God’s Word talks about it, as previously shown. He must proclaim the *whole* counsel of God (Acts 20:27).

Second, talking about sin is necessary to give the hearers a true knowledge of themselves. John Calvin begins the second book of his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* with the thought that the knowledge of ourselves is necessary so that we are rid of pride, humbled by our lost condition, and made ready to embrace the mercy of God in Christ: “When viewing our miserable condition since Adam’s fall, all confidence and boasting are overthrown,

we blush for shame, and feel truly humble” (2.1.1).

Finally, to avoid talking about sin and man’s natural state diminishes the value, necessity, and glory of the redemption. Schaeffer notes that if Christian art emphasizes only the major theme, it is not fully Christian and becomes “simply romantic art” (56). In the same way, if the preacher emphasizes only the major theme, he risks turning the Redeemer into simply a paragon of virtue in the ears of his hearers. He has to show that the heart is “deceitful above all things and desperately sick” (Jer. 17:9), or his hearers will not fully appreciate why they need a completely new heart. He needs to show how even the greatest of the prophets sinned and had imperfect knowledge, how even the most faithful of the priests still needed to offer sacrifices for his own sin, how even the king who was a man after God’s own heart failed so miserably.

The benefit to the hearers is that the gospel of grace shines so much brighter and clearer against the background of man’s sinful state, as diamonds shine more brightly against a black velvet background and as stars glow brighter on the darkest night. As we are given a greater appreciation of the depth of our sin and misery, and our inability to save ourselves, we are then enabled to grow in our understanding of the immensity of God’s marvelous grace and are thus encouraged and equipped to love him more (Luke 7:47).

Against the backdrop of the failures of Moses, Aaron, and David, the glory of Jesus Christ as our perfect prophet, priest, and king shines so brightly. Recognizing man’s depravity helps us to see the grace of God more clearly! As Barnhouse noted, “It is not pessimism to say that man’s problem is absolutely insoluble by man. It opens the way for the most glorious optimism: for God has announced that He Himself will solve the problems” (*God’s Wrath*, 251).

A question could be asked, should the preacher be concerned to explain God’s Word, to educate the saints in attendance, or to evangelize the unbe-

lievers who are there? The answer, of course, is yes! If the preacher is correctly expositing the Word of God, the Word will be both edifying to the believer and enlightening to the unbeliever. Both believers and unbelievers need to hear the gospel, and both believers and unbelievers benefit from hearing the gospel repeatedly. As Dennis E. Johnson states, “*the same gospel of grace* that reconciles alienated rebels continues to direct and drive their growth as reconciled children of God” (*Him We Proclaim*, 43).

And so the believer as well as the unbeliever needs continually to hear the minor theme as well as the major theme.

### Guilt, Grace, Gratitude

The Heidelberg Catechism memorably opens with the assertion that, as believers, our only comfort in life and death is that we belong to our faithful Savior Jesus Christ. The second question asks, “What must you know to live and die in the joy of this comfort?” The answer:

Three things: first, how great my sin and misery are; second, how I am set free from all my sins and misery; third, how I am to thank God for such deliverance.

Do you see it? Or rather, do you hear it? First we hear the minor theme, then the major theme swells, then the crescendo of joyful applause. Guilt, grace, gratitude.

Preachers, as you open God’s Word to us week by week, show us the beauty of the gospel. Show us the brightness of grace against the darkness of sin. Show us the heart of stone that only by the work of the Holy Spirit becomes a heart of flesh. Show us the fallen, sin-cursed creation that groans until the day the Creator makes all things new, and show us his work of recreation already begun. Show us how great our sin is, but even more, show us how much greater our Redeemer is. Yes, show us our beautiful Savior. □

*The author is an elder in the PCA.*



## COMMITTEE ON MINISTERIAL CARE

# JOHN M. FIKKERT, NEW DIRECTOR OF MINISTERIAL CARE



John Fikkert is an ordained OP pastor and licensed counselor

As the new Director of Ministerial Care, John Fikkert hopes to contribute to the projects already begun by the Committee on Ministerial Care and to develop new initiatives that reflect the committee's mandate to support the OPC's active and retired ministers.

Fikkert grew up a covenant child, attending with his family New Hope Presbyterian in Green Bay, Wisconsin, throughout his childhood and Apple Valley Presbyterian in Neenah, Wisconsin, during his high school years. He attended Dordt College and graduated with a degree in engineering. After working for several years as an engineer at a paint factory, he began to feel a call to the ministry. During his time at Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson, Mississippi, he discovered a strong interest in counseling studies and, as he was testing out ministry gifts, found he had an interest in both one-on-one and public ministry. He received both a master of divinity and master of counseling degrees. He met his wife, Lindsay, at seminary.

After graduating from seminary in 2005, John completed a one-year internship with Pastor Lendall Smith at Bethel Presbyterian in Wheaton, Illinois. Following the internship, he remained at Bethel to serve as a pastoral assistant. He was ordained as associate pastor in 2009, serving alongside Pastor Craig Troxel. While in Wheaton, John and Lindsay were blessed with two children, Karis and Caleb. Also in Wheaton, while John was serving at Bethel, Lindsay completed her doctoral studies in clinical psychology at Wheaton College.

In 2015, the family moved to Pella, Iowa, where John and Lindsay both began full-time counseling positions. After moving to Iowa, John continued in ministry by serving as an associate pastor and clerk for both Grace Reformed in Des Moines, Iowa, and Hope Reformed in Pella, Iowa. At the presbytery level, he has served on three committees: Christian Education, Overtures and Papers, and Leaves of Absence

and Sessional Records. John became a member of the OPC's Committee on Ministerial Care in the summer of 2019.

## Live Webinar on April 16 David Murray on *Reset*

The Committee on Ministerial Care is delighted to announce its upcoming live video webinar with Dr. David Murray at 2:00 p.m. EST on April 16.

The webinar will center on pastoral burnout, the subject of Murray's 2017 book *Reset* (see review on page 20). All ministers or ministers' wives who watch the webinar on April 16 will receive a free copy of the book.

Murray is professor of Old Testament and Practical Theology at Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He pastored three churches in the UK and the US over the past twenty-three years and has been teaching at the seminary since 2007. Murray, together with his wife, Shona, is the author of *Refresh*, a companion to *Reset* that was also published in 2017.

CMC's new director, John Fikkert, will interview David Murray. The committee is grateful that Murray generously agreed to share his time and godly wisdom with us on this live webinar.

Please mark your calendars and plan to join the discussion on April 16. Watch your email for a link to join.



Professor and author David Murray

## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

# REVIEW: ESSENTIAL WRITINGS OF MEREDITH G. KLINE

// LANE G. TIPTON

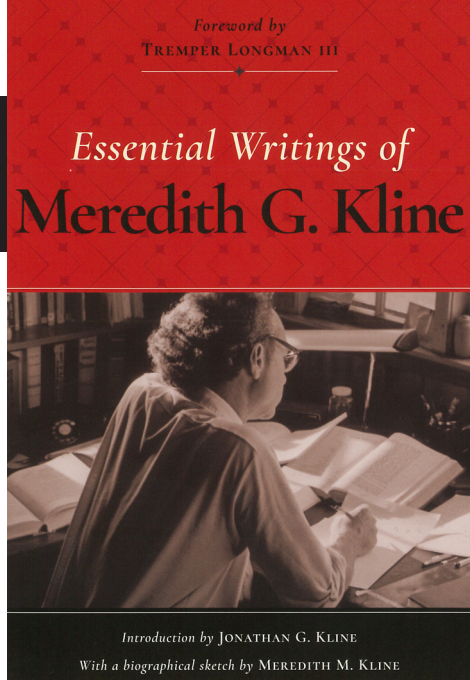
While there is much to commend when considering the collected writings of a theologian as insightful and penetrating as Meredith G. Kline (1922–2007), this review article of his *Essential Writings* (Hendrickson, 2017) will limit itself to what is arguably the most neglected, yet most profound, dimension of his theology, namely, the foundational role that heaven plays in his theological understanding of the Scriptures.

Kline is, without a doubt, an heir of Princeton theologian Geerhardus Vos (1862–1949). He seeks to understand the Scriptures as a God-breathed revelational record of the history of special revelation. He prioritizes the glory of God and seeks to understand special revelation in light of the central concern for God's glory. And the invisible heaven, the primal temple dwelling of God, made in the absolute beginning (Gen. 1:1; Neh. 9:6; Ps. 11:4; Isa. 6:1–6), is the permanent place where that glory will be revealed to angels and to God's covenant people.

This God-centered and heaven-centered approach is featured in capsule form in something approaching an inclusion in this volume. Both the second essay, "Space and Time in the Genesis Cosmogony," and the final essay, "Har Magedon: The End of the Millennium," deal with the foundational reality of heaven, understood as a distinct, created, unseen temple dwelling of God. Heaven, according to Kline, is the presently veiled, temple dwelling of the triune God (Gen. 1:1), who has entered into his heavenly Sabbath Rest (Gen. 2:2). The heaven-temple, created in the absolute beginning, decisively shapes the character of special revelation and the eschatology of the covenant.

### The History of Heaven

Regarding the character of special revelation, the history of special revelation includes not only the progress of earth



history, but the progress of the history of heaven. The God who made the heaven-temple dwells in that temple realm in Sabbath Rest. It is this heavenly Sabbath Rest that is achieved by the ascended Last Adam (1 Cor. 15:47; Heb. 4:4, 8–11). Christ, the Last Adam and life-giving Spirit, has advanced the history of heaven to its climax, and by faith in this Christ the church presently is entering into heavenly Sabbath Rest by faith (Heb. 4:3) and will enter fully into it bodily by sight on the day of resurrection (Heb. 4:9–11).

All of this depends, of course, on the way that heavenly Sabbath Rest in a realm beyond Eden probation was promised to Adam before the Fall. In other words, the God-centered and heaven-centered theology is rooted in a proper understanding of the covenant of works. Entering into heavenly Sabbath Rest, beyond probation testing on earth, where the worship of God is brought to its consummate perfection, lies at the heart of the eschatology of the covenant of works. Kline's work on the history of heaven has stimulating and fruitful implications for our understanding of the ordering to heavenly glory that is basic to the covenant of works and grace. The service of biblical theology to systematic theology in Kline's work shines at this point.

### The "Har Magedon" Motif

But Kline's biblical theology renders another valuable dogmatic contribution, which brings us to the final essay in the volume, Kline's exposition of the "Har Magedon" motif and the issue of the millennium. Kline argues convincingly that Har Magedon is the Mount of Assembly. The realm of Sabbath Rest is the realm of the mountain of God, heavenly Mount Zion, the Mount of Assembly, or Har Magedon (Heb. 12:23). Of decisive significance, the heights of the heavenly Mount of Assembly (Zion) is set in sharpest contrast to the depth of the "Pit" in Isaiah 14:13–15, which is the background for the same sort of contrast in Revelation 16:16. The climactic expression of judgment at the end of the age is a permanent

descent for the wicked to the Pit and a permanent ascent of the righteous atop Mount Zion, Har Magedon, the Mount of Assembly in heaven.

The dogmatic significance of Kline's insight is simple and profound. The victory of the kingdom of God at the end of the age is the vindication of the Messianic Judge, and his people, who dwell atop the Mount of Assembly. Coincident with their vindication and ascension to heaven is the permanent consigning of all God's enemies to the Pit or Abyss (Rev. 16:16). This great judgment ordeal ends the millennium, so that the saints might enter bodily into the revealed glory of the heaven-temple, where they will worship the ascended Christ forever. It is the history of heaven, moved already to its climactic expression in the ascended Messianic Judge, that frames the ultimate destruction of God's enemies at the Har Magedon crisis—the Gog-Magog crisis.

The dogmatic value of Kline's appropriation of the history-of-heaven construction is that the coming of God's heavenly kingdom in its visible and outward grandeur does not come "until final judgment is executed against antichrist/Gog, and therefore not before the end of the millennium" (277). This entails the "identity of the Har Magedon and Gog-Magog events" and proves decisive against both premillennialist and postmillennialist views that understand the millennium as an age in which the kingdom of outward glory comes before the final judgment (277). Put most incisively, "there is no transitional stage in its appearing between the first and second advents of Christ" (277). The time point in which the kingdom comes in its outward glory is the time following the final judgment, when the glory and power of heaven itself will be made visible. That consummation of the kingdom will reveal the ascended Christ, seated at God's right hand, enthroned amidst the praise of angels and his church (Heb. 12:22–24). That throne is in heaven (Isa. 66:1; Heb. 1:3; 8:1–2; Col. 3:1–2).

Kline's theology, in large part, is an attempt to sketch as clearly as possible from the Scriptures the foundational role that heaven, the realm created in the absolute beginning for the glory of God to be set on everlasting display, plays in the history of special revelation. His work remains of immense value to all who seek to develop the deeper Protestant conception set forth so ably by Vos.

*The author is pastor of Trinity OPC in Easton, PA, and a Reformed Forum Fellow of Biblical and Systematic Theology.*

## ☆ Congratulations

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

- **Grace Clary**, Providence OPC, Pflugerville, TX
- **Samuel Clary**, Providence OPC, Pflugerville, TX
- **Talitha Clary**, Providence OPC, Pflugerville, TX
- **Logan Montgomery**, Covenant OPC, Dayton-North (Vandalia), OH

## Favorite Psalms and Hymns *Trinity Psalter Hymnal no. 301* "Song of Mary"

*Stephen Pribble*

An unexpected gem discovered when our church began to use the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal* was music editor Lou Ann Shafer's versification of the Song of Mary (Luke 1:46–55), which begins,

My soul doth magnify the Lord;  
My spirit doth rejoice in God,  
For he, my Savior, did in grace  
His servant's humble state regard.

These inspired words are eminently suited for worship: they were the heartfelt response of the Virgin Mary to the message—previously spoken by the angel, now conveyed to her a second time by her cousin Elizabeth—that she was to be the mother of our Lord. But they are also the heartfelt response of all the saints in every age as they contemplate their humble state as Adam's fallen progeny, their utter dependence upon the heaven-sent Savior, and their life-purpose: to glorify God.

Mary's "Magnificat" (so-called from its first word in Jerome's Latin version) is the first of four songs found only in Luke's gospel. Though not expressly called songs, their song-like character is evident to all who are familiar with the Psalms and Hebrew poetry. Shafer's versification closely follows the majestic language of the King James Version and is well suited for worship and memorization.

The tune, "Puer Nobis Nascitur" (Latin for "Unto us is born a son"), is a melody adapted by Michael Praetorius in 1609 and arranged by George R. Woodward in 1910. The pairing of tune and text is perfect. It is easy for congregations to sing, since the melody is composed entirely of half and quarter notes and spans just over one octave. It begins on the first note of the scale, ascends up an octave to climax in the middle, then gradually descends back to the first note of the scale where it began. It is a delight to sing.

## ● Out of the Mouth . . .

A seven-year-old girl in our congregation asked, "Why is the pastor's car at the church on weekdays?" Her grandfather replied that the pastor was there preparing his sermon for Sunday. The young lady replied, "Oh, I thought he just wings it."

—Terry Miller  
Bartlesville, OK

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

## HOME MISSIONS

# THE HAVEN OPC, LONG ISLAND, NEW YORK

// WILLIAM SHISHKO

For three years, I labored as regional home missionary of the Presbytery of Connecticut and Southern New York. I planned, prepared, produced, and promoted *A Visit to the Pastor's Study*—a broadcast that reached the entire area of our presbytery through WLIE (now WBWD) radio and well beyond that area as a simulcast on the Redeemer Broadcasting Network. That wide-angle outreach was combined with my work to develop a culture of evangelism and to encourage revitalization within the churches of our presbytery.

But—I missed being the pastor of a local congregation.

In June 2018, Home Missions secretaries John Shaw and Al Tricarico, along with men from our presbytery, met with me. While they were encouraged by my labors thus far as regional home missionary, they wanted me to focus more of my energies on getting a new mission church started.

### Suffolk County, New York

So, beginning that fall, I asked many individuals and families in Suffolk County—the eastern half of Long Island—about their interest in a new church that would be committed to the Reformed faith and to presbyterian church government. Some of these individuals and families had been hurt in previous church situations. Others simply wanted a faithful church that was nearer to where they lived. We soon had a sufficient number of people to begin a Bible study that might become a mission church.



*Celebrating the Lord's Supper at The Haven OPC*

In January 2019, that Bible study began at the home of John and Mary Vaeth, who have been part of the OPC for over three decades. Their warm hospitality and Mary's spirited accompaniment on the piano were the environment in which two to three dozen people gathered every Sunday evening for singing, a study in the book of Ephesians, discussion of what is involved in the formation of a new church, and prayer.

Within a few weeks, it was clear that these eager attendees wanted to become a mission work. And it was unanimous that they wanted the proposed church to be called "The Haven," based on Psalm 107:30. All could relate to this verse, which describes those who had gone through a stormy voyage, "glad that the waters (became) quiet" as the Lord "brought them to their desired haven." That haven is Jesus Christ and, ultimately, heaven; but the local church is our halfway house.

### A New Church

A group needs much more than interested people if it is to become a mission work—a lesson I learned when the OPC in Franklin Square, which I served as pastor, was privileged to oversee the birth and development of several mission works.



*The Bible study that was the beginning of The Haven OPC*

But from the very beginning, the Bible study in Suffolk had not only interest but also the raw materials for a mission church: Three of the men had church leadership experience. There was a diversity of gifts (and willingness to use them) that would, by God's grace, enable the idea of "The Haven" to become a reality. And, above all, the people had a zeal for a church that would be faithful to the Word of God, be full of the life that comes from the Holy Spirit, and be a haven for the weary and heavy-laden who could have their burdens lifted and their lives changed by Jesus Christ.

In April 2019, The Haven OPC held its first worship service in the facility of Ascension Lutheran Church. From the outset, we have emphasized that this local church would be about three things: music, message, and mission.

**Music:** We draw from our musical storehouse things old and things new. We combine psalms and hymns from the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal* with doctrinally rich contemporary hymns. The accompaniment and the singing are hearty and full of joy.

**Message:** The focus is on the gospel and how Jesus is truly

motion of ways of outreach (we call it "Evangelism 101"), and encouraging our Haven Young Adult Disciples to be involved in short-term mission projects, we try to live out of the theme of one of our favorite hymns: "Facing a Task Unfinished."

Praise the Lord that we are already seeing the fruit of these things in the lives of our members. I asked a few of the members what The Haven means to them. Here are their responses:

"At The Haven, there is fellowship not just with one another, but, more importantly, with the Lord."

"There is an evident heart for caring for others, for reaching the lost, and for personal growth in grace."

"Christ is in our midst. He is with me. Right here! So amazing!"

"The Lord's Table is done as a celebration and as a community."

"It's like one big family."



Receiving new members at The Haven OPC

alive and at work transforming lives. We believe that the gospel is still God's power unto salvation, and we have a biblically driven optimism that when the Word of God is preached and people are shown Jesus from the Scriptures, they will be changed. We have already rejoiced over the professions of faith and baptisms of an exchange student from Asia and a Jewish woman.

**Missions:** The church is about bringing the gospel to others and service for the kingdom of God. Through an evangelistic emphasis in every worship service, instruction in and pro-

### **Home Missions Today**

For up-to-date news and prayer requests, receive our newsletter by emailing [HomeMissionsToday@opc.org](mailto:HomeMissionsToday@opc.org). New editions: April 1, 15, & 29.

### **New Challenges**

None of this should make you think that this new mission work is without its challenges. Please bring The Haven Orthodox Presbyterian Church before the King and head of the church at the throne of grace with three specific challenges in mind.

**The area:** Suffolk County is even more affected by secularism than are Nassau County and New York City. Consumerism, love of pleasure, multiple distractions in this suburban Vanity Fair, and the demands of living in one of the costliest areas of the United States, make the spiritual conditions difficult. There are few evangelical churches here (and far fewer Reformed churches), and church planting is almost nonexistent.

**Lack of Christian influence:** New York City and Nassau County, for all of their challenges, are at least more influenced by the Christian faith than is Suffolk County. Those who are part of Hispanic, Asian, and African American communities often have a heritage of Christian capital on which church planters can build. Currently, there is little of such capital in Suffolk County.

**Our facility:** While our current facility is excellent—and a remarkable provision from the Lord—our 4:30 p.m. worship time and the restriction of use of the building for only a few hours per week have been an impediment to our growth. Pray that the Lord will provide us a suitable and stable place of physical presence in the Deer Park area that will be our own and that will enable us to show this needy area that the kingdom of God truly has drawn near with the coming of Jesus Christ.

*The author is organizing pastor of The Haven OPC in Deer Park, New York.*

# THE DAILY PRESSURE TO CONFORM

// HEERO E. C. HACQUEBORD



*The church building in L'viv, Ukraine*

“**T**hat part can’t be true! There’s no way she chose her faith and martyrdom over the life of her nursing child!”

One of our church members made this bold statement during a recent adult Sunday school class on martyrdom. We were learning about Perpetua, a Christian in the Roman Empire who, at the age of twenty-two, was killed in the arena in Carthage in AD 203 by wild animals and gladiators because she refused to deny Christ and offer incense to the emperor. She took this bold stand in spite of nursing a baby son and experiencing immense pressure from her father and brothers to renounce her faith.

Hearing that a woman would make a choice for Christ that left her son motherless, however, was beyond belief for some in our church. That reaction is quite indicative of the strong family bond that is preeminent in western Ukraine, along with many other parts of the world.

So, what do you do in such a culture when your family vehemently opposes your faith?

## Family Pressures

“Dzvinka” was close to tears as she spoke to me of her mother’s continued opposition to her membership and active participation in our church. Her mother has been to one of our church services and, in typical western Ukrainian fashion, told me that she appreciated it. Yet in the privacy of her home, she has put immense and constant pressure on

Dzvinka to leave our church—in spite of the fact that her daughter has grown in maturity, love, respect, and independence, and has successfully built her own life in L’viv, all since being involved in our church.

Dzvinka joined our young college ministry after the first English camp we held in 2008. She was responsive to God’s Word and became one of the church’s founding members in 2012. It has been a joy to see her grow in her faith over the years while remaining active in our community. While not in the college ministry any longer, she is currently a Sunday school teacher for the preschool group and helps out with our annual “little lions” VBS. Throughout this time, however, Dzvinka’s struggle with her mother continued. For years, she has attempted to sensitively represent her faith to her mother, but her mother is still vehemently opposed to her membership in any church that is not Greek Catholic or Orthodox.

While Dzvinka has been dealing with family and social pressure related to her faith for over ten years, our younger adherents are just beginning to face this challenge. Of the seven who recently joined our church, three are college students. Another adherent,

“Marichka,” now lives in L’viv but is from a town some distance away. She attended our six-week class for new members and those interested in our church. After the class, the three ordained missionaries in our congregation met with each of the attendees. In the meeting, Marichka expressed a sincere trust in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of all her sins and new life in him. Praise God for that! Yet, when the



*Receiving seven new members*

conversation turned to membership, she grew very sad. Although she would like to join, she knows that her parents would be incredibly hurt by the decision. “I’m not ready for that yet,” she said.

### Sacrificing All

We can see clearly the sacrifices necessary to become a part of our church. “Nazar” attended our English camp in the Carpathian Mountains in 2018. It was clear from the beginning of that camp that he was engaged and listening intently during the daily English Bible lessons. At last year’s camp, as a second-year volunteer and student leader, Nazar enjoyed answering first-year campers’ questions and helping them think through their own spiritual journey. Since then, he’s become more active both in the student ministry and in our church, helping out wherever he can—even building a beautiful manger scene to put in the window of our new church building.

This past January, Nazar took the plunge to become a member of our church despite vehement opposition from his mother and aunt, the older adults in his home. Like many family relations of our church’s members, they are concerned that the Western missionaries have brainwashed Nazar in order to turn him away from his own Greek Catholic church, his native western Ukrainian traditions, and his family. Their words hurt Nazar, who is already the main breadwinner in his family while still working on his bachelor’s degree. Yet Nazar is determined to follow Christ while also loving his mother and the rest of his family as well as he can.

Some have withdrawn from our church apparently due to family pressure. “Andriy” was one of the first men interested in a Reformed church in L’viv, but when his mother returned to L’viv after working abroad, he stopped engaging



*The Hacquebord family*

with our community. This withdrawal might also be due to false rumors about our church helping him financially—stories that irritated his mother. Andriy’s friend “Stepan” has also drifted away from us; in his case, probably because of his wife’s firm devotion to the Greek Catholic church. In this way, some of the men who initially seemed like strong candidates for the position

of elder and deacon in our congregation are not even part of our community anymore.

### Significant Steps Forward

Yet the Lord brings others. He continues to build his church. Nazar is very interested in pastoral ministry. He certainly seems to have great pastoral gifts! He will likely begin an internship in our college ministry soon as he prepares to serve the church for years to come. He might be joined later on by another student who has also expressed a desire to become a pastor. Having young men who are gifted and interested in serving as pastors is a new and encouraging development for our young congregation.

Our small community has taken significant steps forward over the past year. We have moved into our own refurbished building and have grown in our financial giving, but we know that we need to develop in other ways if we want to have our own Ukrainian pastors in the future. We still need to build a sanctuary on our current property that will mark us more clearly as a church and, hopefully, allow us to grow. We also need to find permanent housing for a future pastor and his family so that the church need only provide funds for his salary. These steps can help to establish our place in the city as a legitimate church rooted in the historic faith that is serious about serving the people of L’viv for generations to come.

Most of all, though, we need to help our growing body of young and older believers in Christ to stand firm in their faith, especially when they experience daily pressure from their families and broader communities to be assimilated into the Greek Catholic and Orthodox world and to fit in with a society of mostly cultural believers. And we need to be reminded ourselves, that “all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted” (2 Tim. 3:12).

May God give us the strength to live and persevere for Christ and his kingdom!

*The author is an OP missionary laboring with the PCA Mission to the World in L’viv, Ukraine.*



# IF YOU ARE FORGIVEN MUCH, LOVE MUCH

// MARK A. SCHROEDER

Most pastors do not like to talk to their congregations about the importance of giving because it seems too self-serving. So this page is a good place for us to ask ourselves some pointed questions. How can we be more motivated to give to the gospel work of our Lord? How might we be moved to give sacrificially, like the heartfelt demonstration of the widow giving all she had in Luke 21? How might we increase the cheer in our giving (2 Cor. 9)? For insight, let's look at the account in Luke 7:36–50 of a sinful woman openly expressing her gratitude and love to Christ.

The setting is Simon the Pharisee's house. Jesus and some others have been invited to eat with him. Was this a gracious act on the part of Simon, or did he have ulterior motives? We will never know because someone else enters the place where they are reclining and takes center stage by her outrageous display of love!

First of all, note the great contrast between two sinners and their face-to-face interaction with the Lord. The first, Simon, is self-righteous and hardened against the gospel. The other, "a woman of the city, who was a sinner" (v. 37), expressed open gratitude and love. She acknowledges her sin, he does not. She is grateful, he is full of himself. She is forgiven, he doesn't see the need. Simon was disgusted by this sinful woman and disappointed in Christ. The woman was oblivious to the stares of others. She could only think of expressing the overflow of her heart to Jesus.

Second, notice the principle: grateful love motivates us to serve Christ. This nameless woman, who "stood at his feet behind him weeping" as Jesus reclined at the table,

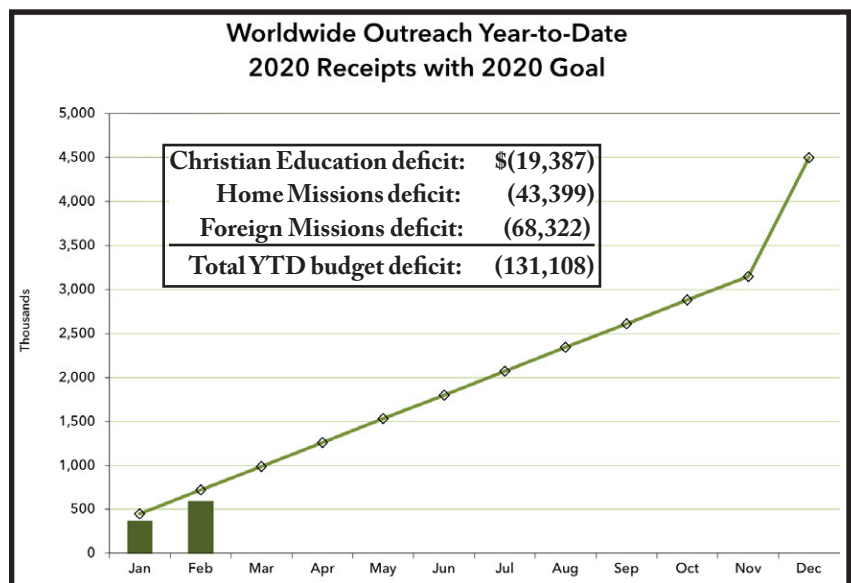
washed his feet with her tears. She "wiped them with the hairs of her head." She "kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment" (v. 38). What loving, costly service this was from a woman who had a sense of how great her sin was! This woman had true spiritual insight, but Simon was blind to his own spiritual poverty. Even after Jesus gave him the illustration of the money lender and the two debtors, he was still missing the truth that was right before his eyes. So Jesus spells it out for him: Did you see all of these things that this woman has done to me, Simon? You have given me no water for my feet, no kiss of greeting, no oil for my head, but she anointed my feet with expensive ointment. She could not restrain herself from serving me.

Third, one who is forgiven much (and understands this) loves much. But the one who is forgiven little loves little. J. C. Ryle, in his *Bible Commentary*, makes this clear:

She had been much forgiven, and so she loved much.... Would the Pharisee know why this woman showed so much love? It was because she felt much forgiven. Would he know why he himself had shown his guest so little love? It was because he felt under no obligation, had no consciousness of having obtained forgiveness, had no sense of debt to Christ.

Therefore, let's pray that the Lord would show us the great burden of debt of sin that our Lord has freely forgiven and that we might continue to know the pardoning love of Christ in our hearts. Let our godly desire be that the love of Christ might control us (1 Cor. 15:14) and move us to greater sacrifice, service, and giving to the cause of the gospel.

*The author is pastor of Harvest OPC in San Marcos, California.*





APRIL



The Richline family

**1** **MARK & JENI RICHLINE**, Montevideo, Uruguay. Pray for the new monthly men's book study and fellowship. / **CARL & STACEY MILLER**, New Braunfels, TX. Pray as they search for a new meeting place for New Braunfels OPC.

**2** **CHRIS & GRACE ANN CASHEN**, Clarkston, GA. Pray that Clarkston Refugee Ministry would shine the light of Christ to those in darkness. / **A. CRAIG TROXEL**, president of the Committee on Christian Education.

**3** Associates **P. F.** and **M. S.**, Asia. Pray that the Lord would restore normalcy to areas affected by the coronavirus. / Home Missions associate general secretary **AL TRICARICO**.

**4** **DAVID & REBEKAH GRAVES**, Coeur d'Alene, ID. Pray that the Lord would raise up officers at Coeur d'Alene Reformed. / **MR. AND MRS. F.**, Asia. Pray that the Lord would give them boldness and wisdom to keep ministering.

**5** **TYLER (NATALIE) DETRICK**, church-planting intern at First Street Reformed Fellowship in Dayton, OH. / Pray for much fruit from last month's **TIMOTHY CONFERENCE**, as young men consider the call to gospel ministry.

**6** **MR. AND MRS. M.**, Asia. Pray for candidates in Reformed churches who are preparing for upcoming ordination exams. / Yearlong intern **JIMMY (KORINA) APODACA** at Providence OPC in Temecula, CA.

**7** Affiliated missionaries **DR. MARK & LAURA AMBROSE**, Cambodia. Pray for the church's outreach from their new building location. / **JEREMY & GWEN BAKER**, Yuma, AZ. Pray for their everyday outreach efforts at Yuma OPC.

**8** **STEPHEN & FELICIA LAUER**, Wilmington, OH. Pray that King Jesus would shine brightly through Wilmington Reformed Church. / Pray for Christian Education general secretary **DANNY OLINGER** as he visits presbyteries.

**9** **BEN & MELANIE WESTERVELD**, Quebec, Canada. Pray for wisdom and financial provision in the ongoing discussions to purchase a church building. / Yearlong intern **BRYCE (KELCIE) SOUVE** at Reformation OPC in Morgantown, WV.

**10** **LOWELL & MAE IVEY**, Virginia Beach, VA. Pray that the Lord would raise qualified men to serve as elders and deacons at Reformation Presbyterian Church. / Pray for missionary associate **ALETHEA FLORES**, Quebec, Canada, as she learns French.



The Lopezes

**11** **BRADNEY & EILEEN LOPEZ**, Arroyo, PR. Pray for the congregation of Iglesia Presbiteriana Sola Escritura as it seeks to move to a new building in Guayama, PR. / **SARAH PEDERSON**, proofreader for *New Horizons*.

**12** **BEN & HEATHER HOPP** and associate missionaries **OCTAVIUS & MARIE DELFILS**, Haiti. Pray for plans for the first indigenous Haitian presbytery meeting, postponed last fall. / **ABBY HARTING**, office secretary for Christian Education.

**13** Pray for tentmaking missionary **TINA DEJONG** (on furlough), Nakaale, Uganda, as she visits churches to report on her work. / Pray for **MARK (PEGGY) SUMPTER**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of the Southwest.

**14** **ANDREW & REBEKAH CANAVAN**, Corona, CA. Pray that the believers of Corona Presbyterian might faithfully and joyfully point their neighbors to Christ. / Yearlong intern **PEDER (ANNA) KLING** at Prescott OPC in Prescott, AZ.

**15** Home Missions general secretary **JOHN SHAW**. / Pray for stated clerk Hank Belfield, the Committee on Arrangements, and registrar Linda Jones, as plans are made for the **87<sup>TH</sup> GENERAL ASSEMBLY**.

APRIL



The Walmers

**16 CHRIS (NANCY) WALMER**, area home missions coordinator for the Presbytery of Central PA. Pray for visitors to the outreach project in Lewistown, PA. / Missionary associates **DR. JIM & JENNY KNOX**, Mbale, Uganda.

**17 CHARLES AND CONNIE JACKSON**, Mbale, Uganda. Pray that the Lord would provide another missionary to aid the Jacksons in Mbale. / **MELISA MCGINNIS**, controller, and **CHARLENE TIPTON**, database administrator.

**18** Missionary associate **RICHARD DANIELS**, Mbale, Uganda. Pray for good health and strength as he teaches at Knox School of Theology. / Yearlong intern **JEREMY (AMY) ALLEN** at Covenant of Grace in Oxnard, CA.

**19 DAVID & RASHEL ROBBINS** and associate missionaries **JAMES & ESTHER FOLKERTS**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for the team's unity and vision for God's kingdom. / Pray for CCE's **SUBCOMMITTEE ON MINISTERIAL TRAINING**.

**20 LARRY & KALYNN OLDAKER**, Sandusky, OH. Pray that God would provide a building for Firelands Grace Fellowship. / **BILL & MARGARET SHISHKO**, Deer Park, NY. Praise God for his continued blessing on The Haven, OPC.

**21 MARK AND CARLA VAN ESSENDELFT**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for the homeschooling work of Carla and others and for the children who can feel homesick. / Pray for **ANDREW MOODY**, technical assistant for OPC.org.

**22 JUEON KIM**, church-planting intern at Christ the King Presbyterian in Naples, FL. / Pray for missionary associates **JOSHUA MARCOUX** and **JONATHAN ROBINS**, Nakaale, Uganda, as they serve those in extreme poverty.

**23 BOB & GRACE HOLDA**, Oshkosh, WI. Pray that Resurrection Presbyterian would grow in fellowship, prayer, and Christian education. / **MARK STUMPF**, manager of the OPC Loan Fund.

**24** Yearlong intern **KEN (MANDY) KRUCKKOW** at Oakland Hills Community Church in Farmington Hills, MI. / Pray for missionary associates **JOANNA GROVE** and **ANGELA VOSKUIL**, Nakaale, Uganda.

**25** Associate missionaries **CHRISTOPHER & CHLOE VERDICK**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for the clinic staff and the need for a new doctor to serve in Karamoja. / **RYAN & ROCHELLE CAVANAUGH**, Merrillville, IN. Pray for the creative outreach of Mission Church.



The Holmlunds

**26 DAVE (ELIZABETH) HOLMLUND**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of Philadelphia. / **HEERO & ANYA HACQUEBORD**, L'viv, Ukraine. Pray that new church members may be faithful witnesses to their families.

**27** Associate missionary **LEAH HOPP**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray that the six immunization outreaches to villages this year will give gospel opportunities. / Pray for the trustees of **GREAT COMMISSION PUBLICATIONS** as they meet today.

**28** Yearlong intern **JOHN PAUL (CORINNE) HOLLOWAY** at San Antonio Reformed in San Antonio, TX. / **DAVID NAKHLA**, short-term missions coordinator. Pray for all preparing to serve in short-term missions this summer.

**29 ETHAN & CATHERINE BOLYARD**, Wilmington, NC. Pray that Heritage would finalize its purchase of a church building and begin renovations. / Pray for those planning May's **MTIOPC** intensive training in Wheaton, IL.

**30** Pray for **RETIRED MISSIONARIES** Cal & Edie Cummings, Brian & Dorothy Wingard, Greet Rietkerk, and Young & Mary Lou Son. / **AN-NELISA STUDLEY**, office manager, and **TRISH DUGGAN**, administrative assistant for STM.

# NEWS, VIEWS, & REVIEWS

## DONALD JAMIESON RETIRES IN SAN JOSE, CA

*Mark D. Soud*

On January 25, Covenant OPC in San Jose, California, celebrated the retirement of Donald Jamieson and his fifty-five years of faithful service as ruling elder. After hors d'oeuvres in the newly renovated office spaces at the church—a longtime passion of Mr. Jamieson's—and dinner, the commemoration included a slideshow, comments by men who have served with him for many years, and the presentation of a resolution of thanks and certificate of retirement. Afterward Mr. Jamieson said that the speakers only described the good half of his service. In addition to his tenure as ruling elder, Jamieson also served as the stated clerk of the Presbytery of Northern California and Nevada for sixteen and a half years. In this role, he labored diligently to see general assembly meet in California; the Eightieth General Assembly met in Moraga, California, in 2013.



(Left to right): Richard Neff, Randy Franklin, Mark Soud, Donald Jamieson, Jeff Landis, Rob Starke, Jack Ferrante, and Rick Vander Kam

a ruling elder there. He also was a member of the board of Westminster Theological Seminary for forty-eight years. He is survived by his wife of fifty-five years, Brenda, son Ben, daughter Kitty Coman, and four grandchildren.

time elder of Redeemer OPC in Atlanta, GA, died on January 25.

• **Gabriela M. Reason**, 41, died on February 18. She was the wife of Roth M. Reason, pastor of Redeemer OPC in Danville, PA.



*William O. Wilson (1928-2020)*

## IN MEMORIAM: WILLIAM O. "BILL" WILSON

*Zecharias A. Weldeyesus*

On January 25, 2020, Mr. William Wilson, ruling elder at Redeemer OPC in Atlanta, Georgia, died at the age of ninety-one and went to be with the Lord in glory. A founding member of Redeemer, Mr. Wilson served for over fifty years as

## UPDATE

### MINISTERS

- On August 31, 2019, the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic dissolved the pastoral relationship between Trinity Reformed OPC in Lanham, MD, and **Brian D. Chang**, who transferred to the PCA on October 3.
- On February 1, **Cecil R. Simpson III** of the Presbytery of Philadelphia demitted the ministry.
- On February 28, **M. Scott Johnson**, formerly the pastor of Grace OPC in Wasilla, AK, was installed as pastor of Mount Rose Reformed OPC in Reno, NV.

### MILESTONES

- **William O. "Bill" Wilson Jr.**, 91, long-

## LETTERS

### WORKPLACE CHAPLAINCY

Editor:

I enjoyed and appreciated the February issue on chaplaincy. The value and benefit of chaplains to those in service is tremendous.

But one kind of chaplaincy was not included: workplace chaplaincy. For example, Timothy McClymonds, now pastor at Christ Covenant OPC in Sheridan, Indiana, served as a certified chaplain in Arkansas with the Corporate Chaplains for America for over six years.

I believe the marketplace is one of the last institutions in America where the gospel hasn't been outlawed. Engaging in the marketplace—through both discipling our members and bringing the gospel ministry to it via workplace

chaplaincy—is a great opportunity for the gospel to intersect with people’s lives.

The benefit to the pastor serving as a chaplain in the workplace is a firsthand understanding of the daily work of many of the church’s members. Chaplains also become a friend and confidant to the lost, so that when a crisis arises, they have earned the trust through a long-term relationship to be able to share the gospel without any doubt of sincerity.

Michael Diercks  
Pataskala, OH

## REVIEWS

***When God Draws Near: Exploring Worship from Seven Summits*, by Paul E. Engle. P&R, 2019. Paperback, 216 pages, \$12.00. Reviewed by OP minister Camden M. Bucy.**

One of my favorite essays of J. Gresham Machen’s is “Mountains and Why We Love Them,” included by D. G. Hart in *J. Gresham Machen: Selected Shorter Writings*. Paul E. Engle references Machen’s love of mountain-climbing (36) in *When God Draws Near: Exploring Worship from Seven Summits*.

In successive chapters Engle focuses upon particular aspects of God’s relationship to his people that are accentuated on seven summits. Sinai is the place where God assembles his people. On Zion, he institutes temple worship. Carmel demonstrates a great triumph over idolatry. Gerizim brings into view the location of proper worship. On Hermon, the Lord Jesus Christ was transfigured, providing a glimpse into his eternal glory and the worship he receives from the angels in the highest heavens. From the Mount of Olives, Christ ascended, and through his blood, God’s people have come to the heavenly Mount Zion. In all of these summits, Engle identifies God’s overarching plan to dwell with us, likening it to an umbrella that covers all of history from Eden to the heavenly Mount Zion (20–21, 167).

*When God Draws Near* is thoughtful, engaging, and written in an accessible

manner, which should not be taken for granted in a work of this type. Readers will benefit greatly by meditating upon its themes and treating them as an invitation to further study. There were, however, some aspects of the book that could have been developed and integrated more thoroughly. Covenants were briefly addressed in the context of Sinai (49), and the Fall is treated in the opening chapter on Eden, but I failed to find any mention of the covenant of works or Genesis 2:15–16. Engle helpfully references Ezekiel 28:13–14, which describes Eden as the “holy mountain of God” (21–22), but because God’s promise to Adam in the covenant of works is not acknowledged, the book treats redemption in Christ as a restoration of Eden rather than as the inauguration of a new and glorious mode of life (24–26). By understanding the deep foundations of covenant theology, we come to see what binds these mountains together in Scripture. It is not a return to the first mountain; it is entrance into the highest heavens.

Adam was created in true knowledge, righteousness, and holiness in fellowship with God. There was nothing deficient with him. Nevertheless, the Lord always intended for him to move from the natural to the Spiritual (see Paul’s comparison in 1 Cor. 15:42–49). Geerhardus Vos called this heavenly orientation the “deeper Protestant conception” (*Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:13). God offered this higher,

Spiritual life to Adam in the covenant of works, and while he forfeited that life in disobedience, the Lord was merciful in establishing the covenant of grace (Gen. 3:15). Through his own blood, Jesus Christ secures redemption for his people. He does not merely restore Eden; he brings his people to the same glorious goal promised in the covenant of works and realized at the heavenly Mount Zion (Heb. 12:18–24; Isa. 2:1–4; Mic. 4:1–5). Mountains have always been a place where the gaze of God’s people is drawn upward, so to speak, to the heavenly places where Christ is now seated at God’s right hand (Col. 3:1–4).

***Reset: Living a Grace-Paced Life in a Burnout Culture*, by David Murray. Crossway, 2017. Paperback, 206 pages, \$11.46 (Amazon). Reviewed by OP elder Matthew Miner.**

David Murray, professor at Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary, begins *Reset* with an argument for the need to pace ourselves in our Christian lives. The argument is directed to men and especially men in ministry, who, Murrays notes, often



grapple with outsize family demands alongside their work in the church.

The Lord alone knows the number of our days and ordains the physical and mental health we enjoy in this fallen world. But

he offers gifts that we reject to the peril of our health, gifts like Sabbath rest or physical exercise. Murray applies the gospel of our salvation to the *how* and *what* of daily living and proffers fruitful wisdom and relationship-strengthening, life-giving advice.

Murray counsels from experience. A few years ago, he received a diagnosis of “multiple blood clots in both lungs” (19) on the heels of “two other health issues, one of which...culminated in a major operation” (21),—all this shortly after a dramatic near-miss in a car accident on an icy road! Murray muses, “Did these providences give me pause? Not for long. That’s why blood clots were required. God’s message to me, through my blood, was: ‘Stop!’” (21–22).

In *Reset*, Murray “challenges [the reader] to take stock of [his] life” (24) and, quoting author J. R. Briggs, says that “self-care is the first step in caring for others, for loving your neighbor as yourself” (24). This is consonant with Paul in 1 Timothy 5 or Titus 1: You can’t serve well in the church if your family life is in shambles. And you can’t serve well in the church or your family without Christ-centered self-care.



## ✓ New Church Plant in the Twin Cities

There is a new church plant underway in the southwest metro area of the Twin Cities (Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota). If you or someone you know might be interested, please contact Pastor Kim Kuhfuss at [kuhfuss.1@opc.org](mailto:kuhfuss.1@opc.org) or 715-222-1723.

Murray structures his book around an automobile repair and maintenance trope, drawing on the Sabbath principle to describe a routine of preventive maintenance for our bodies and souls. He contrasts obedience to God's command to rest with disregard for the Sabbath, leading at best to costly repairs and at worst to landing ourselves in the ditch.

Murray serves up the meat of the book with a self-diagnostic quiz. He interacts comfortably with authors outside our own tradition (there's a quote from Arianna Huffington!) and comments from disciplines outside theology, including medicine, psychology, and both the hard and social sciences. But the book remains rooted in the gospel, concluding with a chapter, "Resurrection," on the newness that is ours in Christ.

Reading a theologian of Murray's stature and experience, I would have welcomed even more discussion of God's Word connected to the topic, but the book is concise, which is useful. The paperback is a terrific option for note-taking and highlighting, but the audiobook version, available on Audible and read by Murray, is excellent; in it, Murray's love for the topic and for men in the church comes through in his voice. This was a blessing to me—and you can share the book with your wife while listening aloud in the car!

***Reformed Ethics*, vol. 1: *Created, Fallen, and Converted Humanity*, written by Herman Bavinck and edited by John Bolt, et al. Baker Academic, 2019. Hardcover, 608 pages, \$36.59 (Amazon). Reviewed by professor R. Carlton Wynne.**

Once blessed when Herman Bavinck's *Reformed Dogmatics* appeared in English translation in 2003–2008, the Reformed Christian world is now blessed again by

the new English translation of Bavinck's companion work on Reformed ethics.

This volume (inaugurating a projected three) is derived from the first portion of a 1,100-page unfinished manuscript long hidden in the Bavinck archives in Amsterdam, but discovered in 2008 by Dirk van Keulen, a researcher at The Neo-Calvinism Research Institute, TU Kampen. Evidence indicates that Bavinck developed this manuscript while teaching ethics at the Theological School in Kampen in the 1880s and 90s, but never sought its publication.

This firstfruits of *Reformed Ethics* divides into two main sections: Book I, "Humanity Before Conversion," where Bavinck examines the creation of humanity as God's image, the essence of sin and its consequences, and the conscience; and Book II, "Converted Humanity," where he unfolds the many dimensions of life in the Spirit, including how Scripture and church history express it, the role that perseverance occupies in it, the pathologies that afflict it, and the spiritual disciplines that enhance it.

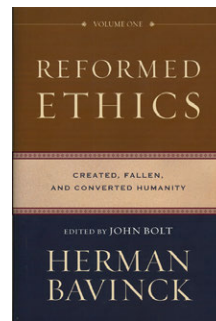
Readers will find this work to be quintessentially "Bavinckian" in at least three ways. First, Bavinck deploys his holistic and organic thinking by linking the distinct disciplines of dogmatics and ethics, explaining that while dogmatics deals with "what God does for us and in us," ethics addresses "what it is that God now expects of us when he does his work in us" (22). He adds, "Dogmatics proceeds from God; ethics returns to God. In dogmatics, God loves us; in ethics, we love him" (22).

Second, Bavinck displays his Reformed bearings by taking Scripture as his sole source and norm for doctrine

and life (26), explicitly disclaiming rationalistic thought or autonomous human behavior, shunning both natural theology and all Pelagian accounts as informing ethics, and yet avoiding biblicism. Much like in his *Dogmatics*, Bavinck first gathers up Scripture's teaching on a subject; then explores how the Christian church, especially the Reformed variety, has understood Scripture's teaching, and then proceeds to describe how we should apply it today. Comprehension is aided by the editors' summaries at the start of each chapter.

Third, Bavinck's treatment of ethics is devotionally rich. Readers will especially benefit from his trenchant analysis of self-love (or "egocentricity") as the "organizational principle" of sin (105), as well as his exposition of the countless categories of sin (118–45). They will also exult in his discussion of the way Spirit-wrought love of God in Christ, through fellowship with him by faith, organically begets Christian maturity in knowledge, faith, and hope (317–59). Bavinck's pastoral wisdom is particularly on display in a long section on Christian assurance, which, he carefully explains, is mediated by God's Word, our faith, and the leading of the Spirit (363–403). The final chapter touches on eight means of spiritual renewal, especially prayer, which is "much more a privilege than a duty" (468).

Other than the editors' inclusion in the footnotes of nearly two dozen references to Wikipedia articles—odd for a work of this stature—this volume is a spiritual feast, prepared by a consummate Reformed theologian who relished Christ and longed to see God's people transformed into his image.



*Exegetical Lectures and Sermons on Hebrews*, by Charles Hodge, edited by William VanDoodewaard. Banner of Truth, 2019. Hardcover, 264 pages, \$19.80. Reviewed by OP professor Alan D. Strange.

Charles Hodge (1797–1878) of Princeton Theological Seminary (PTS) was renowned as the premier Old School Presbyterian theologian of the nineteenth century. He is perhaps best known for his magisterial *Systematic Theology*, written late in his career (1871–1873); the PTS Board of Trustees had long dreaded him writing such a work, fearing that it would devalue studying under him. When he did write his three-volume *Systematic Theology*, he did not simply mine his classroom lecture notes but wrote a new work altogether, a mark of the sort of tireless servant Hodge was. Its publication did not discourage prospective students from continuing to flock to Princeton. Hodge, however, was not always a systematic theologian: before Hodge succeeded Archibald Alexander in the theology chair in 1840, he had taught for two decades in biblical studies. He published biblical commentaries both during and after his time in the biblical department, particularly on Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Ephesians.

This new book is most welcome as an addition to Hodge's published works on the Bible. These lectures and sermons of Hodge on Hebrews, both from his own hand and those of others, have lain dormant in the PTS archives, being brought to publication and edited by William VanDoodewaard, professor of church history at Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary. With respect to the first part of this work, exegetical lectures on Hebrews, it derives from two sources: an early (1821) "brief set of notes, in part summarizing John Owen's commentary on Hebrews, but only covering chapter 2 through 5 of the epistle" (xii); the second, and more significant source, are the lecture notes on the epistle from a class that Hodge taught in 1842 on the Pauline epistles (Hebrews was historically assumed to come from

Paul's pen). These notes cover the whole book of Hebrews save chapter 13. The second part of the book contains sermons and outlines of Hodge's preaching on Hebrews, most of which have not been previously published.

VanDoodewaard points out that those familiar with Hodge's other New Testament commentaries will recognize the typical Hodge style in which "broad themes and fine points of the epistle merge together in a coherent whole," resulting in a product eminently useful for "pastors, theologians, and church members" (xiii). VanDoodewaard also notes that Hodge employs an exegetical exposition similar to Calvin's storied "lucid brevity." The introduction provided by the editor is generally a helpful orientation to the work, though marred by two observations about Hodge's view on creation and slavery that warrant a historical contextualization that they lack.

When Hodge cites Greek, an English transliteration is provided, so non-Greek students need not fear purchasing this. This slender volume, certainly in its first section, will become a helpful resource for a pastor or Sunday school teacher wanting quickly to ascertain the meaning of a verse or a collection of verses of Hebrews. The second section contains fifteen sermons and outlines. The outlines are typically a few pages (three or four), or shorter, and the full sermons are often between fifteen and twenty pages. As VanDoodewaard notes, "Hodge's Hebrew sermons supplement his commentary, providing the reader more expansive exposition and application of numerous key sections of the epistles" (xv). Hitherto unpublished writings of Hodge should always gain an audience among Old School Presbyterians!

*The Christian's True Identity: What It Means to Be in Christ*, by Jonathan Landry Cruse. Reformation Heritage, 2019. Paperback, 155 pages, \$11.00. Reviewed by OP pastor James T. Lim.

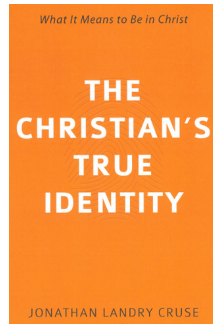
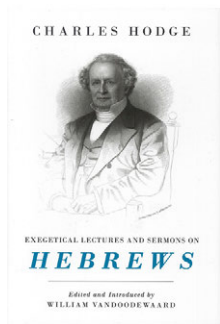
In our therapeutic, self-help, identity-obsessed culture, one of the most important questions people ask themselves is,

"Who am I?" It's a question that reveals people's search for meaning and significance. According to Cruse, the answer to this question "ultimately...reveals what we believe is our identity" (2).

In this little gem of a book, Cruse takes us through the Christian's true identity "in Christ" and how it makes an "eternal difference" in our lives (15). He walks the reader through various passages that highlight aspects of our union with Christ and how it impacts our self-identity exegetically, doctrinally, historically, culturally, apologetically, and most important of all, experientially.

He begins with our union with Christ (ch. 1), and then proceeds to walk us through what it means to be chosen (ch. 2), pardoned (ch. 3), righteous (ch. 4), adopted (ch. 5), one (ch. 6), new (ch. 7), secure (ch. 8), alive (ch. 9), and in communion with Christ (ch. 10). He teaches what each of these words means for our identity in Christ. He highlights the various "false identity gospels" that pervade our culture and society and then proceeds to show how our true identity—our deepest and most satisfying identity—is and ought to be "in Christ."

What I appreciated most was Cruse's engagement with the competing cultural and social identities that Christians can be prone to take up and his explanation of how these identities ultimately fall short in the end. And then he shows us how infinitely better and more satisfying our identity in union with Christ truly is and the ways in which it is a more secure,



## Correction

On page 19 of the March issue, Jeremiah Montgomery should have been listed as a pastor of Covenant Presbyterian in Vandalia, Ohio.

lasting, and life-giving one at that.

He provides an exposition of each aspect of our identity in Christ from Bible passages, while interacting with diverse sources ranging from Justice Kennedy's majority opinion in *Obergefell v. Hodges* (4) to Rachael Denhollander's address to Larry Nassar (43) to Søren Kierkegaard, John Calvin, Martin Luther, John Owen, and the Reformed catechisms and confessions, just to name a few.

Cruse has written a unique book that, though relatively short, packs an enormous amount of profound, yet accessible, biblical truth that informs the intellect, warms the heart, and encourages us to worship and live for Jesus. As a collection of edited sermons, the book provides a model of what Reformed preaching ought to look like. As a doctrinal exposition on union with Christ, it is married to our Christian experience, showing us its relevance for all of life. And as a book for twenty-first-century Christians, it reminds us that the gospel is timeless and can still answer the pressing contemporary questions of identity for believers and unbelievers alike. I heartily recommend this book for personal devotions, group studies (using the questions at the end of each chapter), and for use in counseling people with identity struggles.

My only criticisms are, first, that a final chapter, perhaps, on glorification in Christ might have been a fitting conclusion, and, second, as T. David Gordon writes in his endorsement, I was "saddened" to "arrive at the end of this pithy volume," hoping there will be an expanded treatment in the future.

***Liberty in the Things of God: The Christian Origins of Religious Freedom*, Robert Louis Wilken. Yale University Press, 2019. Hardcover, 248 pages, \$12.99 (Amazon). Reviewed by OP elder Mark Graham.**

For a long, long time, so the story goes, religious freedom was utterly unknown and even unthinkable in the Western world. Then dawned the Enlightenment, and secular minds dreamed up this noble idea in their disdain for the forced belief of Christendom and in exasperation at the staggering amounts of blood shed during

the early modern wars of religion.

Robert Louis Wilken, prominent historian of early Christianity and professor emeritus at the University of Virginia, proposes to debunk this widely held secular narrative that presents "Christianity as inescapably intolerant and religion as prone to violence" (2). Wilken begins during the third-century persecutions of Christians when Tertullian, and, later, Lactantius and a few others, proposed the idea that "religious faith is an inward disposition of the mind and heart and for that reason cannot be coerced by external force" (1). Tracing the idea of religious freedom through medieval and, especially, Reformation-era texts, he ends with the famous writings of John Locke.

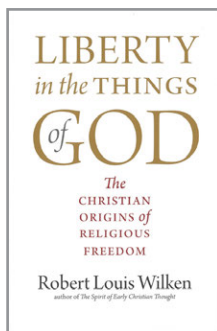
Does he succeed in overturning the dominant secular narrative? Wilken conclusively shows that arguments for religious freedom and liberty of conscience are not absent from the early church, and that they played an important role in Reformation and post-Reformation debates, well before the Enlightenment. Wilken is at his best as he demonstrates the variety of early modern Protestant and Catholic authors who argued about and even for religious freedom and liberty of conscience—in Germany, Switzerland, France, the Netherlands, England, and America. Reformation-era thinkers, not Enlightenment secularists, did the heavy lifting on religious freedom. Wilken well makes the case that John Locke's famous argument for religious freedom, *Letter Concerning Toleration*, in basic ways sim-

ply followed a "well-trodden path" (173).

If the book's subtitle has you expecting proof that religious freedom played a key or even a minor role in Christian thought throughout time, between the early Christian centuries and the Reformers, you will be disappointed. It is one thing to argue that Tertullian's work was (re)discovered and invoked by Protestants and Catholics alike during the era of Reformation, quite another to demonstrate a long-term Christian trajectory, tradition, or even significant strand, of emphasis on religious freedom. Gregory the Great, Alcuin of York, Thomas Aquinas, and other medieval writers appear here, but the demonstrable influence of Tertullian's ideas comes in the context of the Reformation and the century after.

When an alternative narrative like this is proposed, a novel set of facts invariably comes to light. Here are a few examples: You will learn here that Tertullian was the first person to use the phrase "freedom of religion," even if the idea of this freedom as a natural right comes more than a millennium afterward. Later, you will learn that William Penn likely learned Greek from John Locke at Christ Church, Oxford, under Vice Chancellor John Owen and Chancellor Oliver Cromwell. Throughout you will encounter the many opposing and contradictory uses to which the parable of the wheat and tares has been put in church debates over political questions.

This beautifully written book should inform ongoing discussions of two-kingdoms theology, the importance of Renaissance humanism to the Reformation, the unraveling of the political notion of *corpus Christianum*, and the historical emergence of what are now called confessional churches.



## Position Available

**Pastor:** Grace OPC in Battle Mountain, Nevada, is looking for a pastor. Those interested in an opportunity to grow a small but cohesive church body in a rural setting, please contact Dave Bush at 209-559-5289 or at [bush0961@gmail.com](mailto:bush0961@gmail.com).



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