

REVIEW: **MICHAEL HORTON'S** *THE CHRISTIAN FAITH* BY DAVID BOOTH

New Horizons

IN THE ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

FACING THE CHARISMATIC CHALLENGE

by George W. Knight III

**ALSO: ARE CHARISMATIC GIFTS
FOR TODAY?** by David W. King



JAN 2012

Contents

FEATURES

- 3** FACING THE CHARISMATIC CHALLENGE
By George W. Knight III
- 6** PENTECOST AND TRUE SPIRITUALITY
By Richard B. Gaffin, Jr.
- 9** ARE CHARISMATIC GIFTS FOR TODAY?
By David W. King

DEPARTMENTS

- 10** FOREIGN MISSIONS
Jerry Farnik in the Czech Republic
- 12** CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
Interns: the pastor's perspective • Four favorites • Out of the mouth ...
- 14** HOME MISSIONS
Limington, Maine • Gainesville, Fla.
- 16** STEWARDSHIP
Building the temple
- 17** PRAYER CALENDAR
- 20** WOMAN TO WOMAN
- 21** NEWS, VIEWS, REVIEWS

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GEORGE W. KNIGHT III

Facing the Charismatic Challenge

One of the most important differences between the Reformed, and the Pentecostals and some charismatics, is the belief of the latter that the book of Acts is our guide for the special gifts and that the baptism of the Holy Spirit, as it appears in Acts, occurs as a special act subsequent to regeneration by the Spirit.

They cite Pentecost (Acts 2:1–41) and the events involving the Samaritans (Acts 8:14–25), Cornelius (Acts 10:1–11:18), and John’s disciples in Ephesus (Acts 19:1–7). They claim that in these passages people who are already regarded as disciples are then baptized by the Holy Spirit, and that this is the model for the Christian today. However, there was a unique reason for the timing of the baptism by the Holy Spirit in each case, and thus these passages do not provide a general model that we should try to emulate today.

PENTECOST (ACTS 2)

The Pentecost experience itself fulfills Jesus’ words to his disciples that they would receive “the promise of the Father” in being “baptized with the Holy Spirit” and would “receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you,” so that they could be his “witnesses . . . to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:4, 5, 8). That power came upon them not only in that “from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind” filled the house and “divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them,” but also in that “they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:2–4). This was the filling with the Holy Spirit and endowment with power that could come only from the ascended Jesus Christ, who was giving what the Father and he had promised to his disciples.

They experienced baptism with the Holy Spirit this way because they had lived both before and after the Resurrection and the Ascension and had become believers before the promise could be given. The spectacular phenomena of wind and

fire, however, were not given again, and even the subsequent speaking in tongues does not seem to have been as significant as it was at Pentecost, when each person was able to hear them in his own language (2:6, 11).

What did Peter, standing with the eleven, say to those who were listening? He gave them the gospel and then said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself” (2:38–39). Here Peter offered to the hearers that which the apostles had received in two stages (forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit) as one complete offer to be given and received simultaneously. This is the model for today, not the unique experience of the apostles. The hearers were not told to wait, as the apostles had been told to do (Acts 1:4); rather, they responded immediately (2:41). Neither is it recorded that they received the spectacular signs that the apostles had received, nor that they spoke in foreign languages so others could hear and understand them. The passage goes on to say only that these believers “devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers” (2:42). Only of the apostles does Acts say that “many wonders and signs were being done” (2:43).

THE SAMARITANS (ACTS 8:14–25)

The second account is found in the context of Acts 8:4–25. The account begins by recounting that “Philip went

down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed to them the Christ” (8:5). The response is given in these words: “And the crowds with one accord paid attention to what was being said by Philip when they heard him and saw the signs that he did” (8:6). The result is in verse 12: “But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.”

The apostles at Jerusalem heard that “Samaria had received the word,” but that the Holy Spirit “had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.” When they heard this, “they sent to them Peter and John, who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit” (8:14–16). “Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit” (8:17).

The Samaritans became believers and were baptized, but did not receive the Holy Spirit until the hands of the apostles were laid on them. One may deduce from the text that this order of events was determined by the Lord for a reason similar to that in Cornelius’s case, when he and his household received the Holy Spirit first and then were baptized. In Cornelius’s case, this was to convince the circumcised believers accompanying Peter and those back in Jerusalem that they should receive and welcome Gentiles as fellow believers. In this case, it was to bring the Samaritans and Jews together. The Samaritans were shown that they were dependent upon the laying on of the hands of the Jewish apostles, and the Jews (represented by the apostles) were shown that they had to receive into one body with the one Holy Spirit their believing brothers, the Samaritans. Peter and John continued to speak “the word of the Lord” to these believers in Samaria, and “they returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans” (8:25).

THE GENTILE CORNELIUS (ACTS 10–11:18)

The third account in Acts is found in chapters 10 and 11. There we read of Peter being persuaded by God that he should take the gospel to Cornelius and his household at Caesarea. Cornelius was “a centurion of what was known as the Italian Cohort, a devout man who feared God with all his household ... and prayed continually to God” (10:1–2). Peter, after presenting the gospel to Cornelius and those with him, concluded: “To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name” (10:43). “While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God” (10:44–46).

Here again, as in Acts 2, the gospel message, belief in

Jesus, forgiveness of sins, and the reception of the Holy Spirit are tied together, but this time the baptism with the Holy Spirit came on the Gentiles in order to convince Jewish believers that they had really been saved and admitted to the people of God. Note how Peter urged them to be baptized because they had “received the Holy Spirit just as we have” (10:47). This action of the Spirit convinced not only those who were with Peter, but also the Jewish believers in Jerusalem, as Acts 11:15–18 indicates.

Several things need to be noted about this episode. Even though Cornelius was a God-fearing man, Peter was directed to “declare to you [Cornelius] a message by which you will be saved, you and all your household” (11:14). Peter equated their receiving of the Holy Spirit with what the apostles had experienced “when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ” (11:17). It is interesting that Peter relates that gift to the apostles’ belief in Jesus, and to nothing else, even though the gift came some time after their belief in him, namely, after Jesus’ ascension. But this perspective is exactly the way Jesus had already presented the promise of the Spirit in John 7:39: “Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.” Thus, this baptism of the Holy Spirit came upon Cornelius and his household just as Peter had proclaimed and promised to the Pentecost crowd (Acts 2:38–39), except for preceding their water baptism. The Holy Spirit fell upon them before they were baptized, as a testimony to the Jewish believers accompanying Peter and also to those back in Jerusalem (Acts 11:15–18). The speaking in tongues was a sign for all to be aware of the salvation and baptism of the Spirit that had come to these, the first Gentile believers.

DISCIPLES OF JOHN THE BAPTIST (ACTS 19:1–7)

The fourth episode is in Acts 19:1–7. Paul came to Ephesus and found some disciples to whom he said, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” They replied, “No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.” So Paul asked, “Into what then were you baptized?” They replied, “Into John’s baptism” (19:1–3). Paul then told them that John instructed “the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus.” When they heard this, “they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them” (19:4–6).

They were believers as surely as John the Baptist was, but ones who had not heard, even though they had received John’s baptism, that the Messiah had come. Hearing this good news from Paul, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, “and when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking in tongues and

prophesying” (19:6). This was another unique experience. These men had believingly responded to a message someone had presented from John the Baptist, and being convicted of their sin, they had repented and had been baptized into John’s baptism. They had received “John’s baptism,” but not baptism in the name of Jesus. After hearing from Paul that John had not only called men to repentance for their sins, but also to “believe in the one who was to come,” namely, Jesus, they believed in him and received baptism in his name. Whether while baptizing them or thereafter, Paul laid his hands on them and the Holy Spirit came on them. This baptism of the Spirit (and its attendant salvation in Jesus) was signified to them and to Paul by these disciples “speaking in tongues and prophesying” (19:6).

THE LESSON OF THESE FOUR EPISODES

These four episodes do not constitute a model for the Christian church to follow, because they do not have a consistent and uniform pattern. The first one (Pentecost, Acts 2) and the fourth one (John’s disciples, Acts 19) are the most similar, but even here there is an important difference. Some of the apostles had been disciples of John the Baptist, but they heard his message pointing to Jesus and turned to him in true faith, and then had to wait for the ascended Lord to send God’s promise of the Holy Spirit. The disciples of John in Ephesus had not come as far as the apostles, having heard and responded to the message about repentance, but not having heard the part about believing in the one who was to come. But neither we nor those we reach with the gospel are in that situation.

Nor are we Samaritans (Acts 8), despised by the Jews and disliking them equally. We have no need to learn that only through the hands of Jewish apostles will we receive the empowering, energizing, and uniting work of the Holy Spirit. We received the Spirit when we believed, and did not need to wait for the apostles or anyone else to lay hands on us. Yes, we are Gentiles, like Cornelius and his household, but we do not need to speak in tongues to convince Jewish believers that we are really Christians.

All of us who live outside these special and transitional situations are in the same position as those to whom Peter proclaimed the gospel right after the Pentecost episode: “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38).

What has this search produced that is beneficial to the souls and lives of believers, as well as edifying to their minds? It is that in Christ they have all that they need, and do not need to seek something better or higher, such as a follow-up baptism of the Holy Spirit. Except for a few instances in the New Testament where God was especially instructing his church about the Samaritans and the Gentiles, that they were

one with the Jewish believers and apostles, the New Testament repeatedly affirms that when people are united to Christ by faith they have in him thereby received the Holy Spirit.

Thus all Christians have the vitality of being united to Christ and indwelt by his Holy Spirit. As is the case with so many other gifts and graces of God, Christians are continually being urged by the apostle Paul to be filled with the Spirit and to walk by the Spirit, and not just to rest content that they have once believed, once repented, and once been baptized by the Spirit.

INTERACTING WITH CHARISMATICS

How then are we to interact with our charismatic fellow Christians? When the opportunity is appropriate, we should talk with them in an understanding way and try to show them from Scripture that the supernatural special gifts have ceased because they have completed the tasks God assigned to them. When they point to their own lives as proof positive of their charismatic thinking, we should try to point out to them other ways of understanding their experiences. Were they only nominal Christians who have now come to really trust in him, and therefore, like the Ephesian disciples, have they received the baptism of the Holy Spirit as they trusted in Christ? Or were they really believers who turned from their lackadaisical walk as God heard their prayer and filled them with his Holy Spirit in which they were already baptized?

We must be eager to protect the Christian flock from the error of the charismatics. But, at the same time, we must embrace those who are caught up in that error as brothers and sisters in the Lord and seek to lead them away from that error.

The vitality of the Reformed faith is evidenced in the regenerating work of God immediately leading to the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the ongoing filling of the Spirit in God’s people. This work of God enables his people to understand that God has sovereignly founded his church in the apostolic age on the apostles and prophets with a display of extraordinary gifts. It also enables his people to understand that God continues to build his church on that foundation, without those apostles and prophets being present today, by the ordinary (but not extraordinary) spiritual gifts that God still gives his church. This understanding enables those who embrace the Reformed faith to meet the challenge of the charismatic movement and also other aberrant variations of the Christian faith. □

The author, an OP minister, is an adjunct professor at Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. He quotes the ESV. This article is an edited version of “The Vitality of the Reformed Faith: Facing the Challenge of the Charismatic Movement,” which can be found among the 2009 Conference Papers of the International Council of Reformed Churches.



RICHARD B. GAFFIN, JR.

Pentecost and True Spirituality

What is spirituality, true spirituality? What is it that makes a person genuinely “spiritual”? How do you recognize such a person? How can you tell if you are spiritual?

Ours is a time very much preoccupied with questions like these. Oprah Winfrey’s great popularity is apparently explained in large part because she has convinced many that she has found true spirituality—by freeing herself, she believes, from her repressive Christian upbringing—and she is ready to share with you how you can find it for yourself.

The interest of screen star Richard Gere and others in the Dalai Lama runs much deeper than a concern for the freedom and political rights of the Tibetan people. Many are drawn to him as a religious leader because they believe he embodies and knows the way to authentic spirituality.

When we inquire into the specifics of contemporary claims like these, the answers forthcoming tend to be fairly vague, but a couple of things come through quite clearly: spirituality is *personal* and it’s *plural*. I must find it *within me* and I must find it *for myself*.

For Christians, who trust in Christ as their Savior and Lord, and who believe the Bible is God’s Word, it shouldn’t be hard to point out what is flawed and fundamentally wrong with so much current spirituality. It reflects the religious relativism and pluralism of our day, with its adamant aversion to the Bible’s teaching on spirituality.

The Bible is unmistakably clear about two fundamental spiritual realities. First, all human beings are sinners, in fact so hopelessly sinful, so inexcusably guilty and helplessly corrupt, as to be spiritually *dead*. Second, Jesus Christ, because of what he has done in his life, death, and resurrection, is the only Savior of sinners able to deliver us from our sin and its consequences. He and he alone is able to make us spiritually alive.

Still, a nearly unending flood of literature continues to

exhibit a confusing welter of claims and counterclaims. The result is this disconcerting state of affairs: the one Holy Spirit of God, given to unify the church, has become an occasion for tension and division within the church.

What is the solution to this distressing situation? Is there one? There is. Notice what I did *not* say just above. I didn’t say *the Spirit* is the source or cause of division among Christians about his work and gifts. The source of that discord lies elsewhere. It comes from not listening to the Spirit.

But where can I hear what the Spirit has to say, and how can I know for sure it’s the Spirit I’m hearing? The answer to that crucial question does not come from any person or church claiming to speak with final authority for or about the Spirit. Nor is it found in my or anyone else’s experience of the Spirit.

Rather, the answer—the only answer—is, in that memorable phrase, “the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scriptures” (WCF 1.10). The Bible alone is God-breathing today, from beginning to end, because of its unique, “God-breathed” origin in the past (2 Tim. 3:16). It is the only certain and infallibly reliable voice of the Spirit for the church today on all matters that pertain to Christian faith and life, including those that concern the Spirit and his work. We learn *of* the Spirit and his work only as we listen, first and last, *to* the Spirit (1 Cor. 2:10–14). We discover what are to be our expectations of his work in our lives only as, in possession of the Bible, we are armed with “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Eph. 6:17) and are exposed to that penetrating Spirit-sword as it, “living and active,” addresses us at the core of our being and in our deepest concerns (Heb. 4:12).

But what about Christian experience of the Spirit? Doesn't that count for something? Of course it does. But neither my experience nor yours nor any other Christian's is the definitive source for settling our understanding and determining our expectations of the Spirit's work in our lives. That source is Scripture and Scripture alone, rightly understood. Our experience is essential, but only as it corroborates that teaching by conforming to it.

THE GIFT OF THE SPIRIT

No doubt there is more than one way to go about briefly examining the Bible's teaching on the work of the Holy Spirit. One, however, we should not adopt, though it is widely followed today, particularly in Pentecostal and other charismatic circles. That approach focuses on the book of Acts, in particular on accounts there of baptism with the Holy Spirit and instances of tongues-speaking, prophesying, and miracle working. These accounts are then read as providing models to be replicated in the experience of Christians today.

That approach misses the primary purpose of Acts, which is indicated in 1:8, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." The "you" in verse 8 refers to *the apostles*, that is, those who were set apart to be Christ's authoritative witnesses, primarily to his resurrection (verses 20–26). Accordingly, the promise of verse 8 expresses a program of *apostolic* activity that includes others in the church associated with them. The rest of Acts describes the ongoing realization and completion of this apostolic program.

An overall purpose of Acts, in other words, is to document an *apostolic* agenda that has been *completed*: the apostolic spread of the gospel, the extension of the church, from "Jerusalem . . . to the ends of earth" (Rome). Acts describes the expanding scope, through the apostles, of this church-building gospel from Jew (Jerusalem-Judea) to half-Jew (Samaria) to non-Jew (the Gentile ends of the earth). Their activity signals the universality of God's saving purpose, as the proclamation of the promised salvation fulfilled in Christ spreads from one nation, Israel, to all nations.

This aspect of the apostles' activity is captured graphically in Ephesians 2:19–22, where Paul pictures the church as a building under construction. In a context (verses 11–18) where the universality of salvation and the unity of Jews and Gentiles in Christ effected by the gospel is again prominent, the apostles (and prophets), with Christ as the cornerstone, constitute the *foundation* of the *one* church-house that God is constructing in the period between Christ's ascension and his return.

This house, in other words, is a *historical* model. The laying of the apostolic-prophetic foundation of the church-house

is complete. It is not an ongoing activity that continues to the present. Nor does it have to be relaid periodically (assuming, as we must, that God, its master architect-builder, knows what he's doing!). As the work of Christ, the foundation-cornerstone (see 1 Cor. 3:11), is completed, unrepeatable, and noncontinuing, so also is the foundational role of the apostles. Answering to the once-for-all, finished work of Christ is the once-for-all, finished witness of the apostles to that saving work and its implications. The church today is in its postapostolic period when, in terms of Paul's model, its *superstructure* is being erected, an ongoing activity until Christ returns that rests firmly on the building's finished, well-laid, Christ-centered, and apostolic foundation.

Acts, then, is not an open-ended chronicling of loosely chosen episodes from the earliest days of the church's history for our emulation today. Acts is not amenable to an added chapter 29 to complete the narrative it presumably leaves unfinished. Rather, it ends where Luke intended, with the completion of the worldwide apostolic task he set out to document. Notice in this regard that Paul is aware that through his ministry as "an apostle to the Gentiles" (Rom. 11:13), the gospel is being spread "in the whole world," "in all creation" (Col. 1:5–6, 23).

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PENTECOST

What about Pentecost then? If the experience of the apostles and the others present with them described in Acts 2 doesn't provide a model or pattern to be sought and replicated in the lives of Christians subsequently until Christ returns, what is the significance of what happened on that day?

Though occurring near the beginning of Acts, Pentecost is clearly the high point of the book as a whole, of the entire history that Luke narrates. Why? Pentecost has this climactic prominence because the baptism with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5)—also described as the "pouring out" or "sending" of the Spirit (2:33; Luke 24:49)—completes the once-for-all work of Christ. The importance of Pentecost is nothing less than this.

We miss the point of Pentecost if we focus on the experience of those who were present and its assumed potential as a model for our own, no matter how striking and memorable that experience undoubtedly was. Pentecost is much more important than their experience. Without what took place then, the work of Christ on earth would have been unfinished.

This importance may be seen from a couple of related angles in Luke-Acts. In Acts 1:5, Jesus looks both forward and backward by connecting his promise that soon the apostles will be baptized with the Spirit, a promise that we know was fulfilled on Pentecost, with the ministry of John the Baptist marked by his water baptism.

The opening verses of Luke 3 summarize John's ministry by capturing what was central in it and defining it as a whole.

Verses 15–17 recount a comparison John made in response to the crowd’s question whether he was the Messiah. In that comparison, baptism is the common denominator that highlights the difference between the ministries of John and the coming Messiah. But why does baptism serve as the basis of comparison? Because a baptizing activity is a basic index of each ministry. “I am not the Messiah,” John says in effect. “I am but the forerunner, the one who prepares for the Messiah’s imminent coming. Accordingly, my baptism is with water; it is only a sign, a pointer. In contrast, the Messiah’s baptism, a basic index of his ministry, will be with the Holy Spirit and fire. That baptism is the reality to which my ministry, marked by water baptism, points.”

In this passage, then, John surveys the ministry of Christ as a whole, and at its heart, as central as anything else, is baptism with the Holy Spirit. From this perspective, Christ’s work on earth, culminating in the cross as the atonement for the sins of those he came to save, is properly seen as one large effort to secure for them, and give to them, the gift of the Holy Spirit. That is what Christ did for his people on the day of Pentecost. There is nothing subsidiary or secondary about what happened at Pentecost; it was no mere “second blessing.” The baptism with the Spirit that took place then is a matter of first order, primary blessing, blessing integral to the salvation Christ came to accomplish. Without that baptism, that gift, Christ’s work for our salvation would not be complete.

These reflections on John the Baptist’s revelation concerning Jesus are reinforced by Peter in his sermon on the day of Pentecost. As that preaching draws to its close, he affirms climactically, “This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing” (Acts 2:32–33). Four events are linked here: Jesus’ resurrection (revealing the saving efficacy of his messianic ministry culminating in the cross, verses 22–31), his ascension, his reception of the Spirit from the Father, and his outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost.

Clearly these events are inseparable; any one only occurred with the others either having already taken place or in view. Together, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, reception of the Spirit in the ascension, and Pentecost constitute a single complex of events. Pentecost is no more capable of being repeated in individual Christian experience than Christ’s death, resurrection, and ascension are capable of such repetition.

Despite a widespread misconception, Pentecost does not bring a fundamentally new or different experience of the Spirit. The differences in experiencing the Spirit between Old Testament believers and New Testament Christians are real and important, but no more than comparative: richer or greater or fuller for the latter. Rather, the newness of the out-

pouring of the Spirit at Pentecost resides primarily in two related considerations. First, the Spirit is finally present because Christ’s work of accomplishing salvation has been completed. The Spirit that came at Pentecost, fulfilling the promise of the Father, is the Spirit of the now-glorified Christ (“the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified,” John 7:39 QDVE); he is the *eschatological* Spirit. Second, the Spirit that came at Pentecost is the Spirit poured out on all flesh. The people of God are now the fellowship of the Spirit, consisting of Gentiles as well as Jews, from every nation, kindred, tribe, and tongue; he is the *universal* Spirit.

If Pentecost means anything, it is that the Spirit is here with the church to stay—permanently, irrevocably. Because of Pentecost, believers can be confident that the Spirit will not abandon them. But to say that is also to say that Pentecost means that Christ is here to stay and will not abandon believers. In John 14, Jesus tells his disciples that he is going to the Father (verse 12) and promises them that when he does he will ask the Father to send them the Spirit as Helper or Advocate (verses 16–17). And then he immediately adds, “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you” (verse 18; see also verse 23). This statement hardly refers either to his temporary resurrection appearances or to his return at the end of history, but to what will be true in the sending of the Spirit.

For the Spirit to come is for Jesus to come. So inseparable are the two in their activity that the presence of the Spirit is the presence of Christ. Paul expresses this reality—in what is in effect a one-sentence commentary on Pentecost—by saying that in his resurrection the glorified Christ, as the last Adam, has become the “life-giving Spirit” (1 Cor. 15:45). Hence, he subsequently writes, “the Lord [Christ] is the Spirit” (2 Cor. 3:17).

To summarize our reflections on the gift of the Spirit, when Peter, in preaching the gospel on the day of Pentecost, declared that those who repent “will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38), he was not promising, at least not in the first place, the gift of speaking in tongues they had just been witnessing or, for that matter, any other particular gift the Spirit gives. Rather he has in view much more than that: the Spirit himself as “the promise of the Father” (Acts 1:4; Luke 24:49). The gift is nothing less than the Giver himself. In fact, the great gift, in which every believer shares, is God himself—God our Father, in Christ, through the Holy Spirit. We are bound to maintain nothing less than this full, Trinitarian perspective on all matters that concern true spirituality. ◻

The author, an OP minister, recently retired from teaching at Westminster Theological Seminary. This article consists of slightly edited extracts from The Work of the Holy Spirit, available from the Committee on Christian Education on OPC.ORG under “Publications.” Unless otherwise indicated, Bible quotations come from the ESV.



DAVID W. KING

Are Charismatic Gifts for Today?

We speak of “charismatic gifts” because Paul, in 1 Corinthians 12, speaks of the *charismata* (the Greek plural of *charisma*, meaning “free and gracious gift”) given by the Holy Spirit. These are miraculous gifts, not possessed by any person apart from the Spirit’s giving them.

“Charismatic” Christians claim that they receive and use charismatic gifts. Other Christians believe that the Holy Spirit stopped giving miraculous gifts after the time of the apostles, and that modern-day “charismatics” are wrong. Obviously when Paul wrote to the Corinthians, the Spirit was giving these gifts. Is there any biblical reason to believe he stopped giving them and has not started doing so again?

Charismatic gifts passed from the life of the church after the age of the apostles. Down through the centuries, groups here and there have claimed power to prophesy and work miracles—all of them promoting false, unbiblical teachings of one sort or another. The modern Pentecostal movement began in the last century among Arminian perfectionists. Our Lord called the Holy Spirit “the Spirit of truth.” Would “the Spirit of truth” now restore miraculous gifts through those who teach false doctrines?

We may not, however, just point to the doctrinal errors of Pentecostals and charismatics. We need to grasp the historical nature of God’s unfolding plan of salvation and of the Bible that reveals it, in order to see the place of the true *charismata* and understand why they are no longer given to the church.

MIRACULOUS GIFTS IN THE HISTORY OF REDEMPTION

The Bible is historical. It records God’s mighty actions and words as he revealed himself more and more fully and carried forward his work of redemption—all of it preparing for and culminating in the fullness of his revelation and saving work in Jesus Christ.

The coming of Christ from heaven fulfilled the promises

and foreshadowings of all those centuries of preparation. He is the one to whom the Law and the Prophets were pointing. The Son has come in all his greatness, and he has spoken (Heb. 1:1–2). What could surpass that? All that we sinners need for our salvation we find in Christ (Col. 2:9–10).

The gift of the Holy Spirit (not gifts, but the one gift that consists of the Spirit), working and dwelling in saved people, is not something in addition to Christ. It’s not that God worked for centuries in the age of shadows, then the Son came as Jesus and did his atoning work, and now the Spirit occupies the center stage in God’s work. When Christ finished his work on earth and ascended into heaven to the right hand of his Father, he came to his church in the gift of his Spirit. From heaven, Christ poured out the Holy Spirit on his church (Acts 2:33). The Bible speaks of believers being “in Christ” and of Christ dwelling in us; this is by the Spirit. “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col. 1:27) is the Spirit dwelling in you (Rom. 8:9–10), uniting you to Christ, who is in heaven. The book of Acts is the record of what Jesus has *continued* to do and teach from heaven by the Holy Spirit (1:1).

The point is that no separation can be made between Christ and the Spirit in the life of Christians and the church. Sometimes we are told, “You believed in Jesus to be saved; now you need to receive the Spirit.” The impression is given (1) that, while being saved by believing in Jesus is necessary, the really great experiences of the Christian life come after you get the Spirit, and (2) that getting the Spirit is different from and comes later than receiving Christ in salvation.

[Continued on page 19]

Thankful for God's Grace

JEROME A. FARNIK

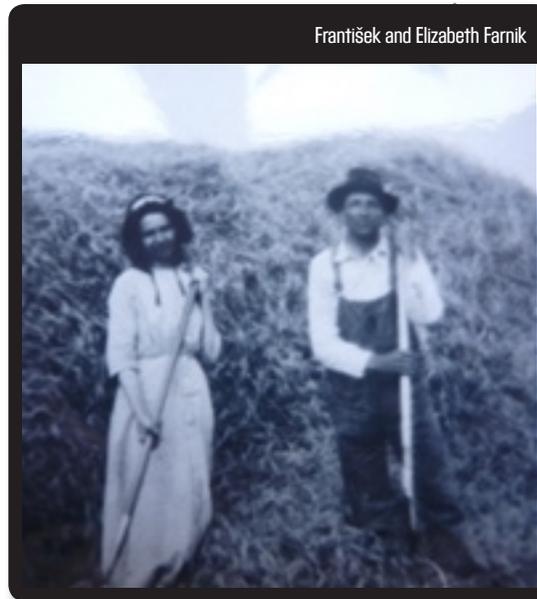
Recently a missionary colleague sat with us and mused about our years together in the Czech Republic. He and his wife will retire and return to the United States this spring. At one point, he looked at us and said, "I don't think you guys will ever retire. You may be buried here." I reflected for a moment, and then responded, "You could be right."

Marilyn and I have served in the Czech Republic for almost twenty-six years and still see a great need for missions in this country. People sometimes ask us, "How did you come to serve here?" Clearly, it was the grace and providence of God that made this possible.

In 1905, my grandfather, František Farnik, set out for the United States to begin a new chapter in his life. During a time of economic hardship, he left behind the rich, black soil and green forests of Moravia (a region of the present-day Czech Republic) for 320 acres of Montana prairie. What awaited him there? Uncertainty and hard work! Though he probably had no idea what he was getting himself into, this sixteen-year-old was nevertheless full of hope and ready for the challenge.

František landed in Galveston, Texas, and then made his way to Kansas. In 1915, he was granted a homestead in Montana, where he moved with his new bride, Elizabeth Horinek. During their first two years on the farm, the prairie yielded bumper wheat crops. In 1917, however, a severe drought began. Lack of rain was accompanied by prairie fires, wind, hail, grasshoppers, and dust. The possibility of making a livelihood on the prairie turned bleak.

In 1919, scores of homesteaders left Montana. Some became so desperate that



František and Elizabeth Farnik

they filled their wagons with what little wheat they had, rode into town to sell it, along with their horses and wagons, and hopped on trains, never to return.

František and Elizabeth, however, stayed. Repeated droughts made it necessary for them to work on and off the farm to stay afloat financially, but eventually they were able to turn their piece of prairie into a profitable enterprise.

My father, Joseph, decided to follow in his father's footsteps and became a farmer, too. My younger brother, Michael, still farms the land, but I chose to study music at the University of Colorado.

Early in my college career, I heard the gospel and put my faith in Christ as my Savior and Lord. With the help of a conservative Bible church and a student ministry, I was soon able to gain a firm foundation in my faith.

In 1977, I attended a Christian conference where the speaker challenged us to pick a country of the world and

consider what we could do to spread the gospel there. He suggested that we pray for the country, give toward missions, and/or serve there on a short- or long-term basis. I chose Communist Czechoslovakia.

First, I began to pray for the country daily. Then, in 1980, God opened up an opportunity to go to Czechoslovakia on the way home from a summer mission trip to Communist Poland. I visited my grandfather's village, but without Czech language skills, I could not communicate well with people there.

This first foray into Eastern Europe convinced me that I needed to return to Czechoslovakia as a missionary. Originally, Marilyn had planned to serve behind the Iron Curtain in Romania, but when we met and decided to marry, she was glad to go to Czechoslovakia, where repressive conditions severely limited people's access to the gospel.

Our first years in Czechoslovakia brought us in contact with Communism, Czech culture, and the Czech language. Czech is notorious for its difficult consonant clusters and complicated grammar. My father spoke only Czech when he entered kindergarten, but my grandparents stopped speaking it at home so their children would succeed in school. It would have helped to hear Czech growing up! Instead, both Marilyn and I had to learn it the hard way, through books and courses.

The Czech language has been a source of consternation to many missionaries and caused some to give up and go home.

At the height of my frustration with Czech, Marilyn was forging ahead of me in language acquisition. We both worked with cassette recorders, and one day I actually considered how I might break her recorder! Thankfully, I did not proceed with this plan. The Holy Spirit convicted me of sin, and I realized that Marilyn's language skills would be a help to our work. We were in this venture together! By God's grace, I did learn the language and am now able to preach in Czech. Our children grew up here and are also fluent in Czech. It is a joy to see them explain the gospel to their Czech friends and serve in our church.

Our mission strategy in the 1980s focused on college students, with an emphasis on evangelism and discipleship. Under Communism, many Czechs didn't care about their work and had lots of time to talk. This provided many opportunities for the gospel. We saw a number of Czechs embrace Christ as their Savior.

The 1990s ushered in the Velvet Revolution (a peaceful transition from Communism to democracy), and more doors opened for the gospel. During the first years, student ministries flourished and local churches grew significantly in number and size. One missionary gave a talk on the existence of God in a college

Jerry and Marilyn Farnik with children Havalind (left), Jared, and Autumn



dormitory in 1992, and one hundred students turned out. Three years later, he gave the same talk in the same dorm, but only two students attended.

Many Czechs, schooled under Communism, still cling to the atheistic views they were taught from an early age. Generally, they do not trust the church, often citing the religious wars that took place in the Czech lands centuries ago. Czechs tend to lump all churches and cults together. Many ask, "What good has the church ever done?" Today the Czech Republic is one of the most atheistic countries in Europe.

In the mid-1990s, God brought us in contact with some Reformed missionaries in Prague. As we worked alongside them, we were exposed to the doctrines of grace. Marilyn embraced them first.

Then, in the following years, with the help of Sid Anderson, George Scipione, Henry Krabbendam, and primarily Marilyn, I also came to understand the riches of the Reformed faith. On furloughs, Marilyn studied historical theology at Westminster Seminary California, and this brought us in contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. In 2003, I transferred my ordination credentials to the OPC and was called by Bayview OPC to be an evangelist to the Czech Republic.

Although we have been here for many years, I can honestly say that I am more excited about fulfilling the Great Commission than ever before. Our young church plant in Prague is growing by God's grace. Worship services take place each Sunday, and we are also involved in evangelistic outreach through English instruction, a children's Bible club, and small group studies for youth, women, and new believers. Elders must be raised up to care for this flock, but we are hoping in God for his blessing, perhaps like my grandfather hoped for rains to water his parched land.

In November, about fifty Czechs came to our house for a Thanksgiving Day/Velvet Revolution (November 17, 1989) celebration. I preached the gospel, and Marilyn fixed turkey with all the trimmings. We were especially encouraged to see more men than ever attend with their whole families. It was a day to express thanks to God for all his gifts and remember that it is only by God's grace that we continue to press on in our faith and service for Christ.

Jerry Farnik's church plant in Prague



Telenews

Call 215/830-9424, ext. *833, for the latest Foreign Missions news and prayer requests. New editions: **January 7, 21.**

Interns: The Pastor's Perspective

PATRICIA E. CLAWSON

Over the last decade, Immanuel OPC in Bellmawr, New Jersey, has sponsored ten pastoral internships—seven in the summer, with three of them later serving for a year. Today, six of their interns are ordained and five serve in the OPC, including one as a missionary.

Why is this church so dedicated to training men for the ministry? “(We) see the nurturing of men for the gospel ministry in the OPC as a significant ministry to which God has called us, and which, by his grace, we feel we are able to proffer,” said pastor Thomas Church. “Everybody wins, even in the case of one man whom we strongly advised not to pursue the ministry.”

Many OP pastors have mentored seminarians as summer interns or graduates as yearlong interns. Over the past decade, four interns have served Grace OPC in Vienna, Virginia—two as sum-

mer interns and two as yearlong interns. Pastor Daniel Clifford sees sponsoring internships as a way “to help with the work, to help train a man for the ministry, and to give a ministry opportunity to the congregation at the same time.”

Mount Rose Reformed OPC in Reno, Nevada, wasn't looking for an intern, but a man approached them seeking an internship around the time a sizable monetary gift was given to the church. The congregation decided to use some of the money for an intern because “having an intern would be a way to advance the church for future generations,” said pastor Andy Preston. “It was a way we as a congregation could give back to the church.”

THE PROCESS OF CHOOSING AN INTERN

Before deciding to have an intern, churches must consider their pastor's time commitments, their finances, and how to find a suitable candidate.

Clifford first considered if he had enough time for an intern. “Although an intern will save me some work, I have to figure that overall it will be a net increase in labor for me,” he said. He prepared a list of duties and discussions up front.

Clifford then ascertained how much an intern would cost and if they could afford one. Using online resources, he determined a reasonable wage for a married man with children living in their area. He considered the Committee on Christian Education's monthly support and his congregation's financial situation. Their financial package included housing and health insurance, which costs as much as the pastor's if the intern has a family, unless his wife has insurance with her work. Summer interns may be housed with families, but yearlong interns live on their own.

After the pastor, session, and trustees gave their support to having an intern, the proposal was presented at the annual congregational meeting. Clifford asked the congregation to welcome the intern into their homes and give feedback to him. Once they approved, Clifford interviewed candidates, selected a man, and coordinated his move.

Immanuel Church has the seminarian serve as a summer intern and then as a sessional assistant before they ask him to become a yearlong intern.

THE BENEFIT OF AN INTERN

Internships benefit the intern, the pastor, the session, the congregation, and the broader OPC.

Interns gain when pastors share their experiences, hopes and fears, and answer the question, “Why did you do that?”

Intern Steve Brown (left) with mentoring pastor Dan Clifford (Vienna, Va.)



said Clifford. Preston's intern preached regularly and interacted with people who had family and job issues. He learned that the ministry isn't glamorous and to meet people as they are, Preston reported.

Clifford explained that mentoring pastors benefit from the clarity gained by explaining their pastoral work to others, from assigned readings, and from seeing their congregation through another's eyes.

"The session gains a vision for the wider church," said Clifford, as they consider whether this man should be a pastor and how best to prepare him for his next post.

The congregation connects to the whole OPC as their former intern shows up in *New Horizons*, broadening their vision for raising up men for the ministry, said Clifford.

The whole OPC also benefits. "Almost any intern in any OP church would leave that internship better equipped for his next calling," said Clifford. "Internships hold great promise, and I would encourage almost any congregation to give it a try." Church agrees. "I thank the Lord for the internship program, and I count it as one of the most important and significant parts of the work of the CCE."

"I hope that the intern would be a faithful minister in the OPC for many years to come, and that God would use him to bring some to salvation and as an encouragement to those under his care," said Preston.

The deadline for churches and seminarians to apply for internships is February 29, 2012. Information and applications are available at OPC.org; click on Christian Education, then select Internships.

Congratulations

The Catechism for Young Children has been recited by:

- Maddie Nakhla (Calvary OPC in Glenside, Pa.)
- Elise Garcia (Immanuel OPC in Moon Township, Pa.)

Four Favorites

Books from a Pastor's Shelf

1. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Spiritual Depression*. Eerdmans, 1990.

Lloyd-Jones, a champion of the Reformed faith through the mid-1900s, was trained first as a physician, and was especially adept at diagnosing and treating spiritual maladies. This book helped me early on to see that preaching should serve also as a cure of souls for God's congregation, providing collective counseling to heal the hurts of many altogether, and should always offer Christ himself as the comprehensive medicine we all need.

2. Ichabod Spencer, *A Pastor's Sketches*, vols. 1 & 2. Solid Ground Christian Books, 2001.

Spencer, called in 1832 to Second Presbyterian Church in Brooklyn, New York, was a powerful preacher and evangelist. He also carefully recorded his pastoral visits in "sketches" numbering more than 20,000 in all, eighty of which are printed here. Most of these visits occurred during times of revival and have to do with "leading anxious inquirers after salvation to see what it is that hinders them from peace with God." To my surprise, he showed me repeatedly how much my evangelistic impulses were shaped by the pervasive Arminianism of our time.

3. Sinclair Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit (in the Contours of Christian Theology series)*. IVP, 1996.

What do you know of that blessed, divine person, the Holy Spirit, who is to be worshiped equally with the Father and the Son, and whose particular ministry is to unite you to Christ for salvation and to other believers for fellowship? One way to know Christ better (and to "belong" in his church) is to understand better the Holy Spirit, for he takes what belongs to Christ and declares and applies it to us. Ferguson offers solid meat in readable form.

4. *The Confession of Faith and Catechisms of the OPC*. The Committee on Christian Education of the OPC, 2008.

Does this surprise you as a favorite? After the Word of God, what could be more precious than a summary of biblical truth, pored over and approved by your church, helpfully organized into brief chapters or Q&A form, and fully supported with Scripture proofs written out on every page—now dazzlingly printed in OPC gray? Get one and fill your heart with the truth as it is in Jesus.

—Paul N. Browne

Out of the Mouth ...

Since God originally did not give animals to mankind for food (Gen. 1:29; 9:3), I asked my Sunday school class, "Why couldn't Eve just grill up a nice burger for Adam?"

Nine-year-old Breck immediately replied, "Because there was no propane!"

—Lisa Howard
Vista, Calif.

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

One of the Newest and One of the Oldest

The Congregational Church in Limington was founded on October 11, 1789, when six men covenanted together to present themselves and their families to the work of the Lord in Limington, Maine. They pledged to govern themselves by the Holy Scriptures with the help of the Holy Spirit, conform their lives to the rules of the gospel, and order their ministry according to the Cambridge Platform of Congregational Churches.

On September 30, 2011, the Congregational Church in Limington vowed together “in reliance upon God for strength . . . to walk together as a church of Jesus Christ according to the Word of God and the constitution of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.”

This was the culmination of a path that the congregation began to take in the 1960s. The congregation left a fellowship

that had become liberal and moved into a conservative fellowship of congregational churches.

The promise of continued good fruit in Limington, Maine



The Wu family in the interior of the Limington church building



Rev. Daniel Wray, who wrote two *Banner of Truth* titles, became the pastor in 1975. Under his ministry, the church was brought back to its Reformed roots. Among the changes was the election of ruling elders in 1978 to provide spiritual oversight to the congregation. The last ruling elder had passed away in 1832. Ken Blake, the current ruling elder, was converted under the ministry of Pastor Wray. The congregation describes Ken as a rock.

Since the 1970s, the congregation has remained committed to being a Reformed church. That commitment was tested a decade ago, when a pastor rejected the regulative principle of worship. Despite losses, the congregation remained faithful to its new, yet old, commitment to being Reformed.

Rev. Leonard Gulstrom is the current pastor. The first question the pastoral

search committee asked him was, "Are you Reformed?" Pastor Gulstrom is a graduate of Mid-America Reformed Seminary. Prior to coming to Limington in 2003, he was the pastor of Faith OPC in Anchorage, Alaska. Previous to that, he was the pastor of Immanuel Chapel in Upton, Massachusetts. That congregation came into the OPC under a pastor who followed Leonard.

The current building of the Congregational Church in Limington (the congregation has not yet changed its name) was erected in 1835. It was built on the same site as the original building. The bell tower was added later. The church bell was cast in 1849.

The process of finding a more conservative, Reformed denomination with which to associate began three ago, when the congregation asked the elders to review the church's affiliation. It was first determined that there was no suitable congregational church option. Then other Reformed denominations were explored. In January 2011, the congregation voted to unite with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. The Presbytery of New York and New England received the petition

Limington Congregational Church (OPC)



in April and established a commission to handle it.

The Congregational Church in Limington is a God-centered, biblical church, Reformed in its theology, and now Presbyterian in its polity. The preaching of the Word of God is central in its

worship.

Pastor Gulstrom asks you to pray that the current elder training class will result in additional elders for the church. Opportunities for outreach abound. Please pray that this new/old Orthodox Presbyterian church will continue to be a light in the dark, hard land in which the Lord established it 222 years ago.

GAINESVILLE MISSION WORK ORGANIZED

Redemption Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Gainesville, Florida, was organized as a new and separate congregation of the Presbytery of the South on November 6, 2011.

Joel Fick, who had been the organizing pastor of the mission work, was installed as pastor of the new congregation. Bill Montgomery was installed as a ruling elder. Steve Reeves, who came to faith in Christ through the ministry of Lake Sherwood OPC in Orlando, was ordained and installed as a ruling elder.

The first meeting that led to the planting of Redemption OPC was held on January 20, 2007. The first worship service was held on June 10, 2007. Organizing pastor Joel Fick took up the work of helping the group to develop into a congregation in January 2008.

The congregation of Redemption OPC in Gainesville, Fla.



Home Missions Today

For up-to-date Home Missions news and prayer updates, e-mail HomeMissionsToday@opc.org. New editions: **January 5, 19.**

Contributing to Build God's Temple

EVERETT A. HENES

Exodus 25–30 details for us God's instructions to Moses for building the tabernacle. As he begins, God tells Moses, "Speak to the people of Israel, that they take for me a contribution. From every man whose heart moves him you shall receive the contribution for me." Here God invites the people to contribute to the building of the very thing that will make possible his special presence with them.

The Hebrew word that God uses here for "contribution" indicates that the materials are to be given as an act of worship. It is voluntary giving, not mandatory. In other words, God is not taxing his people here. They are to respond out of gratitude for the covenant that he has made with them and the salvation he has worked for them. They are to respond, we see, as their hearts are moved.

When we turn to the fulfillment of this command, in Exodus 35–36, we find that the people bring so much, that Moses tells them to stop because they had all they needed. Human wisdom tells us that if we leave the giving up to each individual, then things may not get done. This is not the biblical view. We see, regarding the tabernacle, that the people truly desired to contribute to its building.

The tabernacle was where God dwelt with his people while they were in the wilderness, moving toward the Promised Land. Eventually, under King Solomon, the tabernacle was replaced by the temple. Due to the disobedience of the people, the temple would be destroyed, then rebuilt, and then destroyed again.

God's promise to be present with his people did not end with the tabernacle or the temple. Jesus came and said that

he was the one who was "greater than the temple" (Matt. 12:6). We learn from John's gospel that Jesus is the one who came and "dwelt [*literally*, tabernacled] among us" (1:14).

Moreover, God's people, who make up the church, are the living stones that make up the temple of God. This is what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 3:16: "Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?" In Ephesians 2:20–21, he says that Christians are "built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord."

Given the connection between the tabernacle/temple and the church as the special place of God's presence, we should not be surprised to find instructions in the New Testament on how to contribute to what God is now building.

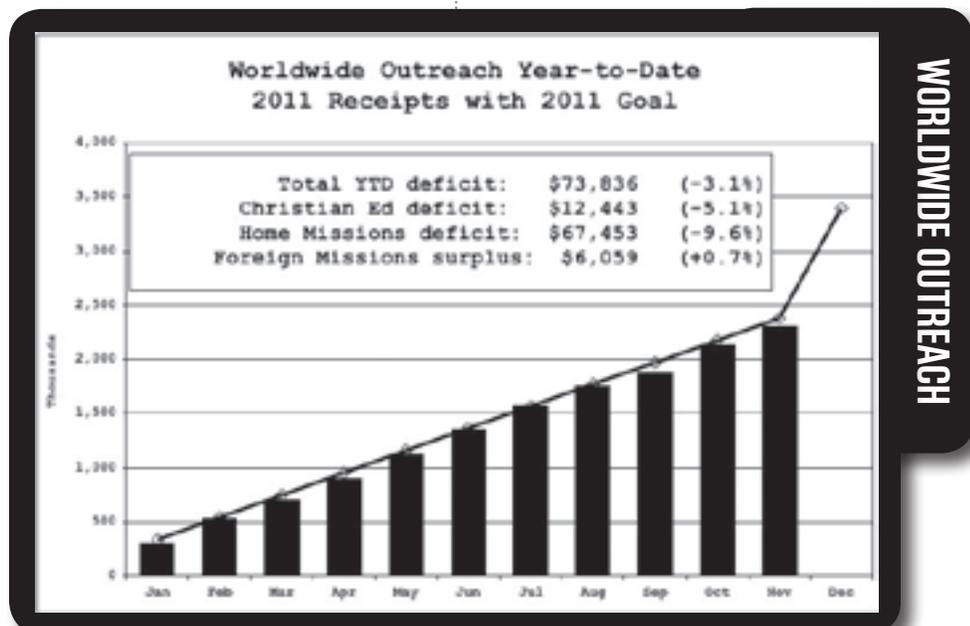
We do not have a tabernacle or

temple that we can see or where we can assemble, but we are all being built into a living temple. By his Spirit, God dwells within us, and so we can know that he will always be with us.

We learn from Exodus something important about the offerings that we give to the Lord. Paul similarly tells the Corinthians that "each one must give as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. 9:7).

Like Israel, we are called to give from what the Lord has given to us. And we too are called to give in order to build up God's tabernacle, his temple. But it is not a temple made with hands. As we give out of our resources, we give to support the proclamation of the gospel in our local churches and through the ministry of Worldwide Outreach around the world.

The author is pastor of Hillsdale OPC in Hillsdale, Mich.



January

1. Retired missionaries **Betty Andrews, Greet Rietkerk, Young and Mary Lou Son, and Fumi Uomoto**. Thank the Lord for the example of their service and pray that others will emulate it. / **Tim and Joanne Beauchamp**, Bridgton, Maine. Pray for the children's Sunday school at Pleasant Mountain Presbyterian Church. / **Linda Foh**, OPC.ORG website assistant.
2. **Kent and Laurie Harding**, Doniphan, Mo. Pray for God's blessing on Sovereign Grace Reformed Church's stewardship and leadership development. / **The Committee on Foreign Missions**. Pray for needed prayer support, workers, and financial support. / Pray for full enrollment at **the 2012 OPC Timothy Conference** in Escondido, Calif., in March.
3. **Ben and Melanie Westerveld**, Quebec, Canada. Pray for St-Marc Church's ministry to high school and university students. / **Christopher and Della Chelpka**, Tucson, Ariz. Pray for new visitors to come to Covenant OPC and for opportunities to reach the lost. / **Marvin Padgett**, president of Great Commission Publications' Board of Trustees.
4. **Joe and Jennifer Troutman**, Bedford, Tex. Pray that the Lord would bless the efforts of Mid Cities Presbyterian Church to minister to the youth. / **Al and Laurie Tricario**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray that the evangelistic materials distributed in local villages will touch many hearts. / Air Force chaplain **C. Phillip (and Melanie) Hollstein III**.
5. **Barry and Anne James**, Mbale, Uganda. Pray for Barry as he preaches in village churches. / Pray for Home Missions associate general secretary **Dick Gerber** as he prepares for the January 9–11 Church Planters Conference in Phoenix, Ariz. / **David (and Rebekah) Graves**, yearlong intern at Covenant Presbyterian Church in Vandalia, Ohio.
6. **Larry and Holly Wilson**, Airdrie, Alberta. Pray that the Lord would convert sinners *through* and add them to Redeemer OPC. / **James and Jenny Knox**, M.D. and R.N., Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for sick and malnourished children who come to the Clinic for care. / **Andrew (and Rebekah) Miller**, yearlong intern at Bethel Reformed Presbyterian Church in Fredericksburg, Va.
7. **David and Sunshine Okken**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray that severe weather won't interrupt the meetings held this week. / Pray for Home Missions administrative assistant **Vickie Swann**, in Phoenix, Ariz., preparing for the Church Planters Conference. / Army chaplain **Earl (and Susan) Vanderhoff**.
8. Pray for Home Missions general secretary **Ross Graham** as he prepares for the Church Planters Conference in Phoenix, Ariz. / Missionary associates **Erika Bulthuis, Leah Hopp, and Emily Phil**, Nakaale, Uganda. / Pray for short-term missions coordinator **David Nakhla**, who anticipates an increased amount of travel this month.
9. **Bob and Martha Wright**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for safety and good health for Bob as he oversees construction and well-drilling projects. / **Jim and Bonnie Hoekstra**, Cedarburg, Wis. Pray that many will be drawn to Mercy OPC through their redesigned website. / Army chaplain **Chris (and Virginia) Wisdom**.
10. **Brian and Sara Chang**, Cottonwood, Ariz. Pray that the Lord would bless Verde Valley Reformed Chapel with new growth. / Pray for missionary associate **Heather Baumgardner**, Nakaale, Uganda, as she assists with the Mission's agricultural projects. / **Pat Clawson**, Christian Education office secretary and MTIOPC coordinator.
11. **Woody and Laurie Lauer**, Numazu, Japan. Pray that the members of Kita Numazu Chapel will be a vital witness to their local community. / **Doug and Kristi Bylsma**,



Missionary Stephen Larson speaking to some of the men of the church in Santa Isabel, Rivera, Uruguay, following the Sunday morning worship service. Pray for further outreach into this community.

- Beamsville, Ontario. Pray that outreach events will draw others to Living Hope Presbyterian Church. / Pray for the work of the **Psalter-Hymnal Committee**.
12. **David and Angela King**, Elkton, Md. Pray that God would give spiritual and numerical increase to Christ Presbyterian Church. / **Cal and Edie Cummings**, Sendai, Japan. Praise God for continuing opportunities to share in the relief work. / **Jason (and Amanda) Kirklín**, yearlong intern at Grace Presbyterian Church in Columbus, Ohio. / Pray for affiliated missionary **Linda Karner**, Japan, as she visits her U.S. supporters.
 13. **Jeremiah and Elizabeth Montgomery**, State College, Pa. Pray for holiness and love in the Resurrection OPC congregation. / Pray for **Danny Olinger**, Christian Education general secretary, as he encourages churches and men to apply for pastoral interns and internships.
 14. **Terry and Karen Thole**, Fargo, N.Dak. Pray for visitors to Grace OPC. / Affiliated missionaries **Craig and Ree Coulbourne**, Urayasu, Japan. Pray for God's leading as new Bible studies and outreach events are planned. / Pray for **David Haney**, director of finance and planned giving for the Committee on Coordination.
 15. **Kaz and Katie Yaegashi**, Yamagata, Japan. / Pray for increased attendance at weekly Bible studies. / **Gene and Cynthia Crow**, Redding, Calif. Pray that the Lord would continue to bring visitors to Redding Reformed Fellowship who will remain. / Pray for **George Cottenden**, stated clerk of the General Assembly, as he works on reorganizing files and procedures for the clerk's office.
 16. **Bill and Sessie Welzien**, Key West, Fla. Pray for God's Spirit to direct and empower Keys Presbyterian Church's gospel witness. / Pray for Foreign Missions associate general secretary **Douglas Clawson**, who is in Haiti to assist with the training of church leaders on Lagonav.
 17. Pray for Foreign Missions general secretary **Mark Bube** in his administrative responsibilities. / **David and Rashel Robbins**, Huntington, W.Va. Pray with Trinity Presbyterian Church for new contacts and opportunities to share the gospel. / **Ryan (and Jennifer) Stoddard**, yearlong intern at Bethel Presbyterian Church in Wheaton, Ill.
 18. **Philip and Jenny Dharmawirya**, Philadelphia, Pa. Pray for Sunday school teachers at Emmanuel Chapel as they bring God's Word to the children and youth. / Foreign Missions administrative assistant **Linda Posthuma** and secretary **Janet Birkmann**. / **Jan Giandomenico**, office manager and assistant to the director of finance.
 19. **Ethiopian Reformed Presbyterian Church**. Pray for church leaders as they seek to shepherd their congregations faithfully. / **Matthew and Jessica Figura**, Cookeville, Tenn. Pray for unity and growth within Faith Presbyterian Church. / **Alan (and Carrie) Dueck**, yearlong intern at Church of the Covenant in Hackettstown, N.J.
 20. **Todd and Cheryl Bordow**, Rio Rancho, N.Mex. Pray that God would bring new visitors to the OPC of Rio Rancho. / Affiliated missionaries **Jerry and Marilyn Farnik**, Czech Republic, are thankful to the Lord for providing contacts and opportunities to share the gospel. / **Joshua (and Jessica) Lyon**, yearlong intern at Branch of Hope OPC in Torrance, Calif.
 21. **Steve and Linda Larson**, Uruguay. Pray for wisdom for local pastors as they deal with the needs of their flocks. / **Larry and Kalynn Oldaker**, Mayfield Village, Ohio. Pray that Lake OPC will draw in new families and progress toward organization. / **Jim Scott**, managing editor of *New Horizons*.
 22. **Drew and Sonya Adcock**, Williamsport, Pa. Thank God for the new committees and the enthusiasm of members and visitors at Omega OPC. / **Mark and Jeni Richline**, Uruguay. Pray for them and their children as they concentrate on studying Spanish. / **Jonathan (and Lauryn) Shishko**, yearlong intern at Reformation OPC in Queens, N.Y.
 23. **Mr. and Mrs. F.**, Asia. Pray for the diaconal ministry to refugees carried out through a local church. / **Douglas L. and Sue Watson**, Honolulu, Hawaii. Pray that regular attenders at Redeemer OPC will seek membership. / **Cris (and Margaret) Simpson**, yearlong intern at Trinity OPC in Hatboro, Pa.
 24. **William and Deddeh Joe**, Philadelphia, Pa. Pray for Grace OPC as they seek to bring people under the ministry of the Word of God. / **The M. family** in Asia. Pray for continued good health for their children during the bitterly cold winter months. / Army chaplain **Paul (and Mary) Berghaus**.
 25. Missionary associates in Asia. Pray for the witness of the outreach program during winter school break this month. / **Ken and Cressid Golden**, Moline, Ill. Pray that the Lord would add new core families to Sovereign Grace OPC.
 26. **Chuck and Kristie Muether**, Pella, Iowa. Pray for God to bless Hope Reformed Presbyterian Church as they give a reason for their hope and unity. / Pray for the labors of our missionary associates in Asia.
 27. Missionary associates in Asia. Pray that students attending outreach classes will come to know Christ as Lord. / **John and Wenny Ro**, Chicago, Ill. Pray that Gospel Life Presbyterian Church will grow strong and flourish as they reach out to friends and neighbors. / **Kathy Bube**, Loan Fund administrator.
 28. Pray for **Vern and Olena Picknally**, Fremont, Mich. Pray for the ministry of Fremont OPC and blessing on a devotional column in the local paper. / **Heero and Anya Hacquebord**, L'viv, Ukraine. Pray for wisdom as decisions are made toward establishing an organized church.
 29. **Church in the Horn of Africa**. Pray for the safety of believers there. / **Mark and Michele Winder**, Collierville, Tenn. Pray that Wolf River Presbyterian Church will have a distinct Reformed identity in a community filled with church groups.
 30. **John and Lois Hilbelink**, Rockford, Ill. Pray that fellowship events will encourage the members and visitors of Providence OPC. / **Brian and Dorothy Wingard**, South Africa. Pray for students and staff at Mukhanyo Theological College as the new school year begins.
 31. **Ben and Heather Hopp**, Haiti (on furlough). Pray for balance in scheduling travel and time for rest. / **Stephen and Catalina Payson**, Mifflinburg, Pa. Pray that Providence OPC's outreach efforts will reach the surrounding community. / **Austin (and Rebecca) Britton**, yearlong intern at Grace OPC in Mount Vernon, Wash.

CHARISMATIC GIFTS

[Continued from page 9]

People who believe this speak of the baptism of the Spirit as a “second blessing,” which moves Christians from being “just” saved to really knowing and living in the power of God. But Paul refutes this when he says, “By one Spirit we were all baptized into one body” (1 Cor. 12:13). There is no special group of Christians who have been baptized by the Spirit, while others are weak and ordinary. Everyone who is truly a Christian has been baptized by the Spirit and is indwelt, led, and empowered by the Spirit (Rom. 8:5, 9–14).

CHRIST AND HIS APOSTLES

Just as the Father certified the authority of Jesus, his Son, by the miracles that he did in the power of the Spirit, so Christ certified the apostles as his personal representatives by the miracles that the Spirit enabled them to do in Christ’s name (Heb. 2:4). Jesus had promised them a special ministry of the Spirit. And after Pentecost the preaching of the apostles was accompanied by miracle working, showing that in and through them Jesus was continuing his work.

In Acts, we find others than apostles doing miracles. But the pattern is that these others received this power of the Spirit through the laying on of the hands of apostles (Acts 8:13–18; 19:1–7). The church in Corinth received an abundance of these gifts of the Spirit. Later, when false teachers came to Corinth and attacked Paul to discredit his teaching, Paul defended himself. Part of his defense was to point to the spiritual gifts abounding in the Corinthian church: “I have become foolish; you yourselves compelled me. Actually I should have been commended by you, for in no respect was I inferior to the most eminent apostles, even though I am a nobody. The *signs of a true apostle* were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles” (2 Cor. 12:11–12).

So bound up with the apostles are the miraculous gifts of the Spirit that Paul speaks of them as “the signs of a true apostle.” Their presence in the church in Corinth was God’s attestation that a true spokesman for Jesus Christ had preached to them and laid hands upon them.

The role of the apostles was historically unique; they laid the church’s foundation (Eph. 2:20). The Great Commission was first given to them, and they made a good start! Yet they did not finish the task, and the church still carries it on. With the completion of the Bible and the passing away of the apostles, the foundational era of the church ended, and with it the need for the signs of true apostles. The apostles did not add their words to the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. The apostles’ words *were* the revelation of God in Christ. We know Christ only through the Gospels, the Epistles, Acts, and

Revelation. There is no additional revelation from God to add to his revelation in his Son.

SALVATION AND SANCTIFICATION BY THE ORDINARY MEANS OF GRACE

The Holy Spirit still works! The risen Christ still works! Christ, by the Spirit, uses his Word to convert and save lost sinners. The miraculous gifts attested the authority of the apostles to speak for Christ, but they are not signs of regeneration and saving faith. God the Spirit does not need miracles to convince people of the truth of the gospel and bring them to saving faith. After Thomas had seen and touched the wounds of our risen Savior and confessed, “My Lord and my God!” Jesus replied, “Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed” (John 20:28–29). His verbs are in the past tense, but he is speaking of us. The Spirit, by the Word, brings dead sinners to life and faith—the greatest of miracles.

The demonstration of the Spirit that we must seek and pray for consists not of the miracle-working *charismata*, but of the regenerating and sanctifying work of the Spirit. Repentance for sin and faith in Christ are the saving gifts of God by the Spirit. Changed lives, no longer lived under the rule of sin in rebellion against God, but now lived in the power of the Spirit in obedience to the Lord, demonstrate the saving and sanctifying presence and work of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:5–14). Heed the warning of our Lord in Matthew 7:21–23, and seek the sanctifying “fruit of the Spirit” (Gal. 5:22–23).

The *charisma* of prophecy may no longer be given. But Christ, by the Spirit, enables men to understand and teach his Word, and he uses their preaching to convert unbelievers and build and sanctify his church. The *charisma* of healing may no longer be given, but God still hears prayer and often answers in powerful ways that we call “miracles.” God uses the “ordinary” means of grace, the Word and prayer, to do his amazing works.

The mania for the miraculous that one finds among charismatics has the effect of making God’s promised means of grace look dull and uninteresting to many. There is a great danger in this. If we despise what God does use in preference for dramatic “ministries” carried on and hyped up by the will and energy of man, we will get man-made “blessings” instead of God’s real work. Paul warns that when the man of lawlessness is revealed, his coming will be “in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved” (2 Thess. 2:9–10). □

The author is pastor of Christ Presbyterian Church in Janesville, Wis. He quotes the NASB.

Trusting God in Illness



To: JuneMcrea@ustel.com

From: pam.garrish4@eglobus.com

Hi June,

You don't know me, but, according to your sister Rose, you've been praying for me for several weeks. I have lots of questions about breast cancer. Rose suggested I e-mail you directly.

So, you're OK now? Really? It seems as if a lot of people know someone who has survived breast cancer. I had my mastectomy last week. I also had the beginning of breast reconstruction—a breast implant. Who would have pictured someone as “down home” as me with an implant? That's for self-absorbed actresses, not moms. But I'm told that the implant will help give me a sense of normalcy, even if it clearly isn't normal.

The surgeon says that one of the lymph nodes in my armpit shows some cancer, so I'm scheduled for chemo to wipe the cancer out. How bad is chemo?

Thanks for your help.

Pam

To: pam.garrish4@eglobus.com

From: JuneMcrea@ustel.com

Dear Pam,

I'm so glad you wrote. I did have lymph node involvement too, so I had chemo. I actually worked through it, in part because my desk was near the women's room! Believe me, I was never so tired in my life. I didn't get a wig, so I wore hats—and they're hot. My advice: get a wig for when you're in public! I also had breast reconstruction and an implant. I felt “Hollywood-ish,” but it's amazing how even a fake thing brings comfort!

All these treatments take time and effort, so make sure you accept help from folks who are willing to drive you, watch

your kids, or make meals. You may think you can drive yourself, but it's a blessing to let others help—as much for their sake as for yours. You would want to help if a friend had to go through what you're going through. Hopefully, you will soon be able to help others.

How are your kids and husband handling this trial?

June

To: JuneMcrea@ustel.com

From: pam.garrish4@eglobus.com

Hi June,

Our church has been very supportive, supplying drivers for the kids and me, bringing meals, and helping with the laundry, grocery shopping, and even housecleaning. Amazing! It has been a real-life example of Romans 12:15, “Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.”

I know this is all God's plan, but I worry that my daughter will get breast cancer too. My son seems mad at God for giving me cancer. When he sees me get sick, he hides in his room. Howie took time off from work to drive me to some doctor's appointments. I worry he'll lose his job, and we'll have no health insurance. I worry that my boss will get fed up with me for being lackluster at work, even though I try hard. I worry that folks in church will get tired of helping. I know God is sovereign and knows what's best, but I sure don't understand it. Do you?

I can trust God that this cancer is his will and that he will be with me throughout the trial, but I have difficulty thinking how my children will be without their mom, if that's God's plan. What if they need me and I'm not there? I know I have to trust God, but that's so hard.

Pam

To: pam.garrish4@eglobus.com

From: JuneMcrea@ustel.com

Dear Pam,

No, I don't understand God's ways, but I'm learning to trust him in all circumstances.

It's so easy to focus on ourselves as we go through the trials of cancer. We live with the pain, emotions, and worries every day. Yet you are looking out for the concerns of your family, which is a blessing. Your husband and kids are going through trials of their own because of your suffering. God knows how your cancer will affect them too. When people pray for you, ask them to pray for your family as well.

You're kidding yourself, however, if you think that by staying here you can keep bad things from happening to your family. We so much want to control what happens to our kids, but it is God who is in control. The apostle Peter knew what it was like to give his “children” over to the care of others. In 2 Peter 1:14, he writes that his time on earth is ending. He warns believers about false prophets and scoffers who will try to draw them away from Christ. But he writes in 2:9 that “the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials.” It's not Peter who rescues his children—the church—in their trials; it's God himself. The same is true for your children.

You don't know what God's will is for you, but you do know God, and he loves you and your family. Give all your worries to him—over and over again. God may use this suffering to give you and your family the strength to persevere in other trials. What a blessing that would be!

I'll keep praying.

June

UPDATE

Churches

- **Redemption OPC** in Gainesville, Fla., was received as an organized congregation by the Presbytery of the South on November 6.
- **Trinity OPC** in Bridgewater, S.D., was dissolved by the Presbytery of the Dakotas at its September 27–28 meeting.

Ministers

- On November 19, the Presbytery of Philadelphia erased the name of **John F. Bettler** from its roll, since he had renounced the jurisdiction of the OPC by declaring himself independent.
- Organizing pastor **Joel D. Fick** was installed as pastor of Redemption OPC in Gainesville, Fla., on November 6.
- On November 11, **Joseph H.**

(“Joby”) **Fowler, Jr.**, was ordained as a minister and installed as associate pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in Charlotte, N.C., to serve as organizing pastor of Reformation OPC in Gastonia, N.C., a mission work of the Presbytery of the Southeast.

- **John A. Sharpe** was ordained as a minister and installed as associate pastor of Calvary OPC in Tallahassee, Fla., on November 11, 2011.

Milestones

- **Robert L. Ayers**, 78, an elder at Caney OPC in Caney, Kans., and a longtime member of the Committee on Home Missions, suffered a massive heart attack and died on November 24.
- **John J. Gregg, Jr.**, 92, who was a maintenance man at Westminster Theological Seminary for many years, died on October 31.

OHIO WOMEN'S RETREAT

Christine Wilson

Almost one hundred ladies and their friends gathered at Camp Akita in Ohio for the 2011 Presbytery of Ohio Women's Retreat on September 23 and 24. Susan Hunt taught the biblical principles of a Titus 2 ministry in her presentation of “Generation to Generation: The Legacy of Biblical Womanhood.”

Here is one thing she said: “Note that

as Mary Magdalene and Mary (the mother of James) and Salome were walking to the tomb to anoint the crucified Christ, they knew that there was a stone in front of the tomb—and they also knew that they couldn't move it! But they continued on to the tomb anyway. They did as much as they could do and depended upon the Lord for the rest.”

What a blessing it was to fellowship with each other and with Susan! Next year's retreat will be September 21–22 at Salt Fork State Park in Ohio.

Participants at the 2011 Ohio Women's Retreat



LETTERS

MILITANT REFORMED ORTHODOXY

Editor:

In his fine biography, *Cornelius Van Til*, John Muether notes that during Van Til's later life he felt that the militant antithesis of Reformed orthodoxy was in “steady decline” at Westminster Seminary and within the OPC (p. 224). Has the day arrived that Van Til's opinion has reached an apex in view of the publication of Michael S. Horton's article, “Loving Our Neighbors Together: Reformed-Catholic Cooperation?” in the October issue of *New Horizons*? Instead of Van Til's militantly antithetical stance against Roman Catholic thought, as well as his consistent starting point of the self-attesting Christ of Scripture applied to all areas of life, we find a compromising position that gives way to a nature-grace dualism that Van Til opposed. In fact, Horton's agenda concerning two kingdoms, natural law, and common grace, which definitely undergirds his article, has more affinity to Aquinas's nature-grace scheme than to Van Til's organic understanding of natural and special revelation being applied to the civil realm.

In spite of Horton's capitulation to Catholic thought on this point, Van Til would not find it legitimate to construct a distinct sociocultural realm in which the moral law—in relationship to natural law—is to be employed for social justice outside the integrative necessity of the gospel of Jesus Christ as stated in the Reformed standards. No matter what we conclude about our interaction with Roman Catholics or non-Christians in the cultural realm, our epistemological self-consciousness of truly biblical, supernatural religion must be thoroughly present at every point of the discussion of that interface. In other words, the antithesis must run thoroughly through our entire engagement without being suspended for some abstract application of common grace concepts and ideals within the construct of two kingdoms and natural law.

Furthermore, Van Til would be enlightened to learn, *especially in light of his penetrating understanding of the noetic effects of the fall*, that “Immanuel Kant retained an infallible certainty of ‘the moral law within’ after rejecting supernatural religion.” After rejecting supernatural biblical orthodoxy, Kant “retained an *infallible* certainty of the moral law” (emphasis mine)? Any true Van Tilian should be deeply disturbed by such a statement, even within Horton’s context that Kant is an example that Christians can work towards a common cause of social justice for the common good “with adherents of other religions and even agnostics and atheists.” Disappointingly, Horton’s paradigm presents a positive dualism of Kant and Christ, whereas, for Van Til, it was always “Kant or Christ” (article in *The Calvin Forum*, 1942). Ironically, Horton’s article upholds the warning Van Til issued in his 1942 article: “To go back from Kant to St. Thomas and back from St. Thomas to Aristotle offers no help” to find harmony between philosophy (moral) and theology which is based on revelation.

In our seventy-fifth year as a denomination, *New Horizons* has given front-cover support to an article that undermines Van Til’s apologetic method and his analysis of Roman Catholic thought. In this light, one is forced to ask whether *New Horizons* has now come to the point that it gives only lip service to “the school of Van Tilian presuppositionalism as the most biblically faithful expression of Reformed apologetics” (*The Book of Church Order of the OPC*, 174). Why is it so hard for succeeding generations to remain faithful to the biblical principles of their fathers in the faith? Does our generation even care as it attempts to establish its own name upon the pages of the church’s history?

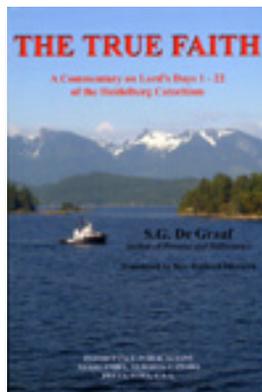
William D. Dennison
Lookout Mountain, Ga.

Correction

On page 3 of the December issue, it should be indicated that the Committee on Foreign Missions was founded in 1937, not 1938.

REVIEWS

The True Faith: A Commentary on Lord’s Days 1–22 of the Heidelberg Catechism, by S. G. De Graaf. Published by Inheritance Publications (www.telusplanet.net/public/inhpubl/webip/ip.htm), 2011. Paperback, 495 pages, list price \$19.95. Reviewed by Pastor Thomas A. Martin.



“True faith,” declares the Heidelberg Catechism, “is a sure knowledge whereby I accept as true all that God has revealed to us in His

Word” (Lord’s Day 7, Q&A 21). Here we see the warmly personal tone of the Heidelberg Catechism. Simon G. De Graaf (known to many for his *Promise and Deliverance*) captures this personal tone in his exposition of Lord’s Days 1–22 (Q&A 1–58), but does so without lapsing into individualism. Indeed, he explains that the “I” of the Catechism is “as a member of the church, and expresses a communal faith” (p. 16). De Graaf is careful to locate the confessing individual in the context of the church, noting eventually that “every believer shares in the blessing that in Christ is bestowed on the whole church. This confession represents the genuine triumph over individualism” (p. 447).

Here is not primarily a work of systematic theology (although there is system), but pastoral theology—reflecting a pastor’s heart. The rich ecclesiology underlying De Graaf’s treatment of doctrine frequently emerges, as in the way he deals with Christ’s offices, which he relates to the special offices in the church as well as to the general office of believer, making the ob-

ervation that “it is so amazing that in Reformed circles, where we normally speak of Christ’s office, it seems so difficult to realize and accept our own call to office” (p. 260). Indeed, De Graaf repeatedly draws us back to Christ: “Faith first of all reaches out to Christ . . . and always must be directed in the first place to Christ” (p. 448; the implications of this for preaching are then noted). We are often reminded that doctrine leads to worship (but with the caution on page 428 that “adoration does not increase when we would wish to know everything that is in God”). With these emphases, it is not surprising to find that De Graaf’s writing often borders on the devotional, as in the section on “My God and My Father” (pp. 197–201).

Although pastorally and devotionally flavored, this is not light reading. De Graaf doesn’t hesitate to take up topics like supra- and infralapsarianism (more than once!) and offers much closely reasoned doctrinal exposition. This is a book to be digested slowly and is therefore probably not an ideal entry-level introduction to the Heidelberg Catechism. The original Dutch is well translated, but the language retains the gravitas of an earlier day. The book itself is well produced and bound, but readers (and note takers) will wish for more white space and wider margins. *The True Faith* will be particularly valued by those seeking pastoral application of Reformed doctrine (including Christian counselors) and by reflective readers who will savor its rich devotional statement of theology.

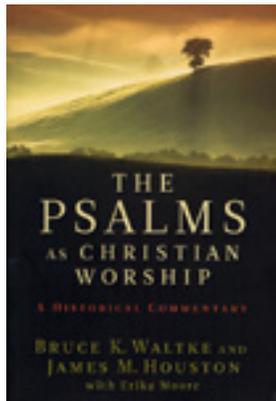
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The Psalms as Christian Worship: A Historical Commentary, by Bruce K. Waltke and James M. Houston with

But What about Speaking in Tongues?

For the answer, visit the OPC website:
opc.org/qa.html?question_id=141

Erika Moore. Published by Eerdmans, 2010. Paperback, 640 pages, list price \$28.00. Reviewed by Prof. Bryan Estelle.



Bruce Waltke and James Houston, with Erika Moore, have produced a treasure trove of a book that edifies the church and

deepens the church's worship.

Waltke (a biblical exegete) and Houston (a professor of history and spiritual theology) team up to write the bulk of the commentary, which concentrates on the history of interpretation and detailed exegesis of selected psalms (Pss. 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 15, 16, 19, 22, 23, 51, 110, and 139). Moore (who teaches Old Testament at Trinity School for Ministry) writes a chapter on the Psalter's history during the Second Temple period. This is a serious tome that both captures the history of exegesis (the believing response of the church to these psalms) and engages the Hebrew text and the ancient sources interacting with these psalms.

The authors are rightly concerned that so much modern exegesis, with its critical assumptions and methodology, has produced bland readings that have "despiritualized" the Psalter, depriving it of its real glory, beauty, and significance. The authors seek to rectify this trend by employing an interdisciplinary response that they call "accredited exegesis" (explained in chapter 3) and by explaining the believing response of the church through the centuries. Their canonical-messianic approach respects responsible typology (over against allegory) and the normativity of the New Testament, ultimately finding the exaltation of Christ as the final object of the many voices in the Psalter.

Naturally, it is not surprising that one would disagree with some things in

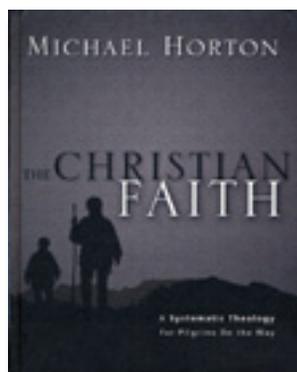
a book of this length. For example, this reviewer thinks that the treatment of the imprecatory psalms is in error. There is also some redundancy between the introduction of each psalm and the exegetical sections that follow. But these and a few other points do not take away from the overwhelmingly positive praise that this work deserves.

This new book comes in a timely manner for our own denomination, since the General Assembly has instructed the Committee on Christian Education to produce a Psalter-hymnal that will encourage the church to make greater use of the Psalter in worship. The singing of Psalms has fallen out of favor in many Reformed churches in recent decades. To read about the pride of place that the Psalter had in individual and corporate worship in centuries past can only lead the reader to conclude that the present sad state of affairs must be rectified in the generations to come.

Any pastor who intends to preach and teach from the Psalter will find in the pages of this book almost everything necessary to set a sumptuous banquet of edifying sermons on the psalms listed above. Reformed churches may be greatly strengthened by the proper use of this book, and we owe a great deal of gratitude to the authors and the publishers of it for working so hard on a significant piece of edifying scholarship.

* * *

***The Christian Faith*, by Michael Horton. Published by Zondervan, 2011. Hardback, 1056 pages, list price \$49.99. Reviewed by Pastor David Booth.**



The Christian Faith begins with a careful discussion of models and methods for

doing theology. Horton's own model, "Meeting a Stranger," closely integrates a redemptive-historical reading of Scripture into the task of doing theology. Those who lack formal training in modern theology and philosophy may find some of the details of these chapters challenging. Yet those who press on to grasp the main lines of Horton's argument will be richly rewarded.

A second distinctive of *The Christian Faith* is its attempt "to focus on specific topics in contemporary theology" (p. 29). This results in a greater portion of some chapters being given over to an irenic interaction with heterodox or heretical thinkers. This enables students to more fully grasp the relationships between Reformed Theology and other religious schemes. However, each of the twenty-six chapters must be read in its entirety, lest the reader unwittingly reduce the gap between Horton's orthodoxy and the errors of his heterodox interlocutors to a matter of mere opinion.

A third distinctive of *The Christian Faith* is its effort "to reflect on the potential of *covenant* not as a central dogma but as a framework that belongs to the integral structure of the Bible itself" (pp. 29–30). Of particular importance is the assertion that "the triune God created us to share *in his drama*, not in his essence" (p. 44). Horton's own covenant theology is indebted to Meredith Kline in ways that will please some, but not others. For example, many Orthodox Presbyterians will be troubled by Horton's treatment of "The Law and the Christian Life" (pp. 677–80), which falls far short of the extensive and positive treatment of the Law as a guide for Christian living (the "third use") found in our Larger Catechism.

The Christian Faith is more of a conversation between theologians (Horton teaches theology and apologetics at Westminster Seminary California) than an explanation and application of the faith. Horton's analysis is sometimes fresh, and occasionally even brilliant, yet he follows the well-worn paths of traditional Western theology, rather than facing the contemporary challenges to Christ's church.

New Horizons Now Online

Beginning in January, the current issue of *New Horizons* will be available at OPC.ORG in full color. The plan is to make the magazine available in PDF and other formats for downloading onto your computer, tablet, or other device.

Thus, Plato receives more attention than Pentecostalism. There is extensive interaction with Karl Barth, but not with Islam. And although the widespread biblical teaching on syncretism cries out to be applied to Western consumerism, that cry is left unanswered.

Nevertheless, Horton's *The Christian Faith* is an excellent resource for those preparing to interact with the thinking of liberal and postmodern theologians. For biblically Reformed Christians working in theology or related disciplines, this volume should be required reading. On the other hand, many *New Horizons* readers will find the extensive interactions with heterodox or heretical theologies to be unfruitful. Such readers may find older works, such as those by Calvin, Hodge, and Shedd, to be both more accessible and more helpful.

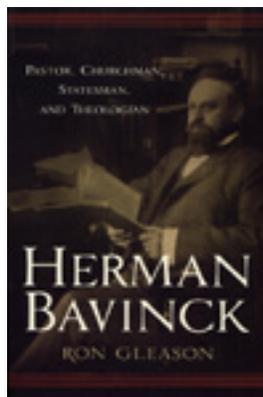
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***Herman Bavinck: Pastor, Churchman, Statesman, and Theologian*, by Ron Gleason. Published by P&R, 2010. Paperback, 511 pages, list price \$29.99. Reviewed by Prof. J.V. Fesko.**

Herman Bavinck is one of the more

important and best-known Reformed theologians of the twentieth century. The recent translation of his four-volume *Reformed Dogmatics*, plus other works, has given

English-speaking students access to one of



Reformed theology's greatest minds. But one of the crucial elements in understanding a person's thought is being familiar with his life. What

and who shaped the man? With great joy we now have a very readable biography of Bavinck, so we can understand the man behind the *Reformed Dogmatics*.

Ron Gleason has written an excellent biography of Bavinck, based largely upon three twentieth-century biographies written in Dutch. Some of the fascinating details of Bavinck's life include the choices he made for his theological education. He studied at the University of Leiden, where he could learn liberal theology firsthand (p. 44). This helps to explain why Bavinck was so effective in refuting theological liberalism. Another interest-

ing element that surfaces is Bavinck's relationship with Abraham Kuyper. Kuyper regularly appears in times of camaraderie and in times of conflict, such as the debate over baptismal regeneration, in which Bavinck opposed Kuyper (pp. 190–91). Readers will find many tantalizing details about Bavinck's life that Gleason has ably communicated.

I have a quibble with the lack of pictures in the book. Most biographies include pictures of family, of the subject, homes, offices, and the like. Readers can compare this work with the recent biography of Charles Hodge published by Oxford University Press, which includes not only a number of pictures, but also thumbnail sketches of the major figures mentioned in the book. Adding this type of artwork would have greatly enhanced the presentation of excellent content.

The major complaint I have is not with the author, but with the publisher. This major biography of Bavinck deserves a hardback with a sewn binding. Moreover, the paper has the feel of what one might find in pulp fiction. It does not have the feel (and hence the durability) of acid-free, archive-quality paper. Publishers send a message by the quality of the paper and the binding about the lasting importance of a book. This paperback edition will not last very long with heavy use. Granted, formatting decisions are often based upon financial constraints. However, this fine biography deserves a quality binding, one that will ensure that this book will be available to readers for generations to come.