

Ordned Servant

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# *Ordained Servant Online*

## *A Journal for Church Officers*

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**CURRENT ISSUE: ORDAINED SERVANT AT THIRTY**

**January 2022**

### *From the Editor*

The December 2021 issue marks the end of thirty years of publication. Thankfully, what leads to the failure of many periodicals, especially those with a limited market, is not a problem for *Ordained Servant*—finances. That is because *OS* is a ministry of the church financed through Worldwide Outreach to serve the officers of Christ's church. It has been a great honor with much joy in the labor to serve as editor for the past sixteen years.

This issue contains several reflections on the thirtieth birthday of *Ordained Servant*: mine as editor, "Grace in Winter: Reflections on *Ordained Servant* at Thirty," Danny Olinger from a historical perspective, "*Ordained Servant* at Thirty," and several who have helped to produce *OS* over the years, Ann Hart, Darryl Hart, Diane Olinger, Stephen Pribble, James Scott, and Ayrian Yasar, "Editorial Reflections on *Ordained Servant* at Thirty."

Danny Olinger presents chapter 7 of *The Writings of Meredith G. Kline on the Book of Revelation: Chapter 7 – "Har Magedon: The End of the Millennium"* (1996). This is a valuable compilation and explanation of the writings of biblical theologian Meredith G. Kline on the book of Revelation. Remember that the final online issue of *OS* in 2021 contains the entire 1946 Masters thesis of Meredith G. Kline, *A Study in the Structure of the Revelation of John*.

Alan Strange continues his commentary on the Form of Government, "Commentary on the Form of Government of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Chapter 23, Part 2." Every officer and would-be officer in our church will benefit from this wise exposition.

T. David Gordon reviews a significant book, written for a targeted audience of those who teach and/or administer in Christian schools, *Digital Life Together: The Challenge of Technology for Christian Schools* by David I. Smith, Kara Sevensma, Marjorie Terpstra, and Steven McMullen.

Ryan McGraw reviews an important new publication of Brill, *Duplex Regnum Christi: Christ's Twofold Kingdom in Reformed Theology* by Jonathon D. Beeke. The important distinction between Christ's twofold kingdom and two kingdoms is explored in light of sixteenth and seventeenth century theology in its context. The last section deals briefly with contemporary two-kingdom literature.

The Committee on Christian Education, through its Subcommittee on Serial Publications, has decided to once again survey the readers and potential readers

of *Ordained Servant* to assess the value of OS for the officers of the OPC and see how we might improve this thirty-year-old publication. We would very much appreciate it if you would complete this brief survey in order to help us minister to the officers of the church in the best way possible.

Finally, as we begin a new year, I offer a poem, “The Calendar of Life.”

Blessings in the Lamb,  
Gregory Edward Reynolds

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## **FROM THE ARCHIVES “ORDAINED SERVANT”**

[http://opc.org/OS/pdf/Subject\\_Index\\_Vol\\_1-29.pdf](http://opc.org/OS/pdf/Subject_Index_Vol_1-29.pdf)

- “Introducing *Ordained Servant*.” (G. I. Williamson) 1:1 (Jan. 1992): 1–2.
- “Reflections on Twenty-five Years of *Ordained Servant*” (Gregory E. Reynolds) 25 (2016): 6–9.

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*Ordained Servant* exists to help encourage, inform, and equip church officers for faithful, effective, and God-glorifying ministry in the visible church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Its primary audience is ministers, elders, and deacons of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, as well as interested officers from other Presbyterian and Reformed churches. Through high-quality editorials, articles, and book reviews, we will endeavor to stimulate clear thinking and the consistent practice of historic, confessional Presbyterianism.

# Servant Thoughts

## Grace in Winter: Reflections on *Ordained Servant* at Thirty

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Gregory E. Reynolds

I guess it was inevitable that I should become an editor later in life. I was the editor of my high school yearbook for the class of 1967. I enjoyed the collaborative effort. We won the University of New Hampshire high school yearbook award that year. I was somewhat oblivious to the honor as I was headed for a career in architecture, never dreaming that I would end up an editor for sixteen years. There is another irony. I feared public speaking, so my assistant editor, who loved the limelight and was a gifted speaker, happily took that responsibility—then I became a minister, speaking in public for over four decades two to three times a week. God’s ways are indeed mysterious.

Samuel Johnson defined the lexicographer as a “harmless drudge.” He might have defined the editor in a similar fashion, since editor and lexicographer are both word gatherers, but as I begin my seventeenth year as editor of *Ordained Servant*, I should like to own the “harmless” attribute and eschew the “drudge.” There is, to be sure, drudgery in editing—late submissions, improper formatting, missing citations, etc., but for me, above all, assisting in edifying my fellow church officers brings a joy that easily supersedes the small drudgery.

I am reminded of the classical trio of transcendental realities: the good, the true, and the beautiful. They embody a summary of what I have tried to accomplish in *Ordained Servant* over the years. The *good* represents the ethics of the Christian life rooted in the Trinity—a life well lived. The *true* represents all that our God has revealed in his Word about who he is, how he has redeemed us, and how we are to live before him and with our fellow man. The *beautiful* is seen in the way the good and the true present themselves in literature, poetry, art, and in all creative human endeavors as well crafted.

I have sought to broaden the exposure of officers to the culture in which we are embedded to witness the gospel. The original intent of *OS*’s first editor was the laudable goal of revitalizing the offices of elder and deacon. Given the presence of much material on these offices in the *OS* archives, I have sought to expand the material available to ministers without neglecting the elders. Although, since ministers and elders form sessions, I always have the two offices in view. There are over twenty articles in the *OS* archives under the topics “Elders” and “Deacons,” besides many more that pertain to those offices such as “Visitation” and Tithing.” Deacons also now have regular denominational summits. Elders are about to receive special attention through a series of podcasts. Serving all three offices remains my goal as editor.

Since our high standard for the ministerial office requires a liberal arts degree, I have sought to help ministers see how that broad exposure to culture relates to the ministry of the Word and their pastoral duties. This has, at times, included reviewing books on important topics written by those outside the Christian faith. I have sought to promote the value of

poetry and literature for preachers as an aid to their craft as wordsmiths, but also for the edification and pleasure of all Christians served by our officers. It has been gratifying to have a number of men and women say how much they enjoy the poetry, some of whom were enjoying poetry for the first time. We must ever be in the business of expanding our understanding of our task in the complex world in which we minister.

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As I look to the future of my editing task, I realize that an editor is a complex creature, whose perceptions and sensibilities are varied, and thus in my case different in some ways from others who have edited the OPC's two periodicals. I will continue to attempt to understand what officers in the church need, what might help them fulfill their callings better. I will also continue to unabashedly introduce new ideas and interests of my own, which I hope will expand the interests of officers, intent on ministering to their congregations. This is what editors do. And while I am always seeking to respond to the needs of officers, this personal trajectory is something that editors cannot deny or avoid. That other editors could do better or at least differently I do not deny.

I intend to continue to follow our original mission statement by helping to encourage, inform, and equip church officers for faithful, effective, and God-glorifying ministry in the visible church of the Lord Jesus Christ. I am always committed to working within the boundaries of our confessional commitment. I have taken a vow to do so.

I want to cover issues that threaten the unity and faith of the church. These issues come from within the church and from outside. They often come from our culture and infect the church. In its worst form these beliefs and practices come in the guise of true spirituality within the church. An example would be the idea of many American Christians that formal membership or a membership role book are unspiritual, when in fact the biblical case for these is overwhelming. This is the spirit of radical individualism in the guise of true spirituality. How easily cultural assumptions can be mistaken for Christian principles and ideals.

As mentioned above, *OS* will be developing a podcast, initially focused on elders. We are planning a series of interviews on topics specifically related to the various tasks of elders.

I will continue to foster close contact with the Committee on Ministerial Care to stay in touch with ministerial concerns. As my generation of ministers retires from full time pastoral ministry, issues such as retirement, financial planning, ministerial transition, etc., will become more of a concern.

I am always open to new ideas and unsolicited articles and reviews. And I am deeply grateful to all who make *OS* possible.

Why did I title this article "Grace in Winter"? It is the title of Faith Cook's book which puts several of Samuel Rutherford's (1600–1661) choice and eloquent letters into verse.<sup>1</sup> Rutherford said, "Grace grows best in winter." This little book meant a great deal to me during a difficult time in my ministry in 1989 and after. Each church officer encounters suffering and difficulty in the lives of those to whom he ministers and also experiences this himself in his own life and ministry. In a sense all of life in a fallen world is in the season of winter in desperate need of the light and warmth of the gospel. It is my constant hope that in a small way *Ordained Servant* helps to alleviate the wintery conditions with which we all deal from day to day and provide a path forward through the snow.

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<sup>1</sup> Faith Cook, *Grace in Winter: Rutherford in Verse* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1989).

# ServantReflections

## Reflections on *Ordained Servant* at Thirty

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Gregory E. Reynolds

The following are reflections by some of the people connected with *Ordained Servant* (*OS*) over the years of my editorship. Not only would the publication of *OS* have been impossible without them, but I count it a great privilege and blessing to work with such talented and delightful people.

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**Ann Henderson Hart**, copy editor for the print edition (2008–present)

I began copyediting *Ordained Servant* in the spring of 2008, the season that my father, a faithful minister, died. Carefully reading through the editorials, articles, and reviews in the journal had a special resonance for me that year. A sustained meditation on Christ, his church, and eternal things meant a great deal to me. In the years since, I have continued to appreciate the range of offerings each year in the journal, from deep theological reflections, to practical pieces on the life of the church, to reviews of quality Christian and secular books.

Edifying is the word that most often comes to mind after proofing the annual volume from cover to cover. One is reminded that you are engaging with thoughtful authors nationwide, who share a love for Christ and his church—whether they are pastors, elders, or deacons.

The breadth of subjects addressed and range of authors from across the country is heartening. Having worshipped in Orthodox Presbyterian churches in Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Michigan, and California, I am thankful to see how God is building his church.

The print version of *Ordained Servant*, in particular, invites readers to move away from their computer screens, slow down and focus on carefully curated submissions. It also provides a permanent record that can be put on the bookshelf and consulted later.

I appreciate the energy that editor Greg Reynolds brings to his post. Often the handsome cover of *OS* journal is a photograph that he has taken of a church steeple in his beloved New England. The layout is appealing, and the contents are easy to follow with titles, including: “Servant Tribute,” “Servant Worship,” “Servant Word,” “Servant Training,” and “Servant Living,” and more. The editor encourages church officers to be stewards of the Word, as well as attentive readers of the words of hymns, poetry, and serious literature.

Writer Marilyn Chandler McEntyre, in her memorable book, *Caring for Words in a Culture of Lies*, challenges readers to care deeply about words both spoken and written. She writes,

To be good stewards of words—we have at least to do three things (1) to deepen and sharpen our reading skills, (2) to cultivate habits of speaking and listening that foster precision and clarity, and (3) to practice *poesis*—to be makers and doers of the word.<sup>1</sup>

Pastors, elders, and deacons are stewards of the Word, whether from the pulpit, engaged in mercy ministries, or by example. *Ordained Servant* has been a complement to those endeavors for thirty years. While the printed journal is for church officers, the monthly editions of *Ordained Servant* are available for the edification of all readers at the denomination’s website, OPC.org

After all, at the end of life’s journey, all true followers of Christ long to hear the words, “Well done, my good and faithful servant.”

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**Darryl Hart**, chairman of the Subcommittee on Serial Publications of the Committee on Christian Education (2002–present)

### “Ruling Elders Rule”

One of the striking features of *Ordained Servant* has been the attention its contributors and editors have given to the office of ruling elder. In the first two years of the magazine’s publication, it featured four articles on eldership. Over the last three decades, it has accumulated eighteen articles on the topic. This reflects the original editor’s vision in some ways. In his first editorial, G. I. Williamson asserted that *OS*’s purpose was “to provide materials to help in the training and effective functioning of the elders (both teaching and ruling) and the deacons of our church.” He argued this was a need, since in the United States at the time (January 1992, just after the Cold War) an “exaggerated individualism” raised serious problems for the work of church officers and for appreciating the seriousness of church membership. “Can we honestly say, without hesitation,” he added, “that the elders of Orthodox Presbyterian congregations are faithfully exercising oversight of the flock according to biblical standards?”<sup>2</sup> To address that question, Williamson then and Greg Reynolds more recently have addressed the nature and function of ruling elders in Presbyterianism. For the sake of comparison, only “deacons” have received more attention—twenty-one articles. Church discipline, for instance, has attracted eight articles over thirty years.

This emphasis on office, and especially the office of ruling elder, is something of an anomaly in the history of Presbyterianism as a theory of church government. The Church of Scotland’s “First Book of Discipline” (1560), for instance, devoted a chapter to the election of elders and some criteria for those elected to office but did not spend much time on theological grounds for ruling elders as an office distinct from pastors.<sup>3</sup> The “Second Book of Discipline” (1578) added a chapter, “Of Elders and Their Office.” It described their work as watching “diligently upon the flock committed to their charge,

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<sup>1</sup> Marilyn Chandler McEntyre, *Caring for Words in a Culture of Lies* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 10.

<sup>2</sup> G.I. Williamson, “Introducing *Ordained Servant*,” *OS*, Jan. 1992, 2.

<sup>3</sup> *First Book of Discipline*, available at <https://www.fpchurch.org.uk/about-us/important-documents/the-first-book-of-discipline-1560/>.

both publicly and privately, that no corruption of religion or manners enter therein.”<sup>4</sup> But the major debate in Scotland and England after 1560 was whether to govern the church through bishops (usually appointed by the Crown) or by assemblies (independent of the civil authorities).

Even in the OPC, when in the 1950s the church revised its form of government, it had debates about the eldership that may have struck the original readers of *OS* as odd. One matter that received considerable debate was whether an elder was an office limited to active service or one that remained as long as the officer lived. Revisions allowed elders to leave office for non-judicial reasons, which some who resisted the revisions saw as a deficient understanding of the office.<sup>5</sup>

The current *Form of Government*, approved by the OPC’s General Assembly in 1979, has a lengthier description of the work of elders than many iterations of church polity from other and older Presbyterian communions. It reads in part:

[Ruling elders] are to watch diligently over the people committed to their charge to prevent corruption of doctrine or morals. . . . They should visit the people, especially the sick, instruct the ignorant, comfort the mourning, and nourish and guard the children of the covenant. They should pray with and for the people. They should have particular concern for the doctrine and conduct of the minister of the Word and help him in his labors.<sup>6</sup>

Whether that description was on the mind of Mr. Williamson when he took up the reins of editing *OS*, under Greg Reynolds’s watch, it has clearly carried over to the pages of the magazine, as the current commentary by Alan D. Strange on the *Form of Government* indicates.<sup>7</sup> That sort of attention to the work of all officers, pastors, elders, and deacons has been one of the hallmarks and positive contributions of *OS*.

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**Diane Olinger**, copy editor for the digital edition (2006–2020)

I was part of the *Ordained Servant* team when Gregory Reynolds first became editor. This was the beginning of online publication of monthly issues as well as a new style sheet, new formats, and new features. During the next fourteen years, Greg and I corresponded monthly concerning the work that needed to be done in preparing each issue. Our emails were brief and to the point: “articles x, y, and z attached,” followed by “mark up of articles x, y, and z attached.” But in the comments in the margins of the articles, we regularly exchanged views on some of the more esoteric rules of the *Chicago Manual on Style*—and occasionally on weighty matters of Reformed theology. Some of the most difficult articles for me, but also perhaps the most worthwhile, were those in which authors were vigorously expressing opposing views. This is one area where good

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<sup>4</sup> *Second Book of Discipline*, 6.4, available at <https://www.fpchurch.org.uk/about-us/important-documents/the-second-book-of-discipline-1578/>.

<sup>5</sup> See D. G. Hart, *Between the Times: The Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Transition, 1945–1990* (Willow Grove, PA: Committee for the Historian, 2011), 65–66.

<sup>6</sup> *Form of Government*, 10.3, available at [https://opc.org/BCO/FG.html#Chapter\\_X](https://opc.org/BCO/FG.html#Chapter_X).

<sup>7</sup> Alan D. Strange, “Commentary on the Form of Government of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Preface,” *Ordained Servant Online*, April 2020, was the first in the series.

editing can foster understanding and appreciation, if not agreement, by stressing the need for clarity of expression and fairness in argument (e.g., representing another's view accurately). I believe *Ordained Servant*, at its best, has served the church in this way.

My favorite *OS* author during my stint with *Ordained Servant* was, of course, Danny Olinger, whose in-depth writing on a variety of topics (including Roman Catholicism, Updike, Flannery O'Connor, Vos, and Kline) I frequently saw long before it arrived on Greg's desk. Greg's love of words and the Word, expressed in his writing on media, ecology, and poetry, introduced me to new ideas and beautiful expression. T. David Gordon and D. G. Hart were pithy—and required only the lightest of edits. Copyediting the profound and precise work of Dr. Gaffin and Dr. Tipton, I considered an honor.

My small contributions to *Ordained Servant* were often made in between loads of laundry or while the kids were napping. The laundry continues, but the kids are (nearly) all grown now, and I have moved on to other endeavors. Still, I am thankful to have had this opportunity to serve the OPC and its ordained servants.

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**Stephen Pribble**, webmaster, senior technical associate, and proofreader (2006–present)

It has been my privilege to work with *Ordained Servant* for the last twenty-four years. In 1998 I was asked, by then-General Secretary of the Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension Ross Graham, to take over OPC.org. Initially I did not have a job description; I was simply told to look over the website, make improvements, and be on the lookout for appropriate content. Ross gave me a few weeks to get started; then we had a one-hour phone call to talk things over, and that was that; I had become the OPC website manager! I did not know till months later that a small salary came with the job.

I remember when *Ordained Servant* first began arriving in my mailbox in early 1992, printed on sheets of office paper, three-hole-punched to facilitate storage in binders. Having been ordained as an independent Baptist (later received into the Presbytery of the Midwest via the PCA), I was amazed at *OS*'s good content. I was impressed that veteran minister G. I. Williamson was the editor. He was a hero of mine, since his study guides on the Westminster Confession of Faith, Shorter Catechism, and Heidelberg Catechism had given me great encouragement in my journey from independency to Presbyterianism. I was moved by the realization that the Committee on Christian Education would pour considerable resources into the ongoing training and equipping of ministers, elders, and deacons—something I had never experienced in independent Baptist circles. Only later did I come to understand that this was an intentional effort to fulfill the Great Commission's "teaching-them-to-observe-all-things" clause.

When I began receiving the four-times-yearly issues of *OS*, I immediately thought that such good content needed to be permanently archived on OPC.org. I phoned G. I. Williamson and persuaded him to send me the issues in PDF format (the only way we could manage it, since at that time he was using a Mac, and I was using Windows), and I began posting the PDFs on the OPC website. The PDF format, while workable with many kinds of computers, did not, however, lend itself easily to the correction of minor errors.

When Greg Reynolds took over as editor in 2006, *OS* began monthly publication (except for July and September) in HTML with an annual printed edition. Greg began sending me articles in Word format for posting. I also helped with proofreading,

especially with regularizing and standardizing Greek and Hebrew citations and transliterations (something that became easier over time with the development of the Unicode, Times New Roman, and Arial fonts). It was a joy to be able to see *OS* content in advance of the general public and to have a part in putting it into good form. The Committee on Christian Education entrusted me with the task of preparing Mobi (Kindle) and ePub editions. During fifteen years of service on the Committee on Christian Education, I had the opportunity to work personally with both G. I. Williamson and Greg Reynolds as well as Tom Tyson, Larry Wilson, Danny Olinger, John Galbraith, and others for whom I have the greatest respect.

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**James W. Scott**, layout-typographer and proofreader for the print edition (2006–2018)

From its beginning thirty years ago, *Ordained Servant* has worked to bridge the ever-widening gap between *New Horizons*, aimed at Orthodox Presbyterian Church members in general, and the *Westminster Theological Journal*, aimed at the Reformed academic world. Into the gap stepped *Ordained Servant* in 1992, edited by G. I. Williamson for the Committee on Christian Education. Initially it was a modest publication, about the same size as *New Horizons* and published less often. It mostly addressed the practical concerns of Orthodox Presbyterian ministers, elders, and deacons. Over the years it gradually grew in size.

At the end of 2005, G. I. Williamson retired, and Greg Reynolds became the editor. Under his leadership, *Ordained Servant* gained a wider theological focus. Starting with volume 15 for 2006, *Ordained Servant* became a monthly online publication, and at the end of that year (and every year thereafter) the chief contents of those issues were assembled topically in a beautiful, printed volume, utilizing a new format designed by Chris Tobias. Greg brought in a number of people to assist him editorially and graphically with the online and printed editions. As an employee of the Committee on Christian Education, I was assigned the task of putting the annual printed volume together, beginning, if I am not mistaken, with volume 16 in 2007. My work continued through volume 26 in 2017 (produced in 2018). As part of my rolling retirement from working for the OPC, my layout/typesetting work was passed on to Judith Dinsmore.

When Chris Tobias designed the new format of *Ordained Servant*, he of course had the reader in mind, not me putting it together. That is, the book is attractive in its design and easy to read. But the mix of fonts and styles makes it rather complicated to format. There were also a number of technical software issues (e.g., involving footnotes), but I figured out what I thought was the most efficient way to handle them. I passed on my secrets to Judith, who has no doubt figured out better ways to do things.

Greg always wanted me to do a final proofing of the printed volume. Since it had already gone through several layers of editing and proofing, I was reluctant to take on such a time-consuming job. But I looked over the material that seemed to be in good shape and spent more time with material that clearly needed more work (especially where Hebrew and Greek text was involved). I did what I could in the time available, but more thorough work could have been done.

I must say that I was consistently impressed by the high quality of the articles and book reviews that I was putting into print. Written mostly by Orthodox Presbyterian ministers, they showed mature insight into the subjects addressed. While my contribution

to *Ordained Servant* was relatively minor, I was always glad to help facilitate the ministry of Christ's church.

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**Ayrian Yasar**, copy editor for the digital edition (2020–present)

James 1:5 states, “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives to all men generously and without reproaching, and it will be given him.” While we pray for wisdom from the Lord, and know he is the one who provides it, he often uses other believers in our growth and acquisition of wisdom. In our current post-modern society there seems to be no loss for experiencing lack of wisdom to deal with current events and secular thought. In this regard *Ordained Servant* is a useful tool for ministers in that it offers biblically based reflections on issues of the church and keeps ministers aware of current secular thought and biblical resources for various concerns. It is a means for passing along wisdom.

For ministers who find themselves in the trenches in their churches, *OS* provides a means by which these pastors can get a taste of what is going on in academia and the broader culture. It provides an opportunity for pastors to be aware of important issues, but with only a small use of precious time. An article like “Imago Hominis: Our Brave New World” by Gregory E. Reynolds is a great example of shedding light on an important subject via reviewing Jacob Shatzer’s book, *Transhumanism and the Image of God: Today’s Technology and the Future of Christian Discipleship*.

For ministers who need encouragement, that also can be found in *Ordained Servant* with selections like “Poured Out Like a Drink Offering: An Ordination and Installation Charge” by Richard B. Gaffin, to just name a recent article among others. Such articles follow the directive in 1 Thessalonians 5:11, “Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.” As ministers are not immune to burn-out from their ministries, *Ordained Servant* is a blessing and means of encouragement to pastors through its writings.

Whether it is understanding church history or current secular thought, gaining a better understanding of the church standards, discovering an appreciation for poetry, or influential biblical resources, *Ordained Servant* brings an assortment of valuable material for the minister that aids in his growth in wisdom. But in all this accumulation of useful information, in this sharing of each one’s gifts and time as individuals write articles and review books, is the understanding that this work is a blessing to Christ’s people, and specifically fellow under-shepherds. The coming together to build each other up and be a source of encouragement and wisdom to each other is a beautiful thing that will, Lord willing, continue to show how Jesus blesses his people as they love him and love each other.

# ServantHistory

## *Ordained Servant* at Thirty

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by Danny E. Olinger

When the members of the Committee on Christian Education (CCE) of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) gathered on Friday, September 29, 1989, at the OPC administrative building on 7401 Old York Road, Melrose Park, Pennsylvania, the excitement revolved around the appearance of the newly appointed general secretary, Thomas Tyson. Ross Graham, the director of the intern program, reported on his activities. Finance subcommittee chairman Payton Gardner made sure to introduce everyone to David Haney, the new controller for the Committee on Coordination. Then, at the end of the meeting, the final action taken was the establishing of a Special Committee on the Equipping of Ordained Officers. The CCE appointed G. I. Williamson, pastor of Bethel OPC in Carson, North Dakota, and two ruling elders newly elected by the Fifty-Sixth General Assembly and attending their first CCE meeting, James Gidley and David Winslow. The mandate given the Special Committee was to “begin to prepare periodic study materials for churches designed to assist the office bearers of the church in their God-given task of the edification of the whole body.”

The Special Committee went to work, and nearly two years later, on September 13, 1991, they brought a recommendation that the CCE publish a journal designed to help church officers. The CCE approved the recommendation and then engaged in a discussion based upon the Special Committee’s additional recommendations on what the journal should look like. The presentation of the work of the elder and deacon would be theoretical and practical. The church standards—the Confession of Faith and Catechisms and the Book of Church Order—should be emphasized, along with historical studies of other Presbyterian and Reformed churches. The practical was to include the session’s oversight of Word, sacraments, and discipline and its leadership in worship, evangelism, and edification. Regarding deacons, the CCE sought to identify the task of deacons in the local congregation and to discuss practical problems that deacons face.

After determining the content, the CCE appointed G. I. Williamson as the editor. Ordained to the gospel ministry in 1952, Williamson had served as a pastor in five different denominations, the United Presbyterian Church of North America (New Bedford, Pennsylvania, and Fall River, Massachusetts), the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (Monticello, Arkansas), the Reformed Church of New Zealand (Auckland and Silverstream, New Zealand), the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (Wichita, Kansas), and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (Fall River, Massachusetts, and Carson and Lark, North Dakota).

As editor, Williamson chose *Ordained Servant* for the title of the new journal—the two options that the CCE had approved were either *Ordained Servant* or *Ordained to Serve*—and decided to print it locally through Pleroma Press in Carson, North Dakota. Since Pleroma Press was, in the words of Williamson, “a fledging operation” without even the standard press equipment of a mechanical page assembler, much of the work fell

upon the members of Bethel Orthodox Presbyterian Church where Williamson served as pastor. But, as Williamson also noted, the work was done “willingly” by these members as they understood how important it was to the church to have faithful pastors, elders, and deacons.<sup>1</sup>

For the inaugural January 1992 issue, Williamson put on the cover a portrait of John Calvin.<sup>2</sup> In his editorial, “Introducing *Ordained Servant*,” Williamson stated that the aim of the journal was to provide materials to help in the effective functioning of elders and deacons in the OPC. He also declared that it was not the intention of the journal to promote a partisan viewpoint, such as a two- or three-office view, as exclusively legitimate. Rather, the task before him as editor was to find the best material to help ordained servants in the church.<sup>3</sup>

Two articles in the first issue, “How to Get Started,” by Williamson and “Taking Heed to the Flock” by Peter Y. de Jong, concentrated on what would become a primary focus of *Ordained Servant*, the practice of family visitation by pastors and ruling elders.<sup>4</sup> De Jong’s “Taking Heed to the Flock” would appear in ten installments in *Ordained Servant* over the next three years. An “Elders Visitation Roll” was even included on the concluding pages of the first issue so that session members could keep a record of families visited.

In the 1998–1999 volume, Williamson revisited the themes of the de Jong articles with a smaller three-part series by David Winslow Jr. In his article, “A Sample Sessional Calling Record,” Winslow explained the goal “in doing Home Visits is to help the lambs of the flock see their lives hidden in Christ, our Good Shepherd; to encourage them to follow Him in the obedience of faith.”<sup>5</sup> So that the time of the visit did not turn into an opportunity to criticize the pastor, Winslow suggested that the visiting elders not ask, “Do you like the pastor’s preaching?” but “Are you understanding it?” and “Do you see that you are growing spiritually through it?”

Williamson, however, also gave notice that *Ordained Servant* was going to focus on the diaconate, with C. Van Dam’s “Some Old Testament Roots and Their Continuing Significance.”<sup>6</sup> Van Dam maintained that the diaconal task was to provide congregational fellowship in the joy of the Lord. In the second issue, April 1992, William Shishko built upon Van Dam’s start with a three-part series, “Reforming the Diaconate.” Shishko argued that Acts 6:1–6 presented the origin of the diaconate as a distinct and uniquely New Testament office. He then identified what he believed were the specific responsibilities entrusted to deacons, not only making provision for the basic needs of widows, but just as importantly relieving those entrusted with the ministry of the Word from responsibilities that detracted from this most important work of the church.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> G. I. Williamson, “Editorial,” *Ordained Servant*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (January 1993): 2, <https://www.opc.org/OS/pdf/OSV2N1.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> The cover portraits of the first two years of *Ordained Servant* following the initial Calvin cover would be J. Gresham Machen, Martin Luther, John Murray, Calvin, B.B. Warfield, and Martin Lloyd-Jones.

<sup>3</sup> G. I. Williamson, “Introducing *Ordained Servant*,” *Ordained Servant* 1, no. 1 (Jan. 1992): 1, <https://www.opc.org/OS/pdf/OSV1N1.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> Williamson, “Introducing *Ordained Servant*,” 5 and 8.

<sup>5</sup> David Winslow Jr., “A Sample Sessional Calling Record,” *Ordained Servant* 7, no. 2 (Apr. 1998): 29, <https://www.opc.org/OS/pdf/OSV7N2.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> C. Van Dam, “Some Old Testament Roots and Their Continuing Significance,” *Ordained Servant* 1, no. 1 (Jan. 1992): 14, <https://www.opc.org/OS/pdf/OSV1N1.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup> William Shishko, “Reforming the Diaconate,” *Ordained Servant* 1, no. 2 (Apr. 1992): 42, <https://www.opc.org/OS/pdf/OSV1N2.pdf>.

The publishing of de Jong, a Christian Reformed minister, and Van Dam, a Canadian Reformed minister, previewed Williamson's penchant for utilizing theologians from the Dutch continental tradition. Most often an issue of *Ordained Servant* would include a mix of articles and reviews written by Orthodox Presbyterians and Canadian Reformed, United Reformed, and Reformed Church of New Zealand authors.

But the opening issues also revealed some of the difficulties involved with trying to write, edit, and print a periodical all by oneself as Williamson was attempting to do. Five different times during the publishing of de Jong's "Taking Heed" series the contents page listed the wrong numerical installment of the series. Grammatical errors were commonplace, and the paper and ink combination used in printing varied from faint and hard to read to bold and blurry.

Some also noted that, despite the editor's declaration in the opening issue that *Ordained Servant* did not want to enter the two- or three-office debate, Williamson's emphasis and terminology was decidedly two-office. In the second issue, Williamson's "A Look at the Biblical Offices" argued that more important than the way that the offices are classified is the way the offices are defined.<sup>8</sup> Larry Wilson supplemented Williamson's article with an article expressing what he believed were the practical concerns of the office debate in the OPC.<sup>9</sup> Wilson maintained that the three-office position on the one hand was concerned with guarding the faithful ministry of the Word by maintaining its necessity, distinctiveness, and importance. On the other hand, three-office advocates did not want to undermine the office of ruling elder by disqualifying men from that office who did not have gifts or training for publicly teaching the Word. The two-office position sought to guard the parity of the governing officers of the church and to avoid hierarchicalism. Wilson thought that each of the concerns were biblical and that the church should endeavor to emphasize all four concerns.

Over the years, the two- or three-office debate lessened in the pages of *Ordained Servant*. One reason was that it was apparent that the predominantly three-office OPC and the predominantly two-office Presbyterian Church in America were not seeking to join, as they had officially attempted in 1981 and 1986. Another reason was the appearance of Mark Brown's 1993 book, *Order in the Offices*. In his *Ordained Servant* article accompanying the appearance of the book, "Why I Came to a Three-Office View," Brown argued that the historical Presbyterian position was correct: the minister is not an elder who teaches but a preacher who also governs.<sup>10</sup>

Williamson revisited the topic in the January 2003 issue with his article, "The Two- and Three-Office Issue Reconsidered." He confessed that he had long hesitated on the issue in that 1 Timothy 3:1–13 and Titus 1:5–9 seemed to him to be only speaking of elders and deacons (a two-office view), but 1 Timothy 5:17 proves that there was a marked division of labor among those who were called elders (a three-office view). Williamson confessed that he had been wrong in believing that Paul only lists the qualifications for two offices: the elders and the deacons. Rather, it is more accurate to say that he lists qualifications for three offices: 1- the deacons, 2- the elders who rule but

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<sup>8</sup> G. I. Williamson, "A Look at the Biblical Offices," *Ordained Servant* 1, no. 2 (Apr. 1992): 30, <https://www.opc.org/OS/pdf/OSV1N2.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup> Williamson, "A Look at the Biblical Offices," 38. On the Contents page, the article is named "The Office Debate." On page 38 where the article appears, the title is "How Many Offices are There? Practical Concerns."

<sup>10</sup> Mark Brown, "Why I Came to a Three-Office View," *Ordained Servant* 4, no. 1 (Jan. 2005): 18, <https://www.opc.org/OS/pdf/OSV4N1.pdf>.

do not labor in the Word, and 3- the elders who labor in the Word and rule as their vocation. The qualifications for category 3 are found in the entire content of 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus, not just in those portions of Scripture like 1 Timothy 3 that speak of the qualifications for categories 1 and 2. He concluded, “So I am finally driven to the conclusion that the three-office view is really what the Scriptures teach. But I also see that recognition of this in no way implies—in the slightest degree—any hierarchical status for ministers.”<sup>11</sup>

Another issue that Williamson eagerly engaged at the start of *Ordained Servant* was the more effective use of modern technology. In his judgment, as the invention of the printing press was vital in the promotion of the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century, so the electronic revolution could be of similar importance to the church in the future. He marveled that with a Macintosh IIsi computer and small GCC personal laser printer a master copy could be produced for the printer. The first of many reviews keeping readers updated on new technology for the church came from Leonard Coppes in the January 1993 issue. Coppes highly recommended the Logos Bible Study Software that was compatible with MS Windows 3.0 and 3.1.<sup>12</sup>

In keeping with the stated goal of providing resources for the training of elders and deacons, Williamson notably published during 1993 and 1994 John Hilbelink’s “A Training Course for Elders and Deacons”<sup>13</sup> and Archibald Allison’s “Biblical Qualifications for Elders.”<sup>14</sup> In addressing practical problems that deacons face, Roger Schmurr’s 1995 article, “Deacons and/or Trustees” sought to answer the question whether the handling of finances and the physical upkeep of the church property was limited to ordained individuals or not.<sup>15</sup>

As the years progressed, Williamson and *Ordained Servant* fell into a comfortable rhythm as such topics as confessionalism, Presbyterianism, expository preaching, and church discipline were regularly discussed and wholeheartedly endorsed. What Williamson, however, never quite achieved was consistency in the editing and printing of the journal.

At the close of 2005, Williamson retired at the age of eighty. During his fourteen years as editor, he produced fifty-one issues, wrote ten editorials, thirty-five articles, and reviewed twenty-three books. More than that, he established a standard of commitment to confessional fidelity.

The introduction of Gregory Reynolds as editor in 2006 brought subtle changes to the content of *Ordained Servant*, and drastic changes to the production and printing. Rather than sending up to four issues in the mail to sessions, the new format was an online monthly issue (except July and September) with a single print edition of the articles made available the following year. Regarding the content, Reynolds declared in his opening editorial, “Galvanized Iron: A Tribute to G. I. Williamson for His Pioneering Work on

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<sup>11</sup> G. I. Williamson, “The Two- and Three-Office Issue Reconsidered,” *Ordained Servant* 12, no. 1 (Jan. 2003): 6, <https://www.opc.org/OS/pdf/OSV12N1.pdf>.

<sup>12</sup> Leonard Coppes, review of Logos Bible Study Software, *Ordained Servant* 2, no. 1 (Jan. 1993): 24, <https://www.opc.org/OS/pdf/OSV2N1.pdf>.

<sup>13</sup> John R. Hilbelink, “A Training Course for Elders and Deacons,” *Ordained Servant* 2, no. 1 (Jan. 1993): 3, <https://www.opc.org/OS/pdf/OSV2N1.pdf>.

<sup>14</sup> Archibald A. Allison, “Biblical Qualifications for Elders,” *Ordained Servant* 3, no. 4 (Nov. 1994): 80, <https://www.opc.org/OS/pdf/OSV3N4.pdf>.

<sup>15</sup> Roger W. Schmurr, “Deacons and/or Trustees,” *Ordained Servant* 4, no. 1 (Jan. 1995): 20, <https://www.opc.org/OS/pdf/OSV4N1.pdf>.

*Ordained Servant*,” that he intended to build upon Williamson’s “fine efforts to cultivate confessional consciousness in the mind of the church through the faithful ministries of its officers, that the Scripture may be understood and lived to the glory of God.”<sup>16</sup>

In moving forward, Reynolds articulated that exploring the combination of digital and print publications for *Ordained Servant* represented a challenge. Digital publication brought with it the efficiency and accessibility of the internet; printed publication brought with it greater thoughtfulness and durability. In Reynolds’s judgment, both had benefits and liabilities.

Finally, Reynolds proposed J. Gresham Machen as the model of piety, doctrinal integrity, and intellectual cultivation that should mark *Ordained Servant*. According to Reynolds, Machen had been able to communicate profound ideas with cogency and focus. This was accompanied with strong conviction, but those strong convictions were always held as a true Christian gentleman.

The January 2007 online issue, the first issue solely assembled under the editorship of Reynolds, was devoted to the ruling elder. In his editorial, “Ordained Servants: The Ruling Elder,” Reynolds lamented that one cause of the weakness of the contemporary church was its failure to understand, accept, and implement the biblical form of government, particularly the scriptural office of ruling elder. For Reynolds, too many religious leaders had concluded that careful oversight and feeding of the flock might take the church away from the task of evangelism. But, Christ, the head of the church, instituted the office of ruling elder for the spiritual welfare of his people. Further, only a biblical view of eldership will enable the church to avoid the Scylla of dictatorship and Charybdis of individualism.<sup>17</sup>

William Shishko contributed two articles, an essay on ruling elder Herbert Muether entitled “Lessons from the Life of an Extraordinary Ruling Elder” and “Tools for the Elder’s Toolbox.” In the former article, Shishko emphasized that he learned from Muether that part of an elder “ruling his household well” (1 Tim. 3:4) is that he “seeks first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness” (Matt. 6:33) in everything.<sup>18</sup> In the later article, Shishko reviewed a reprint of David Dickson’s *The Elder and His Work*. Shishko appreciated the fact that Dickson, a nineteenth-century Scottish Presbyterian, was enthusiastic about the practical benefits of Presbyterian church government. Dickson argued, “We need no new machinery in the Christian church. It is all provided ready in our hand in the Presbyterian system. What we need is motive-power to set it going and keep it going.”<sup>19</sup>

If that issue showed the continuity that would exist between the Williamson and Reynolds editorships, the March 2007 issue, “The Importance of Reading Fiction,” revealed how Reynolds intended to broaden the scope of the articles that appeared in *Ordained Servant*. Reynolds’s “Preaching and Fiction: Developing Oral Imagination” encouraged ministers to consider reading fiction to improve their preaching. Good fiction

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<sup>16</sup> Gregory Edward Reynolds, “Galvanized Iron: A Tribute to G. I. Williamson for His Pioneering Work on *Ordained Servant*,” *Ordained Servant* 17 (2006): 6, *Ordained Servant Online* (Jan. 2006), [https://www.opc.org/os.html?article\\_id=4](https://www.opc.org/os.html?article_id=4).

<sup>17</sup> Gregory Edward Reynolds, “Ordained Servants: The Ruling Elder,” *Ordained Servant* 16 (2007): 9, *Ordained Servant Online* (Jan. 2007), [https://www.opc.org/os.html?article\\_id=31](https://www.opc.org/os.html?article_id=31).

<sup>18</sup> William Shishko, “Lessons from the Life of an Extraordinary Ruling Elder,” *Ordained Servant* 16 (2007): 44, [https://www.opc.org/os.html?article\\_id=28](https://www.opc.org/os.html?article_id=28).

<sup>19</sup> William Shishko, “The Elder and His Work,” *Ordained Servant Online* (Jan. 2007), [https://www.opc.org/os.html?article\\_id=30](https://www.opc.org/os.html?article_id=30).

presents a picture of humanity that squares with reality, helps one become a better storyteller, and expands the color and cadence of the preacher in the preaching moment.<sup>20</sup>

Craig Troxel's "Why Preachers Should Read Fiction" furthered Reynolds's contention. Troxel maintained that reading fiction is a helpful way of gathering sermon illustrations. But mining for illustrations is the lesser reason why preachers should read fiction. The better reason is developing as pastors and persons. Troxel related that, when he came to minister in suburban Philadelphia, the standard allusions and examples understood by friends and family in rural western Nebraska did not always translate smoothly. Reading fiction helped him expand his horizons, and most importantly, to sympathize with others.<sup>21</sup>

Danny Olinger positively reviewed Ralph Wood's *Flannery O'Connor and the Christ-Haunted South*. Olinger affirmed Wood's premise that O'Connor's literature has supreme value for the church because in it "she was willing to slay certain things that seem to be good—the seemingly necessary modifications of the gospel that would make it fit modern needs and thus ensure its success."<sup>22</sup>

Another sterling example of the literary emphasis was the April 2016 online issue devoted to William Shakespeare. Leland Ryken's "Why Shakespeare Matters" encouraged Christians to take up the Bard's writings for four reasons. Shakespeare matters because beautiful language matters; understanding of human experience matters; good entertainment matters; and the Bible matters. Ryken also maintained that Shakespeare was a "Christian" writer, one whose literary world is based on Christian premises.<sup>23</sup>

Reynolds also devoted issues to anniversaries of significant figures in the history of the Reformed church. In 2009, to celebrate the semi-millennial anniversary of the birth of John Calvin, Reynolds published back-to-back issues of "Calvin at 500: The Word" and "Calvin's Soteriology." In his article "John Calvin: Servant of the Word," Glen Clary argued that Calvin was above all else a preacher, one whose entire theological labor was the exposition of Scripture. Calvin's devotion to the whole counsel of God was also seen in his commitment to the *lectio continua* ("we must not pick and cull the Scripture to please our own fancy") in the selection of texts.<sup>24</sup>

Richard Gaffin's "Calvin's Soteriology" examined the structure of the application of redemption in book three of Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Gaffin started by quoting Calvin:

Christ was given to us by God's generosity, to be grasped and possessed by us in faith. By partaking of him, we principally receive a double grace: namely, that being reconciled to God through Christ's blamelessness, we may have in heaven instead of

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<sup>20</sup> Gregory Edward Reynolds, "Preaching and Fiction: Developing Oral Imagination," *Ordained Servant* 16 (2007): 14, *Ordained Servant Online* (Mar. 2007), [https://www.opc.org/os.html?issue\\_id=19](https://www.opc.org/os.html?issue_id=19).

<sup>21</sup> A. Craig Troxel, "Why Preachers Should Read Fiction," *Ordained Servant* 16 (2007): 51, *Ordained Servant Online* (Mar. 2007), [https://www.opc.org/os.html?article\\_id=37](https://www.opc.org/os.html?article_id=37).

<sup>22</sup> Danny E. Olinger, review of *Flannery O'Connor and the Christ-Haunted South* by Ralph Wood, *Ordained Servant* 16 (2007): 124, *Ordained Servant Online*, [https://www.opc.org/os.html?article\\_id=38](https://www.opc.org/os.html?article_id=38).

<sup>23</sup> Leland Ryken, "Why Shakespeare Matters," *Ordained Servant* 25 (2016): 67, *Ordained Servant Online* (Apr. 2016), [https://www.opc.org/os.html?article\\_id=547](https://www.opc.org/os.html?article_id=547).

<sup>24</sup> Glen J. Clary, "John Calvin: Servant of the Word," *Ordained Servant* 18 (2009): 77, *Ordained Servant Online* (Oct. 2009), [https://www.opc.org/os.html?article\\_id=170](https://www.opc.org/os.html?article_id=170).

a Judge a gracious Father; and secondly, that sanctified by his Spirit we may cultivate blamelessness and purity of life.<sup>25</sup>

Gaffin emphasized from this the twofold grace of justification and sanctification in Calvin's soteriology. First and foremost, the focus is on the person of Christ. The saving benefits in view, justification and sanctification, do not accrue to faith apart from the person of Christ. It is in the believer's union with Christ that the benefits are "grasped" and "possessed."

Secondly, by partaking of Christ, believers principally receive a double grace. Gaffin argued that concerning justification, believers are reconciled to God, he being a gracious Father rather than a wrathful and unreconciled Judge. Concerning sanctification, believers, having been joined to Christ, are to cultivate blamelessness and purity of life. In Gaffin's judgment, Calvin then affirms an aspect that is settled, justification, and an aspect that is continuing, sanctification. Even then, however, it is just as believers have been and already are sanctified, in distinction from having been justified, that they are to cultivate a life of holiness.<sup>26</sup>

Just as Williamson had been interested in the intersection of technology and the church, Reynolds showed a fascination with technology and the church also, but in a way that went beyond simply suggesting resources. Particularly, Reynolds focused on media ecology and the church. In his December 2011 article, "John, the Media Ecologist: Why I am a Media Ecologist," Reynolds argued that media ecology for the Christian is a part of the general stewardship of life in this world. He did so by focusing on the insights of Marshall McLuhan on technology and how it applied to the internet age. Technology is not neutral. For instance, the internet may expand our knowledge of the world, but at the same time, it may narrow our view of the world to the social networks we know. Reynolds was not advocating the avoidance of the internet but engaging with the technology in a way that brought glory to God.<sup>27</sup>

In his December 2012 article, "Face-to-Face: The Importance of Personal Presence in Ministry and Life," Reynolds appealed to J. Gresham Machen's "Mountains and Why We Love Them." As Machen warned of a centralized tyranny in a technological civilization that undermined liberty and diminished the human spirit, Reynolds urged that we should be concerned not to use technology to centralize and thus diminish liberty and face-to-face interaction in the church. Ministers and ruling elders need to encourage church members to ask themselves how their use of electronic media advances healthy personal relationships in the church.<sup>28</sup>

During the COVID-19 period in July 2020, Reynolds wrote "Reflections on Virtual Church Meetings in a Time of Coronavirus." Citing 2 John 12, "Though I have much to write to you, I would rather not use paper and ink. Instead I hope to come to you and talk face to face, so that our joy may be complete," Reynolds acknowledged that, while a

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<sup>25</sup> Richard B. Gaffin Jr., "Calvin's Soteriology: The Structure of the Application of Redemption in Book Three of the *Institutes*," *Ordained Servant* 18 (2009): 68, *Ordained Servant Online* (Nov. 2009), [https://www.opc.org/os.html?article\\_id=174](https://www.opc.org/os.html?article_id=174).

<sup>26</sup> Gaffin, "Calvin's Soteriology," 68.

<sup>27</sup> Gregory Edward Reynolds, "John, the Media Ecologist: Why I am a Media Ecologist," *Ordained Servant* 20 (2011): 24, *Ordained Servant Online* (Dec. 2011), [https://www.opc.org/os.html?article\\_id=282](https://www.opc.org/os.html?article_id=282).

<sup>28</sup> Gregory Edward Reynolds, "Face-to-Face: The Importance of Personal Presence in Ministry and Life," *Ordained Servant* 21 (2012): 20, *Ordained Servant Online* (Dec. 2012), [https://www.opc.org/os.html?article\\_id=340](https://www.opc.org/os.html?article_id=340).

mediated media connection with other people is good in certain circumstances, nothing can replace their actual presence. “The present necessity is like John’s paper and inking—better than nothing—but making us long for a better day.”<sup>29</sup>

Another feature of *Ordained Servant* that Reynolds stressed in the media ecology realm was the reviewing of books that touched on that theme. An example of this was T. David Gordon’s January 2013 review article of Sherry Turkle’s *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other*. Gordon supported Turkle’s notion that the powerful technologies of the modern world come with human cost. Turkle wrote,

The ties we form through the Internet are not, in the end, the ties that bind. But they are ties that preoccupy. We text each other at family dinners, while we jog, while we drive, as we push our children on swings in the park. We don’t want to intrude on each other, so instead we constantly intrude on each other, but not in “real time.”<sup>30</sup>

As *Ordained Servant* moves forward, it continues to seek to serve the ordained officers of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Among Reynolds’s editorial goals are to cover issues that threaten the unity and faith of the church. These issues often come from the surrounding culture and infect the church. In its worst form these beliefs and practices come in the guise of true spirituality within the church. An example of this would be the idea that formal membership in a congregation is unspiritual, when in fact the biblical case for it is overwhelming. According to Reynolds, this is the spirit of radical individualism in the guise of true spirituality.<sup>31</sup>

The CCE gives thanks for thirty years of *Ordained Servant* and the work of its two editors, Williamson and Reynolds, and many others who have contributed to it as writers, copyeditors, and proofreaders. This journal for church officers has seen a great deal of change over the years, but what has not changed is a commitment to encourage, inform, and equip church officers for faithful, effective, and God-glorifying ministry in the visible church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

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<sup>29</sup> Gregory Edward Reynolds, “Reflections on Virtual Church Meetings in a Time of Coronavirus,” *Ordained Servant* 29 (2020): 9, *Ordained Servant Online* (June-July 2021), [https://www.opc.org/os.html?article\\_id=826](https://www.opc.org/os.html?article_id=826).

<sup>30</sup> T. David Gordon, review of *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other* by Sherry Turkle, *Ordained Servant* 22 (2013): 124 (citing Turkle), *Ordained Servant Online* (Jan. 2013), [https://www.opc.org/os.html?article\\_id=344](https://www.opc.org/os.html?article_id=344).

<sup>31</sup> Interview with author, September 24, 2021.

# Servant Truth

## *The Writings of Meredith G. Kline on the Book of Revelation: Chapter 7 – “Har Magedon: The End of the Millennium” (1996)*

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by Danny E. Olinger

In 1996, as Meredith Kline was entering his final years teaching at Westminster Theological Seminary in California, he revisited the interpretation of Revelation 16:16 in a *Journal of the Evangelical Theology Society* article, “Har Magedon: The End of the Millennium.”<sup>1</sup> In the article, Kline sought to promote and enhance C. C. Torrey’s explanation of the Hebrew terms in Revelation 16:16 transliterated into Greek as *har magedōn*.<sup>2</sup> Kline was persuaded that Torrey had been correct in tracing *har magedōn* in Revelation 16:16 to *har mō ‘ēd*, “Mount of Assembly,” in Isaiah. 14:13. For Kline, the ramifications of Torrey’s insight significantly impacted the proper interpretation of Har Magedon in the Revelation text. One such ramification is that the place location of Har Magedon is Mount Zion, not the plain of Megiddo. Another is that the battle of Har Magedon is the Gog-Magog crisis prophesied in Ezekiel 38 and 39.

Kline argued that Torrey’s findings, and further exegetical proof from Scripture in support of such an interpretation, added “a final, decisive point” to the amillennial argument. Revelation 20:7–10 (the conflict marking the end of millennium) is to be identified with the climactic battle of the great day of the Lord to which the Apocalypse returns, as in Revelation 16:12–16 and its account of Har Magedon.<sup>3</sup>

### **Har Magedon, the Mount of Assembly**

According to Kline, the difficulty that translators face is that the phrase *har magedōn* is comprised of one Hebrew word whose meaning is not disputed (*har*, mountain) and another Hebrew word whose meaning is disputed, *magedōn*. Concerning the disputed *magedōn*, “the most common view, following the variant reading *mageddōn* in Rev. 16:16, identifies it as Megiddo, site of notable battles in Israel’s history (Judg. 5:2; 2 Chr. 35:22–25) and thus an apt designation for the place where ‘the battle of the great day’ occurs.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Meredith G. Kline, “Har Magedon: The End of the Millennium,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theology Society* 39 (1996): 207–222. Citations will be from the article as found in the *Essential Writings of Meredith G. Kline* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2017), 259–278.

<sup>2</sup> C. C. Torrey, “Armageddon,” *Harvard Theological Review* 31 (1938): 237–248.

<sup>3</sup> Kline, “Har Magedon,” 257. In the accompanying footnote, Kline wrote, “See also Rev. 6:12–17; 11:7–13, 18; 14:17–20; 17:11–14. Cf. Meredith G. Kline, “A Study in the Structure of the Revelation of John (unpublished). A full exposition of the recapitulatory structure of Revelation is found in G.K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999)” (259n2).

<sup>4</sup> Kline, “Har Magedon,” 259–260.

The problem, as Torrey pointed out, is that there is no mountain in Megiddo. Further, Jerusalem and its surrounding vicinity are where biblical prophecies (Zech. 12 and 14; Isa. 29:1–7; Joel 3; Rev. 14:14–20; Rev. 20:7–10) situate the eschatological crisis in which the nations gather against God and his people.<sup>5</sup>

In support of Torrey's suggestion of deriving *har magedōn* in Revelation 16:16 from *har mō'ēd* in Isaiah 14:13, Kline noted that each of these expressions in its sole biblical appearance is paired with Hades as its exact opposite. In the context of Isaiah 14:13, the contrast is drawn between the heights to which the king of Babylon aspires and the depths to which he falls. He will not ascend to the Mount of Assembly (*har mō'ēd*) above the stars but will be brought down to "the depths of the Pit" (Isa. 14:15). Likewise, in Revelation 16:16, *har magedōn* is contrasted with *Abaddōn*, the Hebrew name of the angel of the Abyss from Revelation 9:11, and a synonym in its Old Testament appearances for Sheol. Kline summarized, "The Abaddon of Rev. 9:11 is then the equivalent of the Sheol and Pit of Isa. 14:15. And the *har* (mountain) element in *har magedōn* (Rev. 16:16) of course contrasts with the Pit of Abaddon, as does the *har* in *har mō'ēd* (Isa. 14:13)."<sup>6</sup>

Kline anticipated that the objection with pairing *har magedōn* in Revelation 16:16 with *Abaddōn* in Revelation 9:11 is that these terms do not appear in the same immediate context. He answered that one textual clue that they should be paired is that these two terms are identified as *Hebraisti* ("in Hebrew").

### ***Hebraisti***

The six *Hebraisti* that appear in the New Testament (four in John's Gospel and two in the book of Revelation) are regularly accompanied by an explanation of some sort. In Revelation 9:11, the *Hebraisti* is accompanied by an explanation and translation, "They had a king over them, the angel of the Abyss, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and who has in Greek the name Apollyon (Destroyer)." Further, the "in Hebrew" word in question is regularly the name of a place (John 5:2, Bethesda; John 19:13, *Gabbatha*; John 19:17, *Golgotha*).

Kline argued that this pattern strongly suggests that an accompanying explanation will be found in Revelation 16:16 for *har magedōn*, the place name there with the *Hebraisti* label. When it is recognized that *har magedōn* in Revelation 16:16 is based upon *har mō'ēd*, such an explanation can be shown in the text. The main verb in Revelation 16:16 interpretatively echoes the noun—he gathered them to the Mount of Gathering. That is, the

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<sup>5</sup> Gregory Beale writes in support of Torrey, "That 'Armageddon' is not literal is evident from the observation that OT prophecies of the final battle of history place it, without exception, in the immediate vicinity of the city of Jerusalem and Mount Zion or its surrounding mountains . . . But the plain of Megiddo is about a two days' walk north of Jerusalem." But Beale also recognizes that scholars following Torrey's lead often do not provide much support in the surrounding context of Isa. 14:13 for Torrey's proposal. Beale then adds, "An exception to the objection that the *har mō'ēd* proposal is not supported by the surrounding context is to be found in M. G. Kline, 'Har Magedon: The End of the Millennium,' who demonstrates organic parallels with the immediate and broad contexts. Presupposing the correctness of deriving 'Armageddon' ultimately from *har mō'ēd*, Kline's contextual analysis of Revelation is quite plausible." See, G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 838, 840n112.

<sup>6</sup> Kline, "Har Magedon," 260.

verb *synagō*, “gathered,” both translates *magedōn* and establishes its derivation from *mō ‘ēd*, “gathering.”

## Har Magedon, Mount Zaphon/Zion

In Isaiah 14:13, Zaphon, the celestial realm of deity to which the King of Babylon aspires stands in opposition to the Mount of Assembly. The association of the heaven-defying king with Zaphon anticipates the antichrist associations of Har Magedon in Revelation 16:16.

This phrase also occurs in Psalm 48:3. Kline believed that the opening verses of Psalm 48 link the city (Jerusalem) and mountain (Zion) of God in such a way so as to declare Zion/Jerusalem to be the heights of Zaphon. In Zaphon, the place of his royal presence, God secures the peace of the realm as he defeats the rebellious kings who gather against him. Thus, the key elements of Revelation 16:16 are also found in Psalm 48.<sup>7</sup>

Before explaining the appearance of Zaphon in Ezekiel 38 and 39, Kline provided commentary on what he believed was the first battle on Har Magedon. In Eden “the battle of Har Magedon was joined as Satan challenged the God of the mountain and overcame the first man, the appointed guardian-priest of the garden-sanctuary.”<sup>8</sup> In redemptive history, Zion serves as the setting at the start of the new covenant age for the decisive victory of Jesus, the second Adam, over the evil one. Satan will gather his Antichrist Beast and allied kings in a final attempt to usurp Har Magedon, “but the Lamb, the Lord of the mountain, and his assembled armies will triumph in this final battle of Har Magedon, the battle of the great day of God Almighty (Rev. 16:14–16; 19:11–21; 20:7–10).”<sup>9</sup>

## Har Magedon and Magog

Kline then shifted to the third Old Testament passage containing the phrase Zaphon, the prophecy of Gog-Magog from Ezekiel 38 and 39. He maintained that this portion of Ezekiel’s prophecy was the common source behind Revelation 16:14–16 and 20:7–10. In addition to the explicit mention of Gog and Magog in Revelation 20, there is the shared theme in these texts of the universal gathering of the world forces to destroy the people of God and the world force’s overthrow by the descent of fiery judgment from heaven. Kline added, “Accordingly it is generally acknowledged that Ezekiel’s prophecy and the vision of the loosing of Satan after the thousand years in Rev. 20 describe the same eschatological event.”<sup>10</sup>

Common, also, to both the Ezekiel and Revelation texts is the antichrist element. In Ezekiel, Gog is a pretender to the throne of heaven. He challenges Yahweh’s sovereignty on Zion, but his armies on the mountain of Israel are overthrown, and he is plunged into a netherworld grave. But Gog is not just an Old Testament anticipation but the Antichrist of the final crisis. Revelation 20:7–10 presents the Gog-Magog assault on Zion as marking the

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<sup>7</sup> Kline also maintained that Heb. 12:18–29 echoed Ps. 48. He wrote, “Echoing Ps. 48, Heb. 12:18–29 displays these facets of Har Magedon, Mount of Gathering, and identifies it as Zion, heavenly Jerusalem, city of the living God, the Great King” (266).

<sup>8</sup> Kline, “Har Magedon,” 266.

<sup>9</sup> Kline, “Har Magedon,” 267.

<sup>10</sup> Kline, “Har Magedon,” 267.

end of the millennium. This conforms to Ezekiel 38–39 and the eschatological finality of the Gog crisis.

This antichrist challenge of Gog is according to God’s purpose and sovereign orchestration. Gog, advancing against the mountains of Israel (Ezek. 39:2, 17), is lured by the Lord to this final confrontation. The central point of the attack is Mount Zion, even though Zion is not mentioned by name. Implicit in God’s speaking of the mountains of Israel as “my mountains” (Ezek. 38:21) and the land of Israel as “my land” (Ezek. 38:16) is also the royal mountain-city where he dwells and rules. As is the case in Revelation 16, the destination and intended target for God and his hosts is where the Lord is enthroned. In the Revelation 20 accounting of Ezekiel’s prophecy, Gog’s armies are said to compass “the beloved city” (Rev. 20:9), which is Jerusalem/Zion.

### **Millennial Applications**

Kline closed the article with a discussion of the implications of Revelation 16:16 rightly interpreted (Har Magedon is the Mount of Assembly where the final battle rages) for the millennial positions of premillennialism, postmillennialism, preterism, and amillennialism.

Premillennialism understands Revelation 19:11–20:10 chronologically. The thousand years of Revelation 20:1–6, that close with the Gog-Magog episode of Revelation 20:7–10, follow chronologically the Revelation 19:11–21 judgment of the Antichrist Beast. Criticism of this view, however, is valid, for various points of correspondence exist between the Revelation 20:7–10 crisis and other parallel passages. The battle of Revelation 20:8 is certainly the battle of Har Magedon described in Revelation 16:14–16, the war of “the great day of God, the Almighty.” In each case, it is the battle to which Satan, the dragon, gathers the nations. This gathering “against the Lamb and the city beloved of the Lord is also referred to as Satan’s deception of the whole world through the signs wrought by his agents, the beast from the sea and, particularly, the false prophet.”<sup>11</sup>

“Indeed,” said Kline, “this theme of deception-gathering appears in a series of five passages in the Apocalypse, concentrically arranged according to the subject(s) of the action, with Rev. 16:13–16 the centerpiece and Rev. 20:7–9 the concluding member.”<sup>12</sup> The five passages are: Revelation 12:9 (Satan, the ultimate deceiver); Revelation 13:14 (False Prophet, acting in association with the dragon-like beast); Revelation 16:13–16 (Satan, False Prophet, and dragon appear together as the source of demonic signs that go to kings of the earth); Revelation 19:17–20 (Kings of the earth gathered to deceive against the messianic horseman and his armies); and Revelation 20:7–10 (Satan, his two agents, and the deception-gathering).<sup>13</sup>

The relationship of Ezekiel 38 and 39 to Revelation 20:7–10 and Revelation 16:14–16 also points out the mistakenness of the premillennial position. Ezekiel 38–39 is the common source behind both Revelation 20:7–10 and Revelation 16:14–16 and other Apocalyptic prophecies of the final conflict. Among the similarities between Ezekiel 38–39 and Revelation 20:7–10 that support this conclusion are: 1) the marshaling of hordes from the

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<sup>11</sup> Kline, “Har Magedon,” 273.

<sup>12</sup> Kline, “Har Magedon,” 273.

<sup>13</sup> At the start of the paragraph Kline references the concluding member as Rev. 20:7–9, but at the end of the paragraph he stated, “This identification of Satan with his two agents in the disastrous enterprise is also brought out in the fifth member of the chiasm (Rev. 20:10).” Kline, “Har Magedon,” 273–274.

four corners of the earth (Ezek. 38:2–7, 15; 39:4; Rev. 20:8); 2) the march of the gathered armies to encompass the saints in the city of God, the center of the world (Ezek. 38:7–9, 12, 16; Rev. 20:9); 3) God’s sovereign orchestration of the event (Ezek. 38:4, 16; 39:2, 19; Rev. 20:3, 7); 4) the timing of the event after a prolonged period in which God’s people are kept secure from universal assault (Ezek. 38:8, 11; Rev. 20:3); 5) the eschatological finality of the crisis (Ezek. 38:22, 26, 29; Rev. 20:10 and following); and 6) the fiery destruction of the evil forces (Ezek. 38:22; 39:6; Rev. 20:9–10).<sup>14</sup> Among the similarities between Ezekiel 38–39 and Revelation 16:14–16 and other prophecies of the final conflict in Revelation are: 1) the universal gathering of the enemy armies (Ezek. 39:18–20; Rev. 16:14–16); and 2) the historical setting of that event at the end of the world (Rev. 16:16–17) following an era in which it is given to the church to fulfill its gospel mission (Rev. 11:3–7).

This evidence and more led Kline to conclude that premillennialism had neither rightly interpreted Revelation 20:7–10 nor Har Magedon in Revelation 16. He wrote,

Revelation 20:7–10 is not, as premillennialists would have it, an isolated, novel episode, not mentioned elsewhere in the book of Revelation. Rather, it belongs to a series of passages, including Rev. 19:11–21, which premillennialists rightly regard as referring to the antichrist-Har Magedon crisis and the parousia of Christ. It therefore follows that the thousand years that precede the Gog-Magog crisis of Rev. 20:7–10 precede the Har Magedon-parousia event related in the other passage. Har Magedon is not a prelude to the millennium, but a postlude. Har Magedon marks the end of the millennium. And that conclusion spells the end of premillennialism.<sup>15</sup>

That conclusion, that Har Magedon is the end of the millennium, also contradicts the preterist approach to Revelation. Except for Revelation 20:7–10, preterists believe the prophecies of the final conflict refer to past events, like the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70 or the collapse of the Roman empire.

According to Kline, this approach with its reduced emphasis on the final global crisis is understandably popular with postmillennialists “whose distinguishing notion is that that present age, the millennium, is—at least in its latter phase—a time not only of surpassing evangelistic success for the church but one of outward prosperity and peace.”<sup>16</sup> Postmillennialism of the theonomic reconstructionist variety anticipates that the success of the church’s mission will involve its worldwide practical dominance and elimination of public practice of non-Christian religions.

For such eschatological expectations, prophecies of a global surge of anti-Christian forces as the immediate precursor to the parousia are problematic. The whole series of Har Magedon-Gog passages and the progressively elaborated theme of worldwide suppression of the gospel witness in which the millennium issues refute postmillennial expectations. “Actually, Rev. 20:7–10 by itself refutes the postmillennial projections, for it is evident there that the nations of the world have not become officially ‘Christianized’ institutions during the millennium.”<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Kline, “Har Magedon,” 274.

<sup>15</sup> Kline, “Har Magedon,” 275–276.

<sup>16</sup> Kline, “Har Magedon,” 276.

<sup>17</sup> Kline, “Har Magedon,” 276–277. Kline observed in the footnote accompanying this sentence that the problem of nations not becoming Christianized “drives some to the so-called consistent preterist position

Kline judged that the standard amillennial interpretation of Revelation 20:7–10 was correct. The Gog-Magog episode there is not an isolated episode but is a recapitulation of the Har Magedon crisis that appears in Revelation 16:14–16. In fact, “the very term *har magedōn* itself identifies the Rev. 16:14–16 event as the Gog-Magog event of 20:7–10.”<sup>18</sup>

In concluding the article, Kline summarized what he believed were the major differences between the premillennial, postmillennial and amillennial views. Premillennialism and postmillennialism posit a transitional realization of the Old Testament prophecies of the kingdom as an external imperial power that occurs during the millennium and thus before the consummation. Consequently, premillennialism and postmillennialism are both pre-consummation views, the distinction being that premillennialists relate the millennium to the parousia as post-parousia and postmillennialists relate the millennium to the parousia as pre-parousia.

For Kline, the amillennial position alone represents the biblical position. There is no transitional stage in which the kingdom of glory appears between the first and second advents of Christ. It comes only as a post-consummation reality, and as such it abides uninterrupted, unchallenged for ever and ever.

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which extends the preterist hermeneutics to Rev. 20:7ff. and so regards as past history what all others recognize as events that will usher in the world to come” (277n47).

<sup>18</sup> Kline, “Har Magedon,” 275.

# Servant Standards

## Commentary on the Form of Government of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Chapter 23, part 2

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by Alan D. Strange

### Chapter XXIII Ordaining and Installing Ministers

11. When a minister of this Church is to be installed as the pastor of a congregation the installation may be performed either by the presbytery or by a committee appointed for that purpose, as may appear most expedient; and the following order shall be observed therein:

A time shall be appointed for the installation at such time as may appear most convenient and due notice thereof given to the congregation.

When the presbytery, or committee, shall be convened and constituted at the time appointed, a sermon shall be delivered by a previously appointed minister. Immediately thereafter the moderator shall state to the congregation the purpose of the meeting and briefly review the relevant proceedings of the presbytery. And then, addressing the minister to be installed, he shall propose to him the following questions:

(1) Are you now willing to take the charge of this congregation as its pastor, in agreement with your declaration when you accepted its call?

(2) Do you conscientiously believe and declare, as far as you know your own heart, that in taking upon you this charge you are influenced by a sincere desire to promote the glory of God and the good of his church?

(3) Do you solemnly promise that, by the assistance of the grace of God, you will endeavor faithfully to discharge all the duties of a pastor to this congregation, and will be careful to maintain a deportment in all respects becoming a minister of the gospel of Christ?

Having received satisfactory answers to all these questions, he shall propose to the people the following questions, to which they shall answer in the affirmative by holding up their right hands:

(1) Do you, the people of this congregation, continue to profess your readiness to receive \_\_\_\_\_, whom you have called to be your minister?

(2) Do you promise to receive the word of truth from his mouth with meekness and love, and to submit to him in the due exercise of discipline?

(3) Do you promise to encourage him in his arduous labor and to assist his endeavors for your instruction and spiritual edification?

(4) And do you promise to continue to him, while he is your pastor, that worldly maintenance which you have promised, and whatever else you may see needful for the honor of religion and his comfort among you?

If these questions have been satisfactorily answered the moderator shall pronounce and declare the minister being installed to be regularly constituted the pastor of that congregation. Solemn charges in the name of God shall then be given to the newly installed pastor and to the people, to persevere in the discharge of their mutual duties, and they shall both, by prayer, be commended to the grace of God and his holy keeping. At the conclusion of the service the pastor shall dismiss the congregation with a benediction.

**Comment:** The focus of the FG shifts from ordination and installation of a man to be a pastor in a particular place to simply that of installation, i.e., a previously ordained and installed man subsequently takes another call into which he seeks now to be installed. Ordination is performed only for the first call, and any subsequent calls require only installation. This is why installation may be performed by the presbytery as a whole, as is an ordination, or may be assigned to a committee that holds an installation on its behalf in the local congregation to which the newly called, already ordained man is to be installed. The meeting for such installation occurs at mutually agreeable time and proceeds in a fashion similar to an ordination, for which see sections 8–10.

The difference between the two services (ordination/installation and installation only) obtains particularly in the vows administered to the new pastor to be installed: note that the vows are not of the general sort that mark ordination but have to do with the willingness of the minister to serve in the place that has now called him to be its pastor. Otherwise, things like a sermon being preached for the occasion, charges being given to pastor and congregation, and the benediction being pronounced by the newly installed pastor are the same as in a service of ordination. It should also be noted that this section assumes that the man being installed is already a ministerial member of the OPC, which is the significance of the first phrase, “a minister of this church.” If he is coming from another denomination, the next section (FG 23.12) pertains.

Note respecting the questions for the minister to be installed that the first focuses on his continued willingness to accept the call of the new congregation and to serve there as its pastor (as did Question 8 at the time of his ordination); similarly the new Questions 2 and 3 mirror Questions 5 and 7 in the original ordination vows, focusing, respectively, on his motives for gospel ministry and his readiness to fulfill all the duties of his office in his new situation. The congregation is asked the same set of questions that a congregation is asked at an ordination/installation (see section 9 for comments thereon). The whole service then proceeds in the manner described in section 10 (above), except the laying on of hands only accompanies ordination and initial installation and does not occur at subsequent installations.

12. a. When a minister of another denomination is called to be the pastor of a congregation of this Church and has indicated his desire to accept the call, the presbytery shall require him to give evidence of possessing the qualifications in regard to piety, faith, and learning that are required of candidates for ordination as provided in Sections 3 and 6, above. This evidence shall include written testimonials from qualified persons of his satisfactory exercise of the gifts for the ministry of the Word.

In no case shall an examination on the floor of presbytery be waived. If one-fourth of the presbyters present are dissatisfied with the examination in theology the minister shall be required to undergo an examination in the subject again at a future meeting of the presbytery. If at the outset of such subsequent meeting one-fourth of the presbyters so request, a clear recording of this examination shall be made and filed with the presbytery.

The presbytery shall require him to answer affirmatively the following questions:

(1) Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?

(2) Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith and Catechisms of this Church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures?

(3) Do you approve of the government, discipline, and worship of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church?

(4) Do you promise subjection to your brethren in the Lord?

(5) Have you been induced, as far as you know your own heart, to seek the office of the holy ministry from love to God and a sincere desire to promote his glory in the gospel of his Son?

(6) Do you promise to be zealous and faithful in maintaining the truths of the gospel, and the purity, the peace, and the unity of the church, whatever persecution or opposition may arise unto you on that account?

(7) Do you promise to be faithful and diligent in the exercise of all private and personal duties which become you as a Christian and a minister of the gospel, as well as in all the duties of your office, endeavoring to adorn the profession of the gospel by your life, and walking with exemplary piety before the flock over which God shall make you overseer?

b. After the fulfillment of these requirements the presbytery shall proceed to install the minister in the following manner:

A suitable time shall be appointed for the installation and due notice given to the congregation.

When the presbytery shall be convened and constituted at the time appointed, a sermon shall be delivered by a previously appointed minister. Immediately thereafter the moderator of the presbytery, or another appointed in his place, shall state to the congregation the purpose of the meeting and briefly review the relevant proceedings of the presbytery.

Then, addressing the minister to be installed, he shall propose to him the following questions:

(1) Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?

(2) Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith and Catechisms of this Church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures?

(3) Do you approve of the government, discipline, and worship of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church?

(4) Do you promise subjection to your brethren in the Lord?

(5) Have you been induced, as far as you know your own heart, to seek the office of the holy ministry from love to God and a sincere desire to promote his glory in the gospel of his Son?

(6) Do you promise to be zealous and faithful in maintaining the truths of the gospel, and the purity, the peace, and the unity of the church, whatever persecution or opposition may arise unto you on that account?

(7) Do you promise to be faithful and diligent in the exercise of all private and personal duties which become you as a Christian and a minister of the gospel, as well as in all the duties of your office, endeavoring to adorn the profession of the gospel by your life, and walking with exemplary piety before the flock over which God shall make you overseer?

(8) Are you now willing to undertake the work of the ministry in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, and do you promise to discharge the duties which may be incumbent upon you in that capacity as God may give you strength?

(9) Are you now willing to take the charge of this congregation as its pastor, in agreement with your declaration when you accepted its call?

(10) Do you conscientiously believe and declare, as far as you know your own heart, that in taking upon you this charge you are influenced by a desire to promote the glory of God and the good of his church?

(11) Do you solemnly promise that, by the assistance of the grace of God, you will endeavor faithfully to discharge all the duties of a pastor to this congregation, and will be careful to maintain a deportment in all respects becoming a minister of the gospel of Christ?

Having received satisfactory answers to all these questions, the moderator shall propose to the people the following questions, to which they shall answer in the affirmative by holding up their right hands:

(1) Do you, the people of this congregation, continue to profess your readiness to receive \_\_\_\_\_, whom you have called to be your minister?

(2) Do you promise to receive the word of truth from his mouth with meekness and love, and to submit to him in the due exercise of discipline?

(3) Do you promise to encourage him in his arduous labor and to assist his endeavors for your instruction and spiritual edification?

(4) And do you promise to continue to him, while he is your pastor, that worldly maintenance which you have promised, and whatever else you may see needful for the honor of religion and his comfort among you?

If these questions have been satisfactorily answered the presiding minister shall solemnly pronounce and declare the minister being installed to be regularly constituted the pastor of that congregation. A charge shall then be given to both parties and prayer offered as directed in Section 10. At the conclusion of the service, the pastor shall dismiss the congregation with a benediction.

c. Under no circumstances shall a person be permitted to undertake any of the duties contemplated in the call nor to occupy living quarters that are to be provided by the calling body, and he shall be strongly advised not to change his residence in any case, until after the call has been approved and the presbytery has approved him for installation and reception.

**Comment:** This section addresses the situation in which a congregation calls a man who is a minister in another denomination. He has already been ordained, and in this case, his ordination is fully accepted by the OPC and thus no ordination is in view. Hodge argued for the acceptance of the ordination of other Protestants.<sup>1</sup> What of one coming from the Roman Catholic or Eastern Orthodox churches? Certainly, those churches would not recognize Presbyterian ordination, since our ordination is not by a bishop enjoying apostolic succession.<sup>2</sup> This does not mean that we would automatically reject their

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Hodge, "Reordination," in *Discussions in Church Polity* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1878), 316.

<sup>2</sup> The necessity of a bishop who is a proper successor to the apostles (as defined by the RCC) for valid ordination is everywhere assumed and taught in the RCC, seen, e.g., in Susan K. Wood, *Sacramental Orders, Lex Orandi Series* (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 2000); see also *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Liguori, Missouri: Liguori Publications, 1994), 394: "Validly ordained bishops, i.e., those who are in the line of apostolic succession, validly confer the three degrees [bishop, priest, and deacon] of the sacrament of Holy Orders" (1576).

ordination, misguided as it is, especially with its ontological emphasis,<sup>3</sup> any more than we would their baptism, though we would reject their view of baptismal regeneration.<sup>4</sup> This is a complex question—whose ordination do we recognize?—and is something with which every presbytery must wrestle and come to their own determination about, perhaps even differing from case to case.<sup>5</sup>

It is interesting to note that while most sessions and presbyteries in the OPC do not require a Roman Catholic to be baptized, that same posture may not be assumed if one of her priests wished to become a minister in the OPC. Surely, we would ask no one in NAPARC to be ordained who already had been, or even in many other churches (Baptists, Congregationalists, etc.), while we might a priest from the RCC or Eastern Orthodoxy. I think that this is a difficult question if we accept their baptisms, which tacitly implies that they have a valid ministry to administer such.

The presbytery then shall pose the seven questions to the minister that becomes eleven questions for those at the time of the installation. An affirmative answer to such questions moves forward, in the first case, the examination of the minister and, in the second case, his actual installation. Question 8, at the time of installation, has a focus that is assumed in the case of one already in the OPC but must be ascertained in the case of someone coming from outside the church: whether one is willing to labor in the OPC with all that entails. Further comment need not be made here about the questions, as the substance has been addressed, above.

All the requirements of section 3 and 6, above, pertaining to piety, faith, and learning would need to be ascertained with this candidate as with someone within the denomination. Testimonials and the like would be required. The exam in theology shall be conducted on the floor, and, as seen above, one quarter can arrest the exam and require further examination of the candidate at a future presbytery meeting. Here is a new stipulation: one-fourth of the presbyters can also request that a clear copy of the examination from this point forward be made and filed with the presbytery. This is so, presumably, a faithful record will be had in case of questions or complaints that might arise subsequently.

The rest of what happens, by way of completing his exams and taking vows before the presbytery, as well as what happens in the service of installation, mirrors (with additions appropriate to someone coming from outside the OPC) what happens to someone from within the OPC, already ordained, being installed in a charge. It should be noted that, as with the licentiate in FG 22.13.d (see comments on such), no man called from another denomination should undertake the duties of a call (including, usually, changing residences)

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<sup>3</sup> Allan J. Janssen, *Kingdom, Office, and Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 13–15, distinguishes ontological from functional views of office. The RCC see Holy Orders as sacramentally creating a different sort of person in ordination, part of the reason they cannot recognize Presbyterian ordination (such sacramental transformation has never occurred, they think. Marjorie Warkentin, *Ordination: A Biblical-Historical View* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), page 71 notes, “The Presbyterians [at the Westminster Assembly] equated the offices of bishop and presbyter and so did not deny the validity of episcopal ordination.”

<sup>4</sup> Charles Hodge, “Validity of Romish Baptism,” in *Discussions in Church Polity* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1878), 191–215.

<sup>5</sup> A more modern, and fascinating, engagement of the question may be seen in “On the Necessity of Reordaining a Roman Catholic Priest,” at <https://www.pcahistory.org/rgo/rpcs/docsynod/330.html> (the website of the PCA Historical Center, St. Louis, Missouri).

without the presbytery approving his call and installation into the charge and reception into the presbytery.

13. When a licentiate has been called to be an evangelist, or teacher of the Word of God, and he has indicated his desire to accept the call, and the presbytery has been satisfied with his qualifications for ordination to the sacred office and for installation into the service to which he has been called, in the terms of Sections 1, 3, and 6, above, it shall appoint a time for him to be ordained and installed. It is fitting that these be done before a congregation at a service held for the purpose.

**Comment:** We now return to the call of a licentiate, but one who is called to be something other than the pastor of a local congregation. In this case the licentiate is called to be an evangelist (perhaps to serve as a chaplain in the U.S. Military) or a teacher of the Word of God (perhaps to serve as a professor in a theological seminary). Everything that was in view when a licentiate was called to be a pastor is still in view (in terms of Sections 1, 3, and 6 of this chapter) when he is called to these other forms of ministerial service. Though he is not being called to be pastor of a local congregation, it is still fitting that these be done before some congregation at a service held for the purpose of ordaining and installing him as evangelist or teacher.

14. At the time for ordination and installation the moderator of the presbytery, or another appointed in his place, shall preside over the meeting of the presbytery with the congregation present. A minister previously appointed shall preach a sermon appropriate to the occasion. Afterwards the moderator shall briefly inform those assembled, in the following or similar language, concerning the warrant and nature of the office of minister of the Word of God and concerning the duties which the minister's service will place upon him:

The Word of God clearly teaches that the office of minister was instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul declares that our Lord "gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ."

The duties of the minister of Christ may briefly be set forth under the following heads: the faithful exposition of the Word of God and its application to the needs of the hearers, in order that the unconverted may be reconciled to God and that the saints may be built up in their most holy faith; the offering of prayer to the Lord on behalf of the congregation; the administration of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper; and the exercise, in conjunction with the ruling elders, of the government and discipline of the church.

The office of the minister is first in the church for dignity and usefulness, for, by our God's sovereign design, the ministry of the Word is the primary instrument in our Lord's gathering and perfecting of his church. The person who fills this office is designated in Scripture by different names expressive of his various duties. As he has the oversight of the flock of Christ, he is termed bishop. As he feeds them with spiritual food, he is termed pastor and teacher. As he serves Christ in his church, he is termed minister. As it is his duty to be grave and prudent, and an example to the flock, and to govern well in the house of God, he is termed presbyter or elder. As he is sent to declare the will of God to sinners, and to beseech them to be reconciled to God through Christ, he is termed ambassador. As he is commanded to warn the house of Israel against the enemies of God and his Word, he is termed watchman. And, as he dispenses the manifold grace of God and the ordinances instituted by Christ, he is termed steward of the mysteries of God.

He shall endeavor to give the people a proper sense of the solemnity of both ordination to the office and installation in his field of service.

Then addressing the candidate he shall propose to him the following questions:

(1) Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?

(2) Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith and Catechisms of this Church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures?

(3) Do you approve of the government, discipline, and worship of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church?

(4) Do you promise subjection to your brethren in the Lord?

(5) Have you been induced, as far as you know your own heart, to seek the office of the holy ministry from love to God and a sincere desire to promote his glory in the gospel of his Son?

(6) Do you promise to be zealous and faithful in maintaining the truths of the gospel, and the purity, the peace, and the unity of the church, whatever persecution or opposition may arise unto you on that account?

(7) Do you promise to be faithful and diligent in the exercise of all private and personal duties which become you as a Christian and a minister of the gospel, as well as in all the duties of your office, endeavoring to adorn the profession of the gospel by your life, and walking with exemplary piety before those among whom you labor wherever you may be?

(8) Do you conscientiously believe and declare, as far as you know your own heart, that in taking upon you the work of an evangelist (or a teacher of the Word of God) you are influenced by a sincere desire to promote the glory of God and the good of his church?

(9) Are you now willing to undertake the work of an evangelist (or a teacher of the Word of God), and do you promise to be faithful in the discharge of all the duties of this ministry as God may give you strength?

**Comment:** Again, a service of ordination and installation is held for the licentiate to be placed in these non-pastoral callings of evangelist and teacher. Everything that was in view earlier is in view here, except he is not taking up the charge of a particular congregation, and, consequently, there are not the four questions posed to the congregation at the time a man assumes pastoral service in a particular local congregation. I have already commented upon the activities that take place in a service of ordination and installation (including the preaching of a sermon and the setting forth of the warrant and nature of the office of gospel minister) and will not repeat them here.

15. The candidate having answered these questions in the affirmative, he shall then kneel, and by prayer and the laying on of the hands of the presbytery, according to the apostolic example, he shall be solemnly ordained to the holy office of the gospel ministry. Prayer being ended, he shall rise and the moderator shall declare him to be ordained a minister of the Word of God and installed as an evangelist (or teacher of the Word of God). The presbytery shall then extend to him the right hand of fellowship.

The moderator, or another appointed for the purpose, shall give a solemn charge in the name of God to the newly ordained and installed minister to persevere in the discharge of his duties, and shall then, by prayer, commend him to the grace of God and his holy keeping. The newly ordained and installed minister shall close the service with a benediction.

**Comment:** The candidate, in the service of ordination and installation, as noted previously, enjoys the laying on of hands, the pronouncement of ordination and installation,

with prayer, the right hand of fellowship, charge to the minister (as an evangelist or teacher), and the new evangelist or teacher closing the service with a benediction.

16. When a minister of this Church is called to be an evangelist, or a teacher of the Word of God, and he has indicated his desire to accept the call, the presbytery shall satisfy itself that he has the qualifications for that service. If it is satisfied it shall appoint a time for his installation by the presbytery or by a committee appointed for that purpose. It is fitting that the installation take place in the presence of a congregation at a service held for that purpose.

The time being come, and the meeting convened, a sermon shall be preached by a previously appointed minister. The moderator of the presbytery, or another appointed in his place, shall then briefly inform those assembled concerning the purpose of the meeting and concerning the relevant proceedings of the presbytery.

Then addressing the minister to be installed, he shall propose to him the following questions:

(1) Do you conscientiously believe and declare, as far as you know your own heart, that in taking upon you the work of an evangelist (or a teacher of the Word of God) you are influenced by a sincere desire to promote the glory of God and the good of his church?

(2) Are you now willing to undertake the work of an evangelist (or a teacher of the Word of God), and do you promise to be faithful in the discharge of all the duties of this ministry as God may give you strength?

Affirmative answers to these questions having been made, a solemn charge in the name of God shall be given to the newly installed minister to persevere in the discharge of his duties. Prayer shall then be offered, commending him to the grace of God and his holy keeping. The newly installed minister shall close the service with a benediction.

**Comment:** Now we move to a case in which the candidate to be installed as an evangelist or teacher is already a minister in the OPC. The bounds of this service can be within or outside of the church. In the first case, let us suppose that a pastor of a particular OP church is called by another OP church to plant a church as an evangelist, or a presbytery calls him to be its Regional Home Missionary. In the second case let us suppose he has been a pastor of an OPC and is now seeking to serve as a chaplain in a prison or as a professor in theological seminary. He only needs to be installed into the position that the new call defines.

It should be noted that a call always comes from within the church. A minister may be hired, in other words, to teach in a seminary, but only a presbytery can give him a call as a teacher to perform such a function on behalf of the church. The hiring process of the prison or the seminary does not constitute a call but may prompt the church to issue a call for such service. A specific call to such new work is not so necessary, though, that a candidate could not enter such service without it, since the church can always grant someone who has been in a ministerial call (say, serving as a pastor) permission to accept an appointment for what the presbytery judges to be the work of the ministry (FG 24.4).

17. When a minister of another denomination is called to serve as an evangelist, or as a teacher of the Word of God, and the provisions of Chapter XXII, Section 13, have been fulfilled, the presbytery shall install him in the following manner in the service to which he has been called:

A time shall be set for the installation at which the moderator of the presbytery, or another appointed in his place, shall preside. It is fitting that the installation take place in the presence of a congregation at a service held for that purpose.

The time being come and the presbytery convened, a sermon shall be preached by a previously appointed minister. The moderator shall then briefly inform those assembled concerning the purpose of the meeting and concerning the relevant proceedings of the presbytery.

Then addressing the minister to be installed, he shall propose to him the following questions:

(1) Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?

(2) Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith and Catechisms of this Church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures?

(3) Do you approve of the government, discipline, and worship of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church?

(4) Do you promise subjection to your brethren in the Lord?

(5) Have you been induced, as far as you know your own heart, to seek the office of the holy ministry from love to God and a sincere desire to promote his glory in the gospel of his Son?

(6) Do you promise to be zealous and faithful in maintaining the truths of the gospel, and the purity, the peace, and the unity of the church, whatever persecution or opposition may arise unto you on that account?

(7) Do you promise to be faithful and diligent in the exercise of all private and personal duties which become you as a Christian and a minister of the gospel, as well as in all the duties of your office, endeavoring to adorn the profession of the gospel by your life, and walking with exemplary piety before those among whom you labor wherever you may be?

(8) Are you now willing to undertake the work of the ministry in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, and do you promise to discharge the duties which may be incumbent upon you in this capacity as God may give you strength?

(9) Do you conscientiously believe and declare, as far as you know your own heart, that in taking upon you the work of an evangelist (or a teacher of the Word of God) you are influenced by a sincere desire to promote the glory of God and the good of his church?

(10) Are you now willing to undertake the work of an evangelist (or a teacher of the Word of God), and do you promise to be faithful in the discharge of all the duties of this ministry as God may give you strength?

Affirmative answers to these questions having been made, a solemn charge in the name of God shall be given to the newly installed minister to persevere in the discharge of his duties. Prayer shall then be offered, commending him to the grace of God and his holy keeping. The newly installed minister shall close the service with a benediction.

**Comment:** Finally, we come to the situation in which we have a call to a man who has already been ordained to the ministry, serving at present outside the OPC, now receiving a call to service within the OPC as an evangelist or teacher. The questions to him reflect his coming from outside the OPC, as noted above in the comments on Section 12, similar to a minister coming from elsewhere to serve as a pastor in the OPC.

18. If a minister of another denomination, though not having a call to service in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, desires to labor in the gospel in this church, the presbytery

to which he applies shall require him to give evidence of possessing the qualifications, in regard to piety, faith, and learning, that are demanded of candidates for ordination as provided in Sections 3 and 6, above. The evidence shall include written testimonials from qualified persons of his satisfactory exercise of the gifts of the ministry of the Word.

In no case shall an examination on the floor of presbytery be waived. If one-fourth of the presbyters present are dissatisfied with the examination in theology the minister shall be required to undergo an examination in the subject again at a future meeting of the presbytery. If at the outset of such subsequent meeting one-fourth of the presbyters so request, a clear recording of this examination shall be made and filed with the presbytery.

If the presbytery is satisfied as to the ministerial qualifications of the candidate but finds that he lacks competency in the Hebrew and Greek languages, or one of them, it may judge by a three-fourths vote of the members present to waive these requirements without referring this question to the general assembly for advice. Such action shall be taken only when the applicant has given affirmative answer to the following question:

Do you agree that you will make a continuing endeavor, under the direction of the presbytery, to attain competency in those languages until the presbytery is satisfied?

Although such a minister may not be received as a minister of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church until the favorable judgment of the presbytery has been confirmed by his receiving a call to specific service the presbytery, after approving his examination, shall require him to give affirmative answer, before the presbytery, to the following questions:

(1) Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?

(2) Do you sincerely approve the Confession of Faith and Catechisms of this Church as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures?

(3) Do you approve the government, discipline, and worship of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church?

(4) Will you, if you become a minister of this Church, be willing to be in subjection to your brethren in the Lord?

(5) Are you induced, so far as you know your own heart, to enter the ministry of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church from love for God and a sincere desire to promote his glory in the gospel of his Son?

(6) Will you, if you become a minister of this Church, be faithful and diligent in the exercise of all private and personal duties which become you as a Christian and a minister of the gospel, as well as in all the duties of your office, endeavoring to adorn the profession of the gospel by your life, and walking with exemplary piety before those among whom you labor wherever you may be?

(7) Will you, if you become a minister of this Church, be zealous and faithful in maintaining the truths of the gospel, and the purity, the peace and the unity of the church, whatever persecution or opposition may arise unto you on that account?

(8) Will you, if you become a minister of this Church, undertake and discharge the duties which may be incumbent upon you as an Orthodox Presbyterian minister, as God may give you strength?

The candidate having been approved and having answered the above questions in the affirmative, the fact shall be recorded in the minutes of the presbytery, and the clerk shall promptly inform the other presbyteries of the church of this fact. Normally the minister will remain in his denomination while he seeks a call to service in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. However, if such continued membership is unacceptable to him the presbytery may, at his request, enroll him as a member of the regional church; he shall thus not be enrolled as a member of the presbytery, and the presbytery shall hold his ministerial

credentials in suspense while he seeks a call to service. The presbytery, having approved his qualifications for the ministry, shall authorize him to preach in the church as a candidate for a call to service. If and when he receives a call to service his ministerial credentials shall be restored and he may be installed for his service.

If after a period not to exceed two years gifts for the ministry are not confirmed by receipt of a call to service the presbytery shall consider divesting him from office in accordance with Chapter XXVI, Section 3, of the Form of Government. If the presbytery divests him of office, presbytery shall require him to seek membership in a particular congregation.

**Comment:** Previous sections of this chapter have addressed the ordination and installation of men inside and outside the denomination to the offices of pastor, evangelist, and teacher. Now a rather distinct matter comes into view: A minister of another denomination wishes to pursue gospel ministry in the OPC but does not have a call from any congregation, presbytery, or other agency of the OPC. Lacking such a call, he cannot be installed in the OPC and cannot become a ministerial member of the presbytery until such time as he does receive a call.

He is permitted, however, to come into the OPC at this point after a fashion, in this way permitted by section 18. The term employed here is that his ministerial credentials are held “in suspense” for now, awaiting a call. That his credentials are held in suspense means that he is not a ministerial member of the OPC. It does not mean that he may not administer the means of grace: Word, sacraments, and prayer. He may do so because he is already, and remains, a minister of Word and sacraments, associated with the OPC.

The customary ordination/installation requirements apply here. The piety, faith, and learning required for ministers are required for men who come in and have the presbytery hold their credentials in suspense awaiting a call in the OPC. Sections 3 and 6 are in view here as well as the required testimonials. Again, as always, there must be a theological exam, with one-quarter of those present able to ask for continuance and recording of any future exams. As also noted in section 3, the presbytery may, by a three-fourths vote of those present, waive the biblical language requirements without reference to the general assembly as long as the applicant agrees to make “a continuing endeavor” to attain competency in such “until the presbytery is satisfied.”

Though not a member of the presbytery proper until receiving a call, the candidate answers the eight questions that ordinarily accompany ordination/installation. This is recorded in the minutes, and the clerk notifies the other presbyteries that such a man has been received under this rubric and is eligible for call. Normally, he remains in his denomination while seeking a call to service in the OPC. However, if he desires to come into the OPC at this point, he shall be enrolled as a member of the regional church, though, again, not of the presbytery unless and until he receives a call into which he is installed.

He is fully authorized to preach and perform all the functions of a minister (including administering the sacraments), all of which pertains to his office, regardless of where his membership lies. If a man in such a situation does not receive a call within two years, the presbytery is to consider divesting him of office in keeping with FG 26.3. If the presbytery divests him, it shall also require him to seek membership in a particular congregation and not remain on the roll of the regional church.

19. If a minister is to be installed in a position that is a change of function from his previous service the presbytery shall weigh his qualifications for the new function when

consideration is given to approval of his call. Such change of function, if approved, shall be noted in the records of the presbytery.

**Comment:** If a minister is to be installed in a position that is a change of function from his previous service, the presbytery shall be informed of such, judge whether his qualifications fit the new function, approve such, and record it in the minutes of the presbytery. An example of this would be a minister in a congregation who receives a call upon retirement as senior pastor to continue service in the local congregation as a teacher or evangelist instead of pastor. The presbytery needs to express its judgment as to whether the minister properly possesses the qualification for the new function.

20. When a presbytery has ordained or installed a minister a record of the fact shall be made in the minutes of the presbytery.

The presbytery's decision to install shall be regarded also as its decision to receive the minister into the presbytery if he had been a licentiate or was coming from another presbytery or denomination. Upon installation his name shall be placed on the roll of the presbytery.

If the newly enrolled minister has come from another presbytery of this Church the clerk of the installing presbytery shall notify promptly the presbytery from which the minister has come so that his name may be removed from the roll of his former presbytery. If the minister has come from another denomination the clerk of the installing presbytery shall notify the proper authority of the minister's former denomination.

**Comment:** Ordination and/or installation is one of the most important ordinary acts that a presbytery performs. A record of all that precedes and includes such should be made in its minutes. Any decision to install a man into a duly processed call shall be also a decision to receive a man as a ministerial member of that presbytery. Such membership is effectuated at the end of a service of ordination and installation, in the case of a licentiate, or at the end of an installation, in the case of one already ordained, upon the pronouncement of the apostolic benediction by the newly installed minister. The name of such minister is then and there placed on the roll of the presbytery.

If the newly installed minister comes from another presbytery of the OPC, the clerk of the installing presbytery shall notify the presbytery from which he has transferred that he is now a member of the installing presbytery and that his former presbytery may remove his name from its roll. If the minister has come from another denomination, the clerk of the installing presbytery should likewise notify whatever the proper authority is in the newly installed minister's former denomination or congregation.

21. If a minister enrolled in a presbytery (a) desires to engage in a ministry not under the jurisdiction of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church within the bounds of another presbytery, or (b) desires to transfer to another presbytery for other purposes for which a call and installation are inappropriate, such transfer may be effected without a call and without installation, provided the minister's reasons are satisfactory to both the dismissing and the receiving presbytery (cf. Chapter XX, Section 8).

**Comment:** A man may be enrolled in a presbytery, say, as a pastor and desire to change his service, as letter a. has in view, perhaps becoming a chaplain or a teacher at a local institution (prison, hospital, seminary, college, etc.) within the bounds of another presbytery. He may do such if his reasons are deemed appropriate to both the dismissing

and receiving presbytery. Further comments will be made on the general subject of ministers laboring outside the church at FG 28.

A man may also have, in accordance with letter b., no particular service in view, like seminary or college teaching, but desire to transfer to another presbytery in which he has no call, so installation would be inappropriate: perhaps he has family in that area and intends to seek a call while living there (and perhaps pursuing temporary employment outside the church), while still engaging in supplying pulpits in the new presbytery, seeking and awaiting a future call. He may transfer into the presbytery without a call from a church in that presbytery, again, if both the dismissing and receiving presbytery find his reasons satisfactory.

22. If a retired minister of another denomination desires to transfer his ministerial credentials to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, he may be enrolled as a member of the presbytery without a call and without installation, provided his reasons are satisfactory and he is received in accordance with the relevant provisions of Section 18 of this chapter.

**Comment:** This section addresses the situation in which a retired minister of another denomination, perhaps with which he has come to have differences that prompt him not to remain in such, even though he is retired and no longer actively serving in it, wishes to associate with the OPC. He may have his ministerial credentials transferred to the OPC and enrolled as a member of presbytery without call and installation, provided that his reasons for seeking such a transfer are deemed satisfactory by the presbytery. This situation (being enrolled as a member of presbytery without a call and without installation) obtains only in this circumstance and not when he is seeking a call and his credentials are held in suspense. Such a retired or superannuated minister would be otherwise received in accordance with the relevant provisions of Section 18 of this chapter, about which comment is made above.

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# ServantReading

## Digital Life Together: The Challenge of Technology for Christian Schools *by David I. Smith, Kara Sevensma, Marjorie Terpstra, and Steven McMullen*

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By T. David Gordon

*Digital Life Together: The Challenge of Technology for Christian Schools*, by David I. Smith, Kara Sevensma, Marjorie Terpstra, and Steven McMullen. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2020, x + 377 pages, \$29.99.

### Introduction

Titles and subtitles are tricky, but often follow a pattern: the title is designed to attract readers, and the subtitle to tell them what the book is about. The title of this book—*Digital Life Together*—might suggest that it is written for a large audience, since digital technologies are a ubiquitous aspect of life in the third millennium. The subtitle, however, suggests a much more targeted/restricted audience, limiting the scope of the book to the challenge of technology (mostly digital) for Christian Schools, which reduces the otherwise-potential readership by about 97%, and limits it further to those associated with Christian schools who have governance responsibility. This could include administrators and instructors, and also parents or other interested individuals. If the title suggests the kind of sweeping technological vision of Marshall McLuhan, Jacques Ellul, or Neil Postman, let the subtitle return you to earth. That its potential readership will be small is not a defect; I suspect the textbooks employed in most graduate schools have a small readership also, yet they serve the broader human society very well. To what subset of our society is this book aimed?

The legacy of President George W. Bush will include his No Child Left Behind initiative, in which educational institutions at all levels—kindergarten through graduate school—were required to expend time, resources, and energy not merely on teaching but also on assessing the results of that teaching to assure that they were achieving some demonstrable good. This well-intentioned proposal assumed four things that not everyone assumes:

1. That a President, who admittedly partied his way through college, was competent to reform American education
2. That all the goals of education are tangible and/or measurable (how do we assess whether a student has come to appreciate what is good, true, or beautiful?)

3. That institutions required to satisfy the measurable goals in order to maintain their funding would not drop some of the good things they had previously done in order to “teach to the test”
4. That institutions would not effectively lose funding as soon as the initiative began, because resources that had previously been devoted to education would now be devoted to assessing education (how many former classroom teachers are now assessors?)

I accepted none of the four assumptions. The simple fact of the matter now, however, is that Bush’s NCLB initiative will likely have as permanent a shelf-life as Roosevelt’s Social Security Act; federal bureaucracies (unlike old soldiers) neither die nor fade away. All American educational institutions—private or public—are now required to maintain their accreditation (and funding) by demonstrating—to the satisfaction of some agency or another—that they are “doing their job.” Some readers of *Ordained Servant* are part of that current educational circumstance; and those who are may as well learn how to do what is required, and hopefully in a manner that some good will come of it. For such readers this book was written (although the authors do not state—or even hint—that satisfying President Bush’s initiative was/is part of their intention):

In this book we approach key questions about *digital technology and Christian education*. . . . We draw on extensive data from *classroom observations, focus groups, surveys, and school documents*. From this data, we will be tracing the ways in which *Christian teachers, learners, administrators, and parents* are seeking healthy connections between new technologies and the task of maintaining a discerning Christian learning community. (3, emphasis added)

The book is therefore about “Christian education,” informed by “classroom observations, focus groups, surveys, and school documents,” and is likely to be of primary interest to “Christian teachers, learners, administrators, and parents.” I taught at a Christian college, so I have an interest in Christian education, and, on my good days, I suppose I am a “Christian teacher.” I have little interest in classroom observations, focus groups, surveys, or other school documents, however, for reasons that need not detain anyone here. It is merely to indicate that the book addresses technology in Christian education, and it does not address those who have little interest in focus groups, surveys, or other school documents. But for those who are part of the now-necessary educational apparatus that requires institutional self-assessment, this volume will provide both a template and some very helpful and interesting information.

### **Some Specific Observations**

There is nice and helpful nuancing about what “technology” includes, and the authors include “technique” (behaviors) along with particular “tools,” though they do not go so far as Ellul, either in rejecting the English ruining of the term (“geology” is the study of rocks; “technology” *should* be the *study* of tools and how we use them) or in his use of technique to refer (as Postman later did) to a worldview that expresses confidence (sometimes messianic) in Technology to save us from all our woes.

It was very good of the authors to divide the book into many (39!) brief chapters to permit readers to select the ones most pertinent to their circumstances. These chapters are located in six sections: Context, Mission, Teaching and Learning, Discernment, Formation, and Community.

The authors intend to avoid/evade the pro-tech/anti-tech polarity, while providing at least brief bibliographies reflecting that polarity. They also indicate good awareness of reciprocity: we shape tools and tools shape us.

This volume will likely have a fairly small but very grateful readership. Institutional self-assessment is now a regular feature of academic life, and the digital footprint is as ubiquitous in the academy as it is elsewhere. Nearly every Christian education institution either has a permanent technology committee (however they name it) or an occasional *ad hoc* committee of the same kind. All such groups will benefit greatly by observing how these authors have addressed these matters and will appreciate the clarity, organization, and documentation provided here. To such groups I sincerely commend it.

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# ServantReading

## Duplex Regnum Christi: Christ's Twofold Kingdom in Reformed Theology *by Jonathon D. Beeke*

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By Ryan M. McGraw

*Duplex Regnum Christi: Christ's Twofold Kingdom in Reformed Theology*, by Jonathon D. Beeke, vol. 40, Studies in Reformed Theology. Leiden: Brill, 2021, xiii + 255 pages, \$62.09, paper.

“Two-kingdom” theology has become a vexed question in contemporary Reformed circles. The issues usually press upon the proper understanding of the relationship between the church and state, and both in relation to God’s law, enveloping vexed questions about the nature of natural law. Frequently in discussions over two kingdom theology, authors appeal to historical precedents in Protestant churches, aiming at systematic formulations. Targeting historical developments rather than contemporary questions, Jonathon Beeke explores Christ’s twofold reign in sixteenth and seventeenth century contexts, seeking to understand his chosen authors on their own terms and in their own times rather than in light of contemporary debates (12). His valuable research presses modern readers to step back for a moment to listen to the voices of older authors from different times and places. Doing so often places different options on the table than what we find in modern discussions, enabling readers to take stock as they often claim to be close or far away from historic Protestantism (14). Ultimately, he argues well that Reformed orthodoxy opted to refer to Christ’s twofold kingdom, essentially as God and economically as God incarnate, rather than two distinct kingdoms. This has potential to alter the direction of current debates, at least to an extent.

Beeke’s aim in this work is to investigate what select early modern Reformed authors taught about Christ’s twofold reign, and why they did so (14). His thesis is that Reformed orthodox portrayals of the *duplex regnum Christi* stood in basic continuity with early Reformed formulations, with some significant developments (19, 215). Following a general introduction and statement of his argument, Beeke surveys patristic and medieval foundations for the twofold reign of Christ in chapter two. This sets the stage for his treatment of Luther in chapter three, completing his overview of the Reformation period with Bucer and Calvin in chapter 4. Chapter 5 marks a shift towards Reformed orthodoxy as his main target by highlighting key terms and ideas related to the question. This paves the way for chapters 6 through 8, focusing on Reformed scholastic university instruction at Leiden, Geneva, and Edinburgh, as each illustrates Reformed views of Christ’s twofold reign in varying contexts. Beeke takes readers off the beaten path of treating familiar authors, doing groundbreaking research on figures such as Franciscus Junius, Johannes Scharpius, and David Dickson. Chapter 9 concludes the work via restatement, summary,

and assessment of the whole. From the outset, Beeke notes that “two kingdom theology” is actually an anachronistic term, likely stemming from Karl Barth’s description of Lutheranism in 1922. He retains the language, partly due to its prevalence in secondary literature (2), noting as well that for early modern Reformed authors, church-state relationships became a secondary issue when establishing Christ’s twofold reign (13). The main concerns related to this doctrine in Reformed thinking were Christological and covenantal, saying more about Christ’s pre and post-incarnate states and what implications this had for our relation to him. The fact that Beeke draws similar evidence from Leiden, Geneva, and Scotland, among other sources, illustrates that stressing Christ’s single reign with general and mediatorial aspects was shaped more by the trajectory of Reformed thought than by local and national contexts (216). The result is a clear and broad characterization of the Reformed tradition on this point, which holds great promise for further research.

While several features of this work stand out as particularly clear, shedding light on much recent debate, two stand out. First, Beeke’s contrast between the Lutheran two kingdoms teaching and the Reformed conception of Christ’s twofold kingdom is a substantial dividing point that should shape any contemporary discussion. “Two-kingdoms” ideology aimed to explain the different responsibilities of magistrates and ministers while Christ’s twofold kingdom aimed to press people’s relationship to Christ as both Creator or Redeemer. Second, he shows the development of Christ’s twofold kingdom in Reformed thought, especially in light of Christology and covenant theology. Specifically, the connections he makes between Turretin’s treatment of the covenants of nature and of grace, with Christ’s twofold reign as Creator and Redeemer, breaks new ground (169) and sheds light on the crux of the matter. The primary issues are not thus church and state relationships as much as who Christ is and how people relate to him.

Though the author asserts repeatedly that church/state relationships were not in view primarily under the idea of a twofold reign of Christ, one essential and eternal, the other mediatorial and (maybe) temporary (e.g., 118), the distinction and relation of powers in the church and state remains a natural ancillary discussion. Christ governs the world essentially as God, and world government should respect his law as the eternal Son of God. Christ then rules over the world for the sake of the church as Mediator, with a special aim towards the redemption of the elect and the transformation of heaven and earth.

Surely this distinction still results in different ways in which the state and the church relate to God’s law, as it did in James Bannerman’s *Church of Christ*, for instance. Reformed orthodoxy may present a twofold kingdom of one Christ rather than two kingdoms, yet Christ’s twofold reign is a Christological issue with important implications for church/state relations. All people are subject to law under Christ as Creator, and he reigns over all as Mediator calling people to repentance and faith. However, it remains striking, as the author notes, that Reformed treatments of Christ’s twofold reign appeared in Christologically grounded theological loci and not in relation to pastors and magistrates (148–49). The larger picture that emerges is that Christ’s twofold reign was primarily a Christological issue, with implications for the distinction of power in church and state. This overlap of issues appears more readily in authors like Turretin, as Beeke acknowledges (e.g., 165), but the connection between Christ’s twofold kingdom and church-state relationships remains a natural one. Keeping this caveat in mind, Beeke

rightly observes that confusion often results from the fact that people treat the scope of Christ's mediatorial kingdom as narrower than that of his universal kingdom as Creator while in classic Reformed thought the scope of two aspects of Christ's reign remained universal, though with differing aims and relations (e.g., 21, 114, 224). This point can help alleviate some confusion and charges of inconsistency among Reformed authors as they come to bear on modern debates.

Historical theology cannot tell the church what to believe, but it can tell us what the church has believed. It is vital to hear historical people with their own accents in their own contexts without running into the danger of seeing our own reflections in their viewpoints. This is precisely why historical studies like this one can help modern theological debates, giving us other ideas to evaluate and making some lines in the sand clearer (12). Beeke's book, as an exemplary model of historical theology, thus contributing something vital to ongoing discussions of two kingdoms theology today, pressing towards sound historical exegesis rather than mere theological eisegesis. Not all will be satisfied with his conclusions, but that is part of the beauty of historical theology. Readers are not obligated to like what they find, even as they seek to learn from what they find. I cannot commend this book highly enough, both in relation to the history of Reformed thought and for its potential to clarify contemporary discussions.

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# ServantNews

## *Ordained Servant* Survey

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The Committee on Christian Education, through its Subcommittee on Serial Publications, has decided to once again survey the readers and potential readers of *Ordained Servant* to assess the value of OS for the officers of the OPC and see how we might improve this thirty-year-old publication. We want to know how well *Ordained Servant* is fulfilling its mission:

To encourage, inform, and equip OPC officers for faithful, effective, and God glorifying ministry in the visible church of the Lord Jesus Christ through high-quality editorials, articles, and book reviews, which stimulate clear thinking and consistent practice of historic, confessional Presbyterianism.

We very much appreciate you completing this survey in order to help us minister to the officers of the church in the best way possible. The survey can be done in about 5 minutes. If you choose to identify yourself (name and address) we will send you a free copy of the latest CCE publication: *Catechism of Scripture History*.

On January 10 the survey will be sent out to a wider audience. The survey hyperlink is available now: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/RGW6X3W>

Your brothers in Christ,

Glen Clary, Darryl Hart (chairman), Stephen Tracey, David Winslow  
Subcommittee on Serial Publications of the CCE

# ServantPoetry

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## The Calendar of Life

G. E. Reynolds (1949–)

The season shifts suddenly  
To reveal a shortened day  
As sunlight is compressed  
To narrow our mortal way.

But the darkness presages  
An inner focus on the meaning  
Of each day by the fireside  
Which leads me to sing

Of the incarnation, which came  
In the darkness of the earth's  
Bleak winter's night to say  
Let there be numerous births

Of humankind to celebrate  
The light of everlasting life  
To penetrate the dark night  
And quench impenetrable strife.