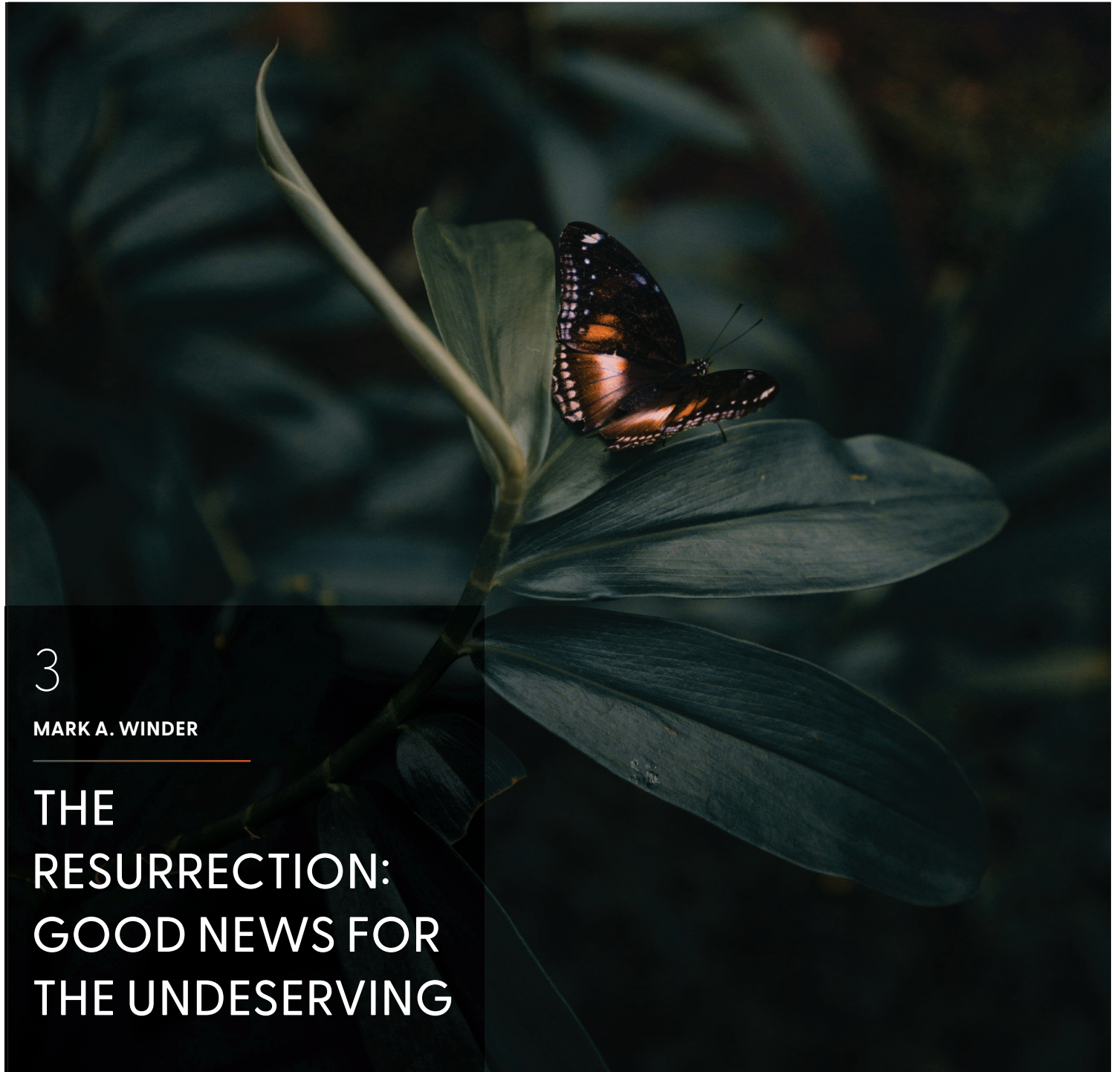


NEW HORIZONS

APRIL 2024

IN THE ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



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Subscriptions: Free to members and
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annually; \$30.00 for addresses in Canada;
\$40.00 elsewhere abroad. A free email PDF
subscription is available. Contact: 215-830-
0900; or 607 Easton Road, Bldg. E, Willow
Grove, PA 19090; or ccesecretary@opc.org.

Periodicals postage is paid at Willow
Grove, PA, and at additional mailing offices.

Postmaster: Send address changes to *New
Horizons in the Orthodox Presbyterian
Church*, 607 Easton Road, Bldg. E, Willow
Grove, PA 19090-2539.

Views expressed by our writers are not
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THE RESURRECTION: GOOD NEWS FOR THE UNDESERVING



MARK A. WINDER

The first recipients of the news of the empty tomb provide a vivid demonstration of how the Holy Spirit transforms sinners through the power of the resurrected Christ. In Mark 16:6–7, the angel announces, “He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee.”

We might think this news would first be delivered to those who condemned him or the crowds that had shouted “crucify him!” Christ would have been vindicated! But this is not Christ’s concern, for he is vindicated by his Father (Eph. 1:20–21). He delivers the message first to his church, even to those who seem like unlikely prospects: Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome (Mark 16:1).

We may be surprised that all four Gospels mention Mary Magdalene as present because by all accounts she should not be here. We meet her back in Luke 8 where we learn that she had been delivered from the power of seven demons. By our accounting, she deserves judgment, not

good news. But she had met Jesus. He had cleansed her and had looked upon her with compassion. She had turned from sin and followed Christ, and now she is here with her friends at the empty tomb.

But perhaps most surprising is the particular recipient of this news: “tell his disciples *and Peter*.” Why Peter? The Gospels record that all Christ’s disciples “left him and fled” (Matt. 26:56), but Peter did more than that. Peter had violently denied even *knowing* Christ (v. 74). At just the time that the Savior was going to the cross for his church, Peter was abandoning both his Savior and his church. If Christ were like you or me, he might have said, “*except Peter*,” not “*and Peter*.” But it is Peter’s sin that makes this news so vital. There is no possibility of repentance, restoration, or rest if there is no resurrection. Peter desperately needs to know that the Savior he denied is alive and has conquered death just as he said. And because his Savior lives, there is living hope for Peter.

PETER WITNESSING TO CHRIST’S RESURRECTION

Mark and Luke mention Peter again after he denies Jesus, both relating to the empty tomb. Luke records that the disciples initially believe the news to be idle gossip. Peter knows that only a Savior who can overcome death can overcome his sin. So while the disciples debate, Peter runs. Arriving at the tomb, he finds it empty and returns home “marveling at what had happened” (Luke 24:11–12). Peter was amazed, having yet to grasp the significance of the empty tomb. In time, however, Peter not only grasps the significance of the resurrection, it becomes the cornerstone of his ministry.

Luke begins Acts with a prophecy of the coming Spirit and Christ’s mandate to be witnesses (Acts 1:8). Witnesses to what? Peter answers that whoever is chosen to replace Judas “must become with us a witness *to his resurrection*” (Acts 1:22, emphasis added). For Peter, the most important aspect of apostolic witness is the resurrection.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the first sermon of the New Testament church, which marks the gospel age initiated by the Spirit’s arrival. Correlating Joel, Isaiah, and the Psalms, Peter shows how Christ’s resurrection and ascension are the focus and conclusion of the Old Testament (Acts 2:14–40). His Old Testament survey concludes: “God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it” (v. 24). It was not possible because Psalm 16 demanded it, and Christ must fulfill it. Peter preaches, “[David] foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. This Jesus God raised up, and of that we are all witnesses” (vv. 31–32).

It is not only Peter's message that testifies to the centrality of Jesus's resurrection, but also his miracles. The dead legs of the lame man come to life as he leaps for joy. When people stare in astonishment, Peter proclaims that although they had killed the author of life, God raised him from the dead, and by faith in his name this man is made strong (Acts 3:1–16). The Sanhedrin becomes "greatly annoyed" at the preaching of Christ's resurrection. And when Peter is challenged by the high-priestly family, he again declares that it is "by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well" (Acts 4:2–10).

In Acts 9, two incidents of healing take place, beginning with Aeneas, a paralytic. In saying "Jesus Christ heals you" (v. 34), Peter indicates that his ministry is not only linked to Christ but is directly the work of Christ. This miracle authenticates Peter's ministry and the message of the gospel he is preaching. We see the effects of the gospel as "all the residents of Lydda and Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord" (v. 35). Then, in Joppa, we meet Tabitha, who is described as a disciple. She is full of good works that flow out of her faith in the risen Christ. When Tabitha dies, her fellow disciples send for Peter, about twelve miles away in Lydda. Peter arrives, prays, then speaks to the dead body: "Tabitha, arise." Her response is immediate: "She opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up" (v. 40). In both miracles, Peter is mirroring the ministry of Jesus. The raising of Tabitha mirrors Christ's raising of Jairus's daughter (Luke 8:40–56). The healing of Aeneas mirrors Christ's healing of the paralyzed man in Capernaum (Mark 2:1–12).

In Acts 10, Luke links the healings of Joppa with Peter's message when he reaches Caesarea: that God raised Jesus on the third day, that Jesus is coming again to judge the living and the dead, and that all who believe in him will receive forgiveness of sins through his name (vv. 40–43). These miracles show that the power of resurrection life provides an inseparable connection between what Peter *does* and the message of the resurrection that he *preaches*. Peter's message and miracles demonstrate that through his resurrection Jesus brings salvation life to sinners. The resurrection message angers the religious leaders, and thus Peter repeatedly suffers persecution and imprisonment. The one who once denied Jesus, fearful of man and unable to go with Jesus to the death, now takes up the cross and boldly proclaims Christ's resurrection. This is an astounding transformation in Peter's witness.

PETER'S LIVING HOPE

What enables Peter now to speak and act with such boldness? Between the empty tomb in Luke 24 and Peter's

sermon in Acts 2, we know of only one significant conversation between Peter and Jesus: by the sea of Galilee, as recorded in John 21. Burned into Peter's memory must be Christ's look of conviction and compassion that had sent Peter weeping. As they finish breakfast, they embark on that heart-wrenching conversation: "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" Peter responds simply, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you" (v. 15). It is a simple answer from a humbled sinner. The gist of the conversation: "Peter, you have been restored through my cross and resurrection. Now take up your cross." And this Peter does, just as Jesus prophesies: "You will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go" (v. 18). A generation later, Clement writes of "noble examples" of faithfulness even unto death, citing Peter as his first example.¹

Roughly a year before his death, Peter picks up his pen, writing to give hope to Christians facing the reality of going to the cross under Roman persecution. We must read Peter's letters remembering the transformation that has taken place from one who fundamentally misunderstood the cross and denied Christ to one who embraces the cross and preaches the newness of resurrection life. Through the resurrection, Peter has found hope for the hopeless and restoration for the repentant. Peter writes to communicate the living hope that they—and we—have in the resurrected Christ.

Once-tearful Peter begins his letter with a burst of joy directed toward the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit. His elation is sourced in the resurrection and the subsequent life believers have in Jesus.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you. (1 Pet. 1:3–4)

Peter not only embraces the reality of the resurrection but also the fact that the resurrection was not merely *out of the grave*, but *unto* the throne room of God. The risen Christ has ascended! Thus Peter has a "living hope" through Christ's resurrection. Peter can go to the cross and give hope to us because he now understands that his resurrection is certain because of the resurrection and ascension of Christ. When Christ arose, he secured the salvation of the elect, and thus our hope is a *living* hope. The reality of salvation is ours in this life. It is even now a possession sealed by Christ's resurrection, even as we look for the full revelation of that salvation when the living Christ comes again



The Two Disciples at the Tomb by Henry Ossawa Tanner (public domain)

in glory. We rest our hope “fully on the grace that will be brought to [us] at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1:13). We joyfully surrender the comforts of earthly security for the reality of an imperishable, undefiled, and unfading inheritance kept in heaven for us.

HOLINESS AND SERVICE—EVEN TO THE CROSS

Peter continues to draw us back to this perspective. The reality of Christ’s resurrection and ascension enables those united to Christ to follow him to the cross with the certain assurance of their own resurrection. It is the reality of this resurrection, not just as a past event—Christ’s—and not just as a future anticipation—our own—but the reality of our *present* resurrection life in Christ (Eph. 2:6), that enables us to live unto righteousness (1 Pet. 2:24). We are therefore not to be conformed to the passions of our former ignorance, but as he who called us is holy, so we too may be holy in all our conduct (1:15).

Peter demonstrates that the resurrection of Christ produces in his people, united to him in his death and resurrection, a life of holiness and service to him—even to the cross. Indwelt by the same Spirit who indwells Christ, God’s people live not according to the flesh and its earthly impulses, but according to the Spirit. As Geerhardus Vos paraphrased Romans 8:11, “If the Spirit of God who raised Jesus dwells in you, then God will make the indwelling Spirit accomplish for you what He accomplished for Jesus in the latter’s resurrection.”² This resurrection life is not merely a future anticipation but a present reality that results in a life that bears fruit in each of us as it did

in Peter. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit constitutes the future reality brought into the present life of the believer, resulting in resurrection works. These resurrection works, being the product of the believer’s Spirit-wrought union with the glorified Christ, are the reflection of the glory of God reproduced in his creatures.³

We love Peter’s story because he’s just like us—subject so often to acute swings of sentiment. At one moment he boldly confesses, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matt. 16:16). In the next moment he wants Christ to avoid the cross, saying “Far be it from you, Lord!” to which Jesus responds, “Get behind me, Satan!” (Matt. 16:22–23). He rashly declares, “Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death” (Luke 22:33), and then cowers, “Woman, I do not know him” (Luke 22:57). He valiantly stands in the face of adversity in Acts but then receives a rebuke for withdrawing from the Gentiles out of fear (Gal. 2:11–14). Which of Christ’s sheep isn’t just like Peter: in one moment, courageous as Daniel in the den of lions, and in the next, pitiful weaklings who offer no resistance to temptation and succumb to sin with hardly a moment’s thought? We go from marveling at our great faith to marveling at our gross failure.

But we marvel also that our loving Father would extend to us forgiveness and embrace us with grace. We acutely identify with Peter’s glorious hope as he runs to the tomb, finds it empty, and goes home marveling at what happened: Jesus lives! And so will I. Impulsive Peter is radically transformed by the grace of God. It gives us great comfort to know that by his resurrection Christ transforms our lives from being bound to fear and sin to being set free to love and serve him.

As we reflect on Mark 16, we have now the answer to why a formerly demon-possessed woman is to tell the news to a former Christ-denier: not only to provide proof of the resurrection but to be a powerful portrait of resurrection life—what Peter would call the living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, unfading, kept in heaven for you. **NH**

The author is pastor of Wolf River Presbyterian in Collierville, Tennessee.

Notes

1. Clement of Rome, “The First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians,” in *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*, ed. Roberts, Donaldson, and Coxe, vol. 1, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (1885), 6.
2. Geerhardus Vos, *The Pauline Eschatology* (1994), 164.
3. See Vos, *The Pauline Eschatology*, 313, 314.

THE WOMEN AT THE EMPTY TOMB



JAMES W. SCOTT

The Gospels begin their accounts of the resurrection of Jesus by relating how a group of women went to his tomb and found it empty. Then they saw Jesus—the first people to do so.

These women had followed Jesus on his final journey to Jerusalem. Indeed, when Jesus traveled about with his twelve disciples, women often accompanied them and “provided for them out of their means.” They included women whom Jesus had healed, such as Mary Magdalene, Joanna (the wife of King Herod’s household manager), and Susanna (Luke 8:1–3).

Jesus was crucified outside Jerusalem, and his body was taken down from the cross by Joseph of Arimathea, a rich Jewish leader who secretly followed Jesus. In a nearby garden was a large tomb that Joseph had recently cut out of a rock face for his own use, and there he laid Jesus’s body. A heavy stone was rolled in front of the entrance. All this was observed by Mary Magdalene and other women (Matt. 27:61; Luke 23:55). On the next day (the Sabbath), guards were placed at the tomb—to be sure the body was not moved.

VISITING THE TOMB

Early the next morning, during twilight, the women walked to the tomb, bringing spices with which to anoint Jesus’s body. At least five women went there, but each gospel names only some of them. Putting the lists together, we get Mary Magdalene, two mothers of disciples (another Mary and Salome), Joanna, and probably Susanna.

Precisely what happened on that resurrection day is difficult to sort out, because the gospel narratives are selective, usually concise, and sometimes condensed. The account given here is, I believe, in historical order. Information from Mark 16:9–20 will be included; its authority is disputed, but whether the passage is inspired or not, it has historical value.

As the women approached the tomb, they could see that the stone had been rolled away. Mary Magdalene jumped to the conclusion that someone had removed Jesus’s body, and she hurried back at once to inform the disciples (John 20:1–2). The other women entered the tomb and were perplexed to find it empty. But then they saw two angels, who had come earlier and rolled away the stone (Matt. 28:2)—not so Jesus could get out (for the tomb could not hold him), but to scare away the guards and enable the women to enter the tomb.

One of the angels explained that Jesus had risen from the dead and was not there. The angel told the women to report these things to the disciples and tell them that “he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you” (Mark 16:6–7; see 14:28). The women were given this instruction because they were the first ones to visit the tomb. The disciples so far saw no reason to do so.

Matthew tells us that the women “departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples” (28:8). But Mark adds that “they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid” (16:8). In other words, they decided along the way not to do what the angel had told them to do.

Meanwhile, Mary Magdalene found Peter and John and told them that the stone had been rolled away and that Jesus’s body had (evidently) been removed. The two disciples then ran to the tomb, followed by Mary. Peter and John arrived at the tomb and found it empty (except for the burial cloths). John sensed that Jesus had risen, but both men were puzzled and went back to where they were staying.

While the two disciples were returning, Mary Magdalene reached the tomb. She began weeping and looked in, where she saw two angels sitting where Jesus’s body had been laid. She told them that she didn’t know where Jesus’s body had been taken.

At this point, neither Peter nor John, nor Mary Magdalene, fully grasped the significance of the empty tomb. And the women who had originally seen the angels hesitated to bring their news to the disciples. In order to move things forward, it would be necessary for Jesus to show himself to them alive and well.

SEEING AND SPEAKING WITH JESUS

As Mary Magdalene stood outside the tomb, she noticed a man standing near her, whom she assumed to be the gardener. But when he addressed her by name, she joyously recognized him as Jesus. She wanted to be with him, but he told her to report her experience to the disciples, and she went off to do so.

Then Jesus appeared to the other women, who had decided to keep quiet. They recognized and worshiped him, and he repeated what the angel had said: to tell the disciples that Jesus had risen and wanted them to go to Galilee and meet with him there. Their doubts and fears allayed, the women found the disciples and told them what had happened. Mary Magdalene similarly reported to the disciples.

However, the disciples would not believe them. Some have asserted that their report was not believed because it was the testimony of women. But, as we shall see, the disciples had doubts about the reports of women and men alike (Mark 16:14)—and even questioned what they saw with their own eyes—simply because “the miracle of the Resurrection seems incredible to men by its very nature” (Theophylact, ca. AD 1100).

Luke 24:8–11 summarizes the women’s reports to the disciples and their reaction to them. The Greek word in verse 11 that characterizes their reports, as perceived by the disciples, is *lēros*, commonly translated as “an idle tale” or “nonsense.” But this word is used only here in the New Testament and rarely by contemporary writers, so its precise meaning in this passage is difficult to determine. The closest parallel is provided by the historian Josephus, who relates that when he gave an exculpatory account of himself after being captured by the Romans during the Jewish revolt, a skeptical listener warned that his words could be a *lēros*, a made-up story, concocted to win his captors’ favor (*Jewish War*, 3.405). Similarly, Luke 24:11 should be translated, “but these words seemed to them like a made-up story, and they did not believe them.”

Notice the word “like” in the verse (missing in the ESV, but not in the NIV). The women’s testimony initially seemed to the disciples “like” it was made up, because they couldn’t see how it could be true. But they couldn’t just dismiss it as nonsense, because multiple women whom

they knew as dependable followers of Jesus were telling the same story. They awaited more evidence, which soon came.

THE STRUGGLE TO BELIEVE

Later that day, Jesus appeared to Peter (1 Cor. 15:5). Peter reported his experience to the other disciples, many of whom believed him—but with lingering doubts. Some criticize the disciples for believing a man, but not the women. However, the disciples were more inclined to believe a fellow disciple than anyone else, regardless of gender. Moreover, Peter’s report lent credence to the women’s testimony, evoking the response, “The Lord has risen indeed” (Luke 24:34).

That afternoon, Jesus came alongside two of his followers as they were walking to Emmaus (Luke 24:13–35). Jesus opened up the scriptural teaching about the Christ to them, but they didn’t recognize him until he started a meal with them—whereupon he vanished. The two men rushed back to Jerusalem and told the disciples what had happened. Many of them were already inclined to accept that Jesus was raised from the dead, but the story told by these two men stretched their credulity (Mark 16:12–13).

That evening, when the disciples had gathered together, Jesus suddenly appeared in their midst and frightened them. He asked them, “Why do doubts arise in your hearts?” Jesus proceeded to show them who he was—though “they still disbelieved for joy” (Luke 24:38, 41). Thomas was not among them, and when they told him that they had seen Jesus, he refused to believe it. But when the disciples met a week later, Thomas was among them. Jesus again appeared in their midst, and he revealed himself to Thomas, who finally accepted that Jesus was alive, exclaiming, “My Lord and my God!” Jesus responded—and says to us today—“Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed” (John 20:28–29). Nonetheless, when Jesus later met with the disciples in Galilee, there was still some hesitation (Matt. 28:17). The coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost (Acts 2) was still necessary!

The women who went to the tomb were devoted to the Lord and brought the good news of his resurrection to others. Yes, they stumbled along the way, but the Lord graciously helped them up. What Jesus said about the woman who poured expensive ointment over him shortly before his death also applies to each woman at the empty tomb: “Wherever this gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her” (Matt. 26:13). **NH**

The author, once the managing editor of this magazine, now devotes his retirement to biblical scholarship.

PRIMING THE PUMP FOR PRAYER



LARRY E. WILSON

J. I. Packer once wrote about the Lord’s Prayer, [It] should be put to service to direct and spur on our prayers constantly. To pray in terms of it is the sure way to keep our prayers within God’s will; to pray through it, expanding the clauses as you go along, is the sure way to prime the pump when prayer dries up and you find yourself stuck. We never get beyond this prayer; not only is it the Lord’s first lesson in praying, it is all the other lessons too. Lord, teach us to pray. (*Growing in Christ*, 157–158)

With help from the Heidelberg Catechism and the Shorter Catechism, here is a pump primer for Christian prayer.

OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN

We come to you in the name of Jesus, relying on his doing, dying, and ongoing mediation. It’s because of his saving work that you have justified us and adopted us

as your beloved children, so that we may call you, “our Father.”

It’s through faith in him that we have boldness and access with confidence to your throne of grace.

We come to you relying on the help of the Holy Spirit—the Spirit of adoption, by whom we can cry, “Abba! Father!” He helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.

We come to you both with reverence—for you are almighty God in heaven—and with confidence—for you are our reconciled, loving Father.

We come to you as needy children to a loving, divine Father who not only wants to help us but also is able to help us.

We come to you praying with one another and for one another in your worldwide family, as well as in our particular manifestation of your family.

HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME

Please so rule and overrule that you cause all things to work together in ways that best serve your glory and your people’s good.

Unite all your people’s hearts to fear you, and enable us to seek your glory in all we do.

Enable us better and better to know you—to walk step by step with you, and to live day by day for you, showing love to you and to our neighbors.

Enable us better and better to make you known.

And please bless our witness with abiding fruit for your kingdom.

YOUR KINGDOM COME

Please keep gathering, building, protecting, and perfecting Christ’s kingdom of grace.

Continue adding people to your church.

Keep your people persevering in their walk with you and with one another in you.

Guide and govern us by your Word and Spirit so that we more and more submit to you; so that we more and more serve you.

Please frustrate and defeat Satan’s malevolent kingdom of lies and destruction.

Destroy the works of the devil. Frustrate and defeat every power that exalts itself against you. Frustrate and defeat every conspiracy against your Christ and his Word.

And please hasten the coming of Christ’s kingdom of glory—the Day when our faithful Savior visibly returns in power and glory, and your kingdom comes in its consummation fullness so that you are all in all.

YOUR WILL BE DONE ON EARTH, AS IT IS IN HEAVEN

By your grace, make us both willing and able to know, delight in, and obey all your precepts, and to submit with thanksgiving to all your providences.

Help us to do whatever you call us to do, wherever you call us to do it, for as long as you call us to do it, as willingly, faithfully, and diligently as the angels do in heaven.

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD

Provide for us whatever we need of the good things of this life. Grant that we may enjoy your blessing with them.

Grant that we come to know firsthand that you are the fount of every blessing and that neither our work and worry, nor your gifts, can do us any good apart from your blessing.

Allow us more and more to turn from our trust in creatures to trust you alone.

**AND FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS,
AS WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS**

For the sake of Jesus’s blood, please freely forgive all our sins—both of commission and omission—as well as all the indwelling sin that constantly clings to us.

Forgive us, and assure us of your forgiveness, not least as we find this testimony of your grace in us—that we want to forgive others from our hearts.

**AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION,
BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL**

By ourselves, we’re too weak to hold our own—not even for a moment. Apart from you we can do nothing.

What’s more, our sworn enemies—the devil, the world, and our own flesh—never stop attacking us.

Keep us from being tempted to sin, and, when we are tempted, support and deliver us.

**FOR YOURS IS THE KINGDOM,
AND THE POWER,
AND THE GLORY,
FOREVER**

We make these requests of you because you—and not we—should receive all the glory and praise. For from you and through you and to you are all things! May all the glory go to you—and may we find all our joy and satisfaction in you—for ever and ever!

O Triune God of grace, it’s even more sure that you listen to our prayers than that we really want what we ask for. But to testify that not only do we want you to hear us but also that we trust that you do hear us, all God’s people say, “Amen.” **NH**

The author is a retired OP minister.



Boy and Sheep
Under a Tree by
Henry Ossawa
Tanner (public
domain)

IN MEMORIAM: YOUNG J. SON

MARK T. BUBE

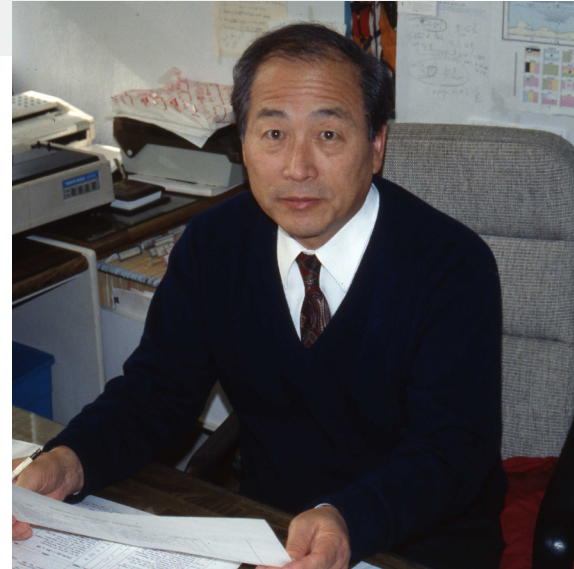
On February 12, 2024, former OP missionary to Korea Dr. Young J. Son, then the oldest living minister in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, joined the church triumphant at the age of ninety-three.

Dr. Son was born to Korean parents living in Tokyo. They returned to a Korea under Japanese occupation shortly thereafter, and Young grew up speaking Japanese. The Lord drew Young to himself in his teenage years. I remember cooling our heels together in Dzhambul (Kazakhstan) one afternoon and him telling me the story of the summer before he turned twenty. He had been living in Seoul on the north side of the Han River when the North Korean army invaded South Korea to begin what became known as the Korean War. As the North Korean army swept south, the retreating South Korean army dynamited the last remaining bridge over the Han River, leaving Young Son and a million other South Koreans trapped on the northern side. He was eventually captured and conscripted into the North Korean army but escaped with two friends as soon as he could and fled south—where he was arrested and put in prison because he was thought to be a Communist infiltrator. While in prison, he promised the Lord that, if it pleased the Lord to deliver him, he would go into the gospel ministry. In

With Bruce Hunt and Mary Lou Son in the 1970s



Young J. Son at the MTI office in 1991



God’s marvelous grace, the prosecutor assigned to his case believed his story, and he was released. Almost immediately, God put him to work.

After the war, a friend arranged for him to come to the United States. In 1955, he arrived in San Diego with his Bible and five dollars in his pocket. He would end up attending Geneva College, graduating from Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary in 1962, and moving to the Philadelphia area where he did some graduate work at Westminster Theological Seminary and met his wife, Mary Lou, at Tenth Presbyterian. The Lord blessed them with six children. He was ordained to the gospel ministry by the RPCNA in 1963 and transferred his credentials to the OPC in 1968. Several years later, he learned of the need for another generation of missionaries in Korea, and several, including missionary Bruce Hunt, encouraged him to consider returning to Korea as a missionary.

In 1977, the OPC’s Committee on Foreign Missions called him to missionary service in Korea, and he began to sense a growing interest in missionary service among the seminary students there. But the population of Korea (the “Hermit Kingdom”) had been isolated for centuries, and many of the potential candidates were poorly equipped for cross-cultural missionary service.

In 1983, he started the Missionary Training Institute (MTI) at the request of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Hop Dong Presbyterian Church. It was never easy going, but he remained unflappable and trusted God to protect

the ministry of MTI. At the end of 2000, he retired from active missionary service—but continued as an adjunct missionary to assist in the transition of the MTI directorship to a successor, which was finally accomplished in 2009.

Never one to rest when there is still kingdom work to be done, in 2005 Young accepted a call to pastor the OP congregation in Bancroft, South Dakota, finally retiring from pastoral ministry in 2016. For those who knew him, his beaming smile, the twinkle in his eyes, and his ready laugh displayed a real joy in the ministry to which he had been called. And his love for Christ and his servants on the mission field, his compassion for those perishing in their sin without a Savior, and his exemplary piety were a great encouragement to us all.

The author is administrator for the Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations.

IN MEMORIAM: RHETA CAROLE (PEACOCK) HUBENTHAL

Patricia E. Clawson

Retired Orthodox Presbyterian missionary Rheta Hubenthal, who served eleven years with her husband in Suriname, entered glory on January 22, 2024, at the age of eighty-four. She is survived by her husband, Karl; four of their five children; twenty-two grandchildren; and one great-grandchild.

Rheta's desire to become a missionary grew over the years. An art history and archaeology graduate of the University of Missouri, Rheta then studied at the Near East School of Archaeology in Jerusalem and worked with Arabic girls in an evangelical orphanage until she was evacuated during the Six Day War. She studied missionary service at Covenant Seminary, where she met Karl. They married fifty-two years ago while he was stationed with the US Army in Panama. Rheta was busy raising five children while Karl pastored for fourteen years at Knox OPC in Lansdowne, Pennsylvania. In 1983, Karl took a sabbatical to study with the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, Liberated, where their family was introduced to the Dutch language and culture.

Her mission studies, time in the tropics, learning Dutch, and being a pastor's wife prepared Rheta to support Karl's call to serve the Committee on Foreign Missions. He was asked to begin a Dutch-speaking congregation in Paramaribo, Suriname. Their family of seven arrived in the for-



Rheta and Karl Hubenthal in 1991

mer Dutch colony in 1990. The new congregation, called Reformatie Kerk, met in their home, then their carport, then a Christian school, until a building was purchased. Gifted in hospitality, Rheta ministered to young couples, was upbeat and a good listener, and took things in stride, including lizards, mosquitoes, and a political coup in this humid, rainy country near the equator. Rheta also encouraged the lonely and rejected in the Esther Hof leper colony. In 1998, Rheta returned to the United States to medically treat lymphedema, which led Rheta and Karl reluctantly to move back to Pennsylvania in 2002.

The author is a member of Calvary OPC in Glenside, Pennsylvania.

WHAT'S NEW

Uganda missionaries **Mr. and Mrs. Travis (Bonnie) Emmett** welcomed their newborn son Dawson Ezra Emmett on February 17 in Pennsylvania. They are preparing to leave for the field in the coming months.

Regional foreign missionaries (for Africa and Haiti), the **Rev. and Mrs. Benjamin K. (Heather) Hopp** and their youngest daughter, Esther, arrived in early March on the field in Mbale, Uganda, where they will establish a base for Ben's Mobile Theological Mentoring Corps work in Africa.

REVIEW: THE RISE AND FALL OF DISPENSATIONALISM

DANIEL R. SVENDSEN

Christianity is timeless, dispensationalism is not. Our faith transcends nations, this story could have only happened in America.

Such were thoughts I had reading *The Rise and Fall of Dispensationalism* (Eerdmans, 2023). In this book, Daniel Hummel gives a sweeping view of how nineteenth century America shaped dispensationalism's rise, and then how dispensationalism shaped the twentieth century church. It is an enthralling narrative for anyone interested in the story of the church in America over the last two hundred years. Hummel outlines all the major players, institutions, and eras in a historical work that keeps the reader engaged.

Hummel's knowledge of the history is impressive, and his analysis prescient. While I did not agree with every point of analysis, nor completely with his concluding remarks, I heartily recommend this book.

NOT TIMELESS

Dispensationalism is a way of dividing up biblical and redemptive history, a system first articulated in the nineteenth century by Brethren author John Nelson Darby. Darby was a minister in the Church of Ireland who came to believe that Christians should reject established denominations and form more organic associations. A prodigious writer, he left a mark both in his homeland and as he traveled to the new world of the United States.

Darby wrote at a time when the foundations of post-millennialism, a system which saw the end times as being ushered in peacefully as Christianity gained prominence worldwide, were starting to crumble. Darby's timeline was one of much more cataclysmic events which would precede Christ's second coming, leading to a millennial reign of Christ's kingdom that focused on the nation of Israel. The church is God's spiritual people, Israel the earthly, and this dualism shaped all his thought.

As Darby developed his own premillennial map, several other premillennial movements were hatching up in the new world. William Miller, a Baptist who predicted Christ's return in 1844, gained a following whom we know today as the Seventh-day Adventist church. The infamous Joseph Smith established the Church of Jesus

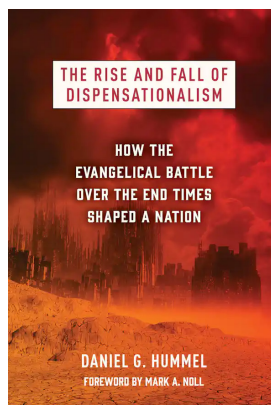
Christ of Latter-day Saints in 1831. Later in the century, Charles Taze Russell founded the Watch Tower Society, a group we know today as the Jehovah's Witnesses.

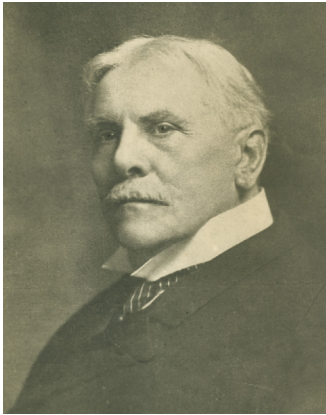
Hummel's explorations allow the reader to ponder why the nineteenth century was such fertile ground for the growth of these movements. He reminds the reader that this was the century that produced the thought of Darwin and Marx, among others. Modernism, scientism, rationalism, idealism—all were melding together in various ways to form a world unique in its openness to new ideas. The Industrial Revolution, urbanization, and loss of the traditional community all played a factor as well.

ONLY IN AMERICA

The story of dispensationalism is not only about trying to understand the times, but also the place. The reader is presented with plenty of evidence which makes one think, "only in America." The audience of *New Horizons* will appreciate seeing how various Presbyterians played a role, none more prominently than James Brookes, an Old School Presbyterian who pastored in St. Louis. It was in his congregation that Cyrus Scofield converted to Christianity and would become one of the key figures in American dispensationalism around the turn of the twentieth century. His study Bible is *still* the all-time best seller from Oxford University Press (134).

The attraction to dispensationalism from Brookes and many other Presbyterians may be confusing to us today, but in the following years Reformed and Presbyterian





thinkers would play chief roles in showing the errors of dispensationalism. Westminster Seminary, the OPC, and Calvin College and Seminary all figure prominently in this story, especially when considering their size at the time. The story of dispensationalism's rise is especially eventful around the time of the Fundamentalist/Modernist controversy, which allows Hummel to explore various connections to J. Gresham Machen.

Cyrus Scofield and Dwight Moody are two main figures who “Americanized” the dispensational system. Scofield’s writing led the way to the high points of dispensational scholarship and the founding of institutions such as Dallas Seminary and Biola, while Moody’s individualized and scattershot appropriation of Darby led to a more populist type of movement outside of those institutions.

Hummel shows that time and again, Americans have shown an appetite for revivalism, end-time predictions, reading prophecy through the lens of the day’s politics, and cultural conspiracy theories. Hummel argues, convincingly, that as scholastic dispensationalism faded quickly, pop dispensationalism became big business from the 1970s on, starting with Hal Lindsey.

Readers should be encouraged to think about how the church can better understand and respond to this fascinating story of dispensationalism. Our country at that exact time was ripe for such a movement, faulty approaches to the Bible notwithstanding. How can we foster a more universal, timeless approach?

It seems to the present author that a confessional approach to Word and Sacrament, anchored in the Lord’s Day, is how we begin to answer that question. For those who grew up witnessing dispensationalism’s fall, historic and confessional Christianity ought to be a breath of fresh air. Such an approach can be rightly anchored in truth without being rationalistic, properly eschatological without dating the Lord’s return, properly heavenly-minded without becoming detached from this world. We need a church that can see itself in the past, understand where it is in the present, and not enslave itself to the spirit of the age, that it may be shaped through the work of the Spirit as it looks in hope to the future.

The author is pastor of First OPC of South Holland in South Holland, Illinois.

ON READING OLD BOOKS

“It is a good rule, after reading a new book, never to allow yourself another new one till you have read an old one in between.”

—C. S. Lewis

Daily and Sabbath Scripture Readings (1852) by Thomas Chalmers

In October 1841, Thomas Chalmers, the Scottish pastor, church leader, and professor, began composing a series of meditations on the Scriptures. The Daily Readings cover the Old Testament from Genesis through Jeremiah; the Sabbath Readings from Genesis to 2 Kings and the New Testament.

These meditations were not intended to be detailed commentaries or works of research. They were instead private reflections on the Bible, the fruit of Chalmers’s devotional life. In fact, Chalmers never meant for them to be published; his son-in-law had them published posthumously.

They were written during a busy period in Chalmers’s life. The Church of Scotland was experiencing great growth but also much controversy, which would culminate in the Disruption of 1843 and the foundation of the Free Church of Scotland. Despite this, there are few references to external events. Rather, we see Chalmers’s keen insights into Scripture and his desire to apply them to his own life.

What is most striking in the Daily Readings is how Chalmers connects the history, prophecy, and poetry of the Old Testament to the life and work of Jesus Christ. Some of the richest material can be found in his meditations on the Psalms. In the even more personal Sabbath Readings, we find Chalmers’s reflections leading him to repentance for his sin and expressions of deep faith and devotion to God.

Chalmers is usually remembered for his pastoral gifts and leadership, but these two readings show a man of passionate faith and deep devotion. There is living faith in evidence here.

—Sandy Finlayson

TRINITY PSALTER HYMNAL ANDROID APP

Now Available: The *Trinity Psalter Hymnal* Android mobile app for phones and tablets is now available for download on all versions of Android. Search the Google Play Store for purchase and download.

FELLOWSHIP AMONG PASTORS' WIVES

MARGARET ANN BIGGS WITH CHARLES R. BIGGS

Ministry takes a toll on both pastors and their families. But while ministers can build friendships with other ministers through both formal and informal connections within their presbytery, ministers' wives often don't have the same opportunities to connect. In 2022, several members of the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic recognized this need and suggested that the PMA form a special committee to organize an opportunity for the ministers' wives in their presbytery to gather for fellowship and teaching. We were going to enjoy our first formal "presbyterial."

A special committee was formed to establish a yearly Pastors' Wives' Fellowship, to be held concurrently with the PMA meetings. The committee members were Pastor Francis VanDelden, Pastor Ben Franks, Elisabeth Young (wife of Pastor Damon Young), and myself.

A PRESBYTERIAL IN NEW FORM

I later found out that in God's good providence, Rachel Allison from Staunton OPC in Staunton, Virginia—where her husband, Ethan, serves as pastor—had been hoping for just such an opportunity. "I spent many afternoons absorbed in *Choosing the Good Portion* (edited by Patricia E. Clawson and Diane L. Olinger)," Allison remembered. While reading, "I was telling my husband about presbyterials and wishing that they were still a thing in our presbytery. After the very next presbytery meeting, my husband came home and said, 'Guess what? You are going to have your very own version of a presbyterial!'"

At our first Pastors' Wives' Fellowship in December 2022, we welcomed Emily Van Dixhoorn to facilitate and



At the PMA's September Pastors' Wives' Fellowship

teach on "Christ, Our Mediator" at Bethel Presbyterian in Leesburg, Virginia. We all were greatly edified and encouraged by the teaching and fellowship.

LEARNING TOGETHER

Our 2023 meeting was held during the September presbytery at Ketocin Covenant Presbyterian in Purcellville, Virginia. Anneke Fesko, who works for the Committee on Ministerial Care (CMC) as the care coordinator for ministers' wives, was our speaker. She brought a wealth of practical gospel knowledge to share with the twenty pastors' wives in attendance. Fesko led four workshops followed by breakout sessions. In the first, attendees received handouts of the map of the presbyteries, prayer requests for Worldwide Outreach, and CMC information. Fesko shared with us some of the emotional, physical, and financial scaffolding the OPC has in place to support its ministers and their families in times of need. Some in

attendance had not known about these resources. After this session, we spent time praying for one another, for the OPC, and for the work of Worldwide Outreach.

During the second session, “Solving Ministry Challenges,” we spent time in small groups examining different case studies of potential problems in churches and discussing biblical principles and approaches to these issues. “There is great value in many counselors who remind us to pray and seek the Lord before looking for our own pragmatic solutions as we considered common scenarios in our churches,” one pastor’s wife commented. It was helpful to hear the godly wisdom from others who are called to serve Christ and his church.

Our third session was “Creating and Cultivating Christian Community.” We were asked to think of the spiritual mothers, sisters, daughters, and friends in our lives and to write down their names. Then, Fesko encouraged us to make a deliberate effort to pray for and stay in touch with these ladies. I was reminded that, when the Holy Spirit brings someone to my mind, I should stop, pray, or reach out to that person. May our lives never be too busy to stay connected with our dear friends. We are humbly called in Christ “to count others more significant than [yourselves]. Let each of [us] look not to [our] own interests, but also to the interests of others” (Phil. 2:3–4), and to “walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God” (Eph. 5:2).

The fourth session was “Discovering Books and Resources That Show Us God’s Truth”—a book recommendation conversation. It was delightful to hear of the books that other wives had read and learn what was edifying or entertaining for each of them. We compiled the book list and shared it with one another. One of the book recommendations was *Choosing the Good Portion*, and I can wholeheartedly name women in our presbytery who, like the women in that book, cheerfully have chosen very well.

REFLECTIONS

“I have been so refreshed by the Pastors’ Wives’ Fellowships,” one pastor’s wife wrote afterward. “My biggest suspicion was that these would be glorified gripe fests, but I was proven 100 percent wrong. It has been such a time of encouragement, laughter, and friendship. I do not know the struggles of any of the churches the other women attend; but I do know they are pastored by men who have wives that love the Lord, love their husbands, and love digging into the Word of God with others.”

Another said, “I remember feeling very isolated and out of my depth as a new pastor’s wife eleven years ago,

Anneke Fesko, care coordinator for ministers’ wives



and I would have loved to gain these connections so much earlier. . . . Being able to talk, pray, and connect with women who have walked the same road is so encouraging. Even though our family has changed presbyteries now, I know that we have brothers and sisters praying for us in the PMA. It makes it all the sweeter as we cross paths in the small OPC world.”

These meetings, given by our gracious God through his church, have been wonderful times of learning and fellowshiping. It is rare that pastors’ wives are able to set aside time for spiritual growth alongside their sisters in Christ. I am thankful the PMA sees that it is an important yearly event for us. Charles and I would encourage other presbyteries to consider something similar for their pastors’ wives. This can be an ideal way in the gospel to “live with your wives in an understanding way,” showing honor as the heirs of life with us in Christ (1 Pet. 3:7).

The author is a member of Ketocin Covenant Presbyterian Church in Purcellville, Virginia.

GOD'S PROVISION THROUGH THE BODY OF CHRIST

JUDITH M. DINSMORE

Upon his retirement after forty years of serving as an Orthodox Presbyterian pastor—with a three-year interlude as a missionary in Egypt—George Cottenden, along with his wife, Barbara, began to receive from the Committee on Ministerial Care an annual financial gift, drawn from the Obadiah Fund.

“I’ve received the gift as an expression of the oneness that I have with my brothers and sisters in the OPC,” Cottenden reflected.

The Obadiah Fund disburses to retired OP ministers an annual, non-taxable love gift as well as additional financial support, coordinated with presbytery diaconal committees, on an as-needed basis. Since 2007, when it was established with a large donation from an anonymous member of the OPC, the Obadiah Fund has been much used (see sidebar).

In a letter to the committee, Cottenden wrote that he appreciates what the gift means: “The OPC is a church that takes seriously that we’re the body of Christ, and that we not only look out for the needs of different members of the body, but we also show gratitude to them.”

In its yearly communication about the Fund with retired ministers, including Cottenden, and ministers’ widows, the Committee on Ministerial Care checks in not only about how they are doing physically, but also how the committee might be praying for them.

Although the OPC is a small denomination, Cottenden said, it’s amazing what the church is able to provide to ministers and pastors—“largely due to the thoughtfulness of some very gifted men,” he explained. The Obadiah Fund is one prominent example.

CARE THROUGH THE DECADES OF MINISTRY

Cottenden has more. Throughout his ministerial career, he said, there has been much evidence of the care of the church.

First came a piece of good advice: soon after Cottenden’s ordination into the ministry in 1967, Lewis Roberts,



The Cottendens in 1978

then acting as a controller for the OP committees, advised him to put twenty-five dollars per month into a mutual fund investment program. “Twenty-five dollars might not seem like much now, but my starting salary was \$4,800 a year plus manse,” he laughed. At the time, the OPC didn’t have a very good pension plan. However, following Roberts’s good advice fifty-seven years ago has provided a reasonable portion of the financial foundation for where Cottenden is now. Had it been otherwise, the Obadiah Fund would have been one safety net for the Cottendens.

Then came a thoughtful congregation. George Cottenden’s first pastorate was at Good Shepherd OPC in Neptune, New Jersey—not a large body. But one elder, who was on the negotiating team for the teacher’s union, was convinced, and convinced the congregation, that a pastor ought to be paid approximately equal to a teacher with a master’s degree in that community. “Those were the years our kids were born, so our family costs were going up,” Cottenden remembered. (No doctor’s bills, though: doctors often treated pastors’ families gratis, and Cottenden can’t remember ever paying a pediatrician.) Good Shepherd OPC provided for the needs of their family.

Egypt was hard on the Cottendens’ finances, although a restructuring of missionary salaries part-way through their term helped. But missionary labor was rich in other ways: “My own perspective on ministry has been tremen-

dously broadened,” he reflected. If you never experience life in another culture, Cottenden said, you might think that the way we do things in our culture is exactly the way things should be done everywhere. “That’s just not the case.”

God’s provision through the body of Christ was then seen in their furlough from service in Egypt, when Trinity OPC in Hatboro, Pennsylvania, allowed the Cottendens, who were uncertain of future plans, the use of the manse in return for pulpit supply. That in time led to a call. “I haven’t formally candidated for any position I’ve held since 1970-something,” he smiled. Cottenden was pastor in Hatboro from 1981 until his retirement in 2008.

In their years at Trinity OPC, Barbara Cottenden taught kindergarten, third grade, and later served on the board at Phil-Mont Christian Academy. Her love for kindergarten she discovered in Egypt: the principal of the American school there came knocking on their door one Friday. The kindergarten teacher had gone home to the United States on vacation and hadn’t returned. They needed a teacher by Monday. Barbara countered that she wasn’t certified in early childhood education. “Well, you’re a certified teacher, right?” the principal asked. “And you have children, right?” Yes, she replied. “Well, then, we need you!”

RETURNING THE GIFT

As chair of his presbytery’s candidates committee, George Cottenden now seeks to give the kind of advice to others that benefited him: “I’ve encouraged the men under care to make themselves aware of the Committee on Ministerial Care and be sure to avail themselves of all the resources this committee provides for them.”

Along with the Obadiah Fund, the Cottendens have been thankful recipients of the CMC’s partnership with Ronald Blue Trust. Initially, Cottenden thought that the program was only for ministers preparing for retirement. “But they were willing to meet with me, fifteen years into retirement,” he said. “It was very helpful.” In a two-hour conference, the representative confirmed the Cottendens’ present practices, made suggestions toward the end of simplifying paperwork, and gave the Cottendens insights on charitable giving in the near future versus charitable giving from one’s estate.

Because of the generosity of the church, he and Barbara find themselves in a financial position where they are able to show the same to others. “We give thanks to God. Obviously, he’s the one behind all this generosity,” he said.

The author is managing editor of New Horizons.

THE OBADIAH FUND

BUILDING A BIGGER BAKERY

As Obadiah fed the faithful prophets of the Lord with bread and water, so the Obadiah Fund helps supply the material needs of our retired ministers and their widows. While Scripture does not reveal where Obadiah obtained so much bread, we do know how the Obadiah Fund gets its “bread.” The bakery the Fund relies on is the earning power of its invested principal.

Of growing concern to the Committee on Ministerial Care, the needs facing the Obadiah Fund have increasingly outstripped the earnings generated. Three challenges are at work:

- For each year that the Fund pays out more than it earns, there is less available the next year to generate earnings. In essence, we are eating our seed corn.
- The number of OPC ministers and widows over age sixty-five is projected to grow by 25 percent in the next fifteen years.
- While inflation increased 17 percent from 2021–2023, the Fund has been unable to support any increase to the annual “love gift” distributions. Many of our retired ministers are being squeezed by the rising costs of basic necessities.

To put the Obadiah Fund on a sound footing and better enable it to meet these growing needs, the Committee on Ministerial Care is seeking additional gifts to “build a bigger bakery.” To donate, or to learn more, please visit www.opcCMC.org/obadiah.



APR 2024 PRAYER CALENDAR



The Jenkinses (day 8)



The Halleys (day 14)

1
Charles & Connie Jackson, Mbale, Uganda. Pray for clear diagnoses and healing for Charles as he deals with health issues. / **Chris Byrd**, Westfield, NJ. Pray for the evangelistic efforts of Grace OPC.

2
Lacy (Debbie) Andrews, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of the Southeast. / Yearlong intern **David (Hope) Garrett** at Orthodox Presbyterian in Franklin Square, NY.

3
Missionary associates **Nathan & Elisabeth Bloechl**, Mbale, Uganda. Pray for deeper, more transparent relationships between members of the church plant in Mbale. / Yearlong intern **David (Jazmine) Rios** at The Haven in Commack, NY.

4
Home Missions associate general secretary **Al Tricarico**. / Missionary associates **Josh and Danielle Grimsley** and **Jed Homan**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for the development of friendships that lead to gospel conversations.

5
John & Grace Jee, Columbia, MD. Pray that the people of Word of Life OPC would develop a holy burden for evangelism. / Pray that *The Reformed Deacon Podcast* would spur deacons on to joyful service in the church.

6
Tentmaking missionary **Tina DeJong**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for Ugandan pastor Julius as he leads Nakaale Presbyterian church and disciples young leaders. / Yearlong intern **Joe (Melody) Gehrman** at Covenant OPC in Orland Park, IL.

7
Pray for associate missionaries **Christopher & Chloe Verdick**, Nakaale, Uganda as they finalize their preparations and depart for furlough. / **Corey & Andrea Paige**, Kyle, TX. Pray that Hays County OPC would find a new facility to worship in.

8
Mark & Celeste Jenkins, Placentia, CA. Pray for more people to participate in Resurrection Presbyterian Church's outreach events. / Pray for the General Assembly stated clerk, **Hank Belfield**, and others preparing for the 90th General Assembly, June 19–25.

9
Travis & Bonnie Emmett, Nakaale, Uganda. Praise that Jackson is medically approved to go to Uganda. Pray for Bonnie's recovery after the birth of their fourth child, Dawson. / Pray for the **Presbyterian and Reformed Committee on Chaplains and Military Personnel**.

10
Charles (Margaret) Biggs, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic. / Associate missionary **Leah Hopp**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for the leadership of the clinic to manage well while the Verdicks are on furlough.

11
Home Missions general secretary **Jeremiah Montgomery**. / Yearlong intern **Andrew (Noel) Davis** at Covenant Presbyterian in Marina, CA.

12
Pray for the **Ethiopian Reformed Presbyterian Church** and for the persecuted church in **East Africa**. / Pray for **Danny Olinger**, general secretary of Christian Education, in his work as editor of *New Horizons*.

13
Pray for God's comfort for retired missionary **Mary Lou Son** as she mourns the passing of her husband, Young Son. / Please join the **Presbytery of Michigan and Ontario** in praying for the provision of a regional home missionary.

14
Dan & Stacy Halley, Tampa, FL. Pray that Bay Haven Presbyterian Church would welcome and invest in visitors well. / Yearlong intern **Brennen (Tiffany) Winter** at Harvest OPC in Wyoming, MI.

.....
15 Affiliated missionaries **Dr. Mark & Laura Ambrose**, Cambodia. Pray for eight sponsored students at university to stand strong in their faith and convictions. / Pray that the *Ruling Elder Podcast* blesses listeners.

.....
16 **David & Ashleigh Schexnayder**, Scottsdale, AZ. Pray for opportunities for members of Providence OPC to grow in faith and grace. / Pray for blessing on the work of the **Reformed Church of Quebec (ERQ)**.

.....
17 **Brad (Cinnamon) Peppo**, regional home missionary of the Miami Valley for the Presbytery of Ohio. / **Committee on Diaconal Ministries**. Pray that the Lord would raise up more godly men full of the Spirit to serve as deacons in our churches.

.....
18 **Stephen & Catalina Payson**, Montevideo, Uruguay. Pray for many people from Maldonado to respond positively to invitations to Bible studies. / Yearlong intern **Tyler (Jeanna) Freire** at Redeemer OPC in Beavercreek, OH.

.....
19 **Mark & Jeni Richline**, Montevideo, Uruguay. Praise the Lord for raising up two men to serve as elders over the past year. / **Nate & Anna Strom**, Sheboygan, WI. Pray that the ministry of Breakwater Church would reach the unchurched and renew the church.



The Freires (day 18)

.....
20 **Carl & Stacey Miller**, New Braunfels, TX. Pray that God would bless the outreach efforts of Heritage Presbyterian. / Yearlong intern **David Wright** at South Austin Presbyterian in Austin, TX.

.....
21 **Heero & Anya Hacquebord**, Lviv, Ukraine. Pray for severely persecuted Christians in areas of Ukraine occupied by Russia. / **Stephen Pribble**, senior technical associate for OPC.org.

.....
22 **Matt & Hyojung Walker**, Yorktown, VA. Pray that Peninsula Reformed Presbyterian would show God's love to the lost in word and deed. / Affiliated missionaries **Jerry & Marilyn Farnik**, Czech Republic. Pray that more children will join the Thursday Bible club and grow in faith.

.....
23 **Chris (Megan) Hartshorn**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of Southern California. / **Charlene Tipton**, database administrator.

.....
24 **Mr. and Mrs. F.**, Asia. Pray for Mr. F., studying in Korea, that the Lord would prepare a place of fruitful ministry for him. / Loan Fund manager **Mark Stumpff**.

.....
25 **Mr. and Mrs. M.**, Asia. Pray for connections with new international students who want to study the Bible. / **Johnny & Berry Serafini**, Marion, NC. Pray that God would bless the gospel as it is proclaimed through the ministries of Landis OPC.

.....
26 Home Missions administrative assistant **Allison Groot**. / Pray for the **students and teachers** involved in the spring Ministerial Training Institute courses.



The Hacquebords (day 21)

.....
27 Pray for the health and care of **retired missionaries** Cal & Edie Cummings, Greet Rietkerk, Mary Lou Son, and Brian & Dorothy Wingard. / Pray for the **Great Commission Publication Trustees**, meeting April 29.

.....
28 **Bill & Margaret Shishko**, Commack, NY. Pray for the men's and women's meetings at The Haven, OPC. / **Ben & Heather Hopp**, Africa & Haiti. Ask the Lord to accelerate the process of work permits for the Hops in Uganda.

.....
29 **Andrew (Rebekah) Miller**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of Central Pennsylvania. / Pray that the Lord would prepare the hearts of those who will hear the gospel through various **Short-Term Mission Teams** this summer.

.....
30 Associate missionaries **Octavius & Marie Delfils**, Haiti. Pray for the Lord's blessing on the new members class. / Office manager **Annelisa Studley**.

ESTATE PLANNING THROUGH THE BARNABAS FOUNDATION

KEITH A. LEMAHIEU

It has been called the “silver tsunami,” the “wealth tsunami,” and “the great wealth transfer.” All these terms refer to the transfer of wealth that will occur when baby boomers reach the end of their lives.

For baby boomers, education was inexpensive, home prices were affordable, and financial markets rose steadily for forty years. Since 1983, when the average boomer was thirty years old, home prices grew nearly 500 percent, and the S&P 500 stock index rose 2,800 percent. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, by 2023, boomers held approximately half of US wealth. In 1989, total family wealth in the United States was about \$38 trillion. By 2022, it more than tripled to an estimated \$140 trillion.

A report from research and analytics firm Cerulli Associates estimates that there will be \$85 trillion of wealth transferred in the next twenty years. Cerulli goes on to estimate that \$73 trillion will be distributed to heirs, while \$12 trillion will be donated to charities. This is believed to be the greatest generational wealth transfer in the history of mankind. It reminds me of Joseph’s interpretation of Pharaoh’s dream in Genesis 41: “There will come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land” (v. 29). As stewards of the all the resources God has placed in our care, we are obligated to prepare for how we will participate in this great wealth transfer. Are you properly prepared? Are you certain?

ESTATE PLANNING FOR ALL OP MEMBERS

When the General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church established the Committee on Coordination (COC), one of the specific responsibilities assigned to the COC was, “To support the ministry of the pastors and sessions in their responsibility to teach and encourage the

practice of biblical stewardship in the church.”

To help you prepare for the impending “wealth tsunami,” COC has partnered with the Barnabas Foundation to give all OP members access to free estate planning and wealth management tools designed to help you develop biblically based wealth transfer strategies. This includes ideas to help your heirs take up their stewardship responsibilities in a biblically responsible way. Experts in the field of estate planning say most people are concerned about a smooth transfer of their estate to their heirs, but inadequate planning is costly and often leads to unresolved family conflict. With the millennial generation poised to hold five times as much wealth after the great transfer, this is no small matter.

Estate planning is an often-overlooked aspect of our responsibility to be good stewards of the resources God has entrusted to us. COC has developed a new planned giving web page on OPC.org designed to introduce you to the free resources available from Barnabas Foundation. We encourage you to take advantage of the planned giving tools available from Barnabas Foundation for the sake of helping the OPC bring the good news of Jesus Christ to a world in desperate need.



Keith LeMahieu, an OP elder and member of the Committee on Coordination, is retired from planned giving work for Mid-America Reformed Seminary.

FOR MORE INFORMATION . . .

For more information about estate planning with the Barnabas Foundation, visit opc.org/planned_giving.



At the February 4 installation of Adams (center, gray suit)

NEWS

ADAMS INSTALLED AT VIENNA, VA

On February 4, 2024, the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic installed the Rev. Daniel W. Adams as the associate pastor of Grace Presbyterian Church in Vienna, Virginia. Mr. Adams previously served as associate pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in Ada, Michigan.

SHAW INSTALLED AT COLUMBUS, OH

On February 2, 2024, John Shaw, formerly general secretary of the Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension, was installed as a pastor of Grace Presbyterian in Columbus, Ohio. Tyler Detrick preached from Luke 19:1–10; Jonathan Shishko charged the congregation; and Robert Arendale charged the pastor.

UPDATE

MINISTERS

- On January 27, **William H. Sloan** was ordained and installed as an evangelist of the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic to serve as church planting pastor of Good Shepherd OPC in Onley, VA.
- On February 4, **Daniel W. Adams** was installed as associate pastor of Grace Presbyterian in Vienna, VA.
- On February 10, the Presbytery of Philadelphia dissolved the pastoral relationship between **Albert J. Tricarico Jr.** and Calvary OPC in Glenside, PA, with their mutual agreement.

- On February 24, the Presbytery of New Jersey dissolved the pastoral relationship between **William O. Slack II** and River of Life OPC in Phillipsburg, NJ, upon his retirement.
- On March 1, **Jacob G. Cash** was ordained and installed as associate pastor of Westminster OPC in Hollidaysburg, PA.

MILESTONES

- Retired OP missionary to Korea **Young J. Son**, 93, died on February 12.

REVIEWS

Psalms for You, by Christopher Ash. The Good Book Company, 2020. Paperback, 288 pages, \$16.40 (Amazon). Reviewed by OP minister Larry E. Wilson.

Christians have long loved the Psalms. Well, at least *some* of them. Well, at least some *parts* of some of them. Do you find it hard to connect with all the parts of all the psalms when you read, pray, or sing them? Me too. *Psalms for You* by Christopher Ash is a welcome resource for us. Ash—writer-in-residence at Tyndale House, Cambridge, United Kingdom—offers a first-rate exposition of selected psalms in the context of the whole Psalter and the whole Bible. He does so within a framework of sound Reformed doctrine and robust biblical theology. His expertise and hard work are evident, yet he presents its fruit in a highly readable, instructive, devotional, and pastoral manner, reflecting a love for the Psalms and the Lord they point to, as well as for the church.

Ash doesn't cover all one hundred and fifty psalms in this book. He selects thirty-

Bill and Tina Slack at a retirement dinner honoring his years of ministry in Phillipsburg, NJ



At the February 2 installation of John Shaw (center)



Would you add these OPC missions teams to your prayer journal?



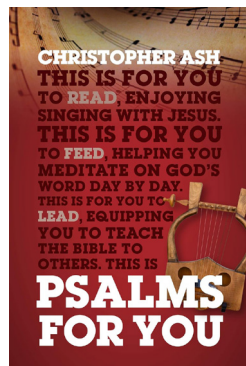
2024

- Cross-Cultural Missions Training in Mexico
- The Boardwalk Chapel in New Jersey
- Team Japan
- English for Kids in Quebec
- Team Puerto Rico
- Team Hungary
- ESL South Korea
- Churches Helping Churches

opcstm.org



five specific psalms and puts them into sixteen groups to represent various types of psalms from each of the five books of the Psalter. Of each psalm, he asks questions like: Who is the speaker? What did this mean for the original hearers? What did it mean for later old covenant believers? What did it mean for Jesus? What does it now mean for the exalted Christ and for us who are in Christ? This approach guides new covenant believers in learning how to read, pray, and sing all the psalms *in Christ*.



Ash's approach really shines when he tackles challenging psalms like 109, 137, and 139, often called "imprecatory psalms." He explores these psalms in both the old and new covenant contexts with skill and sensitivity. He also offers five compelling reasons to include them in our new covenant prayers and songs (204). He emphasizes that these are not really imprecations (curses) but rather prayers that ask God to make things right. As such, they align with the second petition of the Lord's Prayer

to read the Psalms well. The authors begin by setting the correct hermeneutical posture when approaching God's Word. The same appreciation for a precritical (pre-enlightenment) stance that pervaded Waltke's previous work on the Psalter is noticeable here. Intellectual humility on the part of the interpreter and a high view of the inspiration of the Scriptures by God are commended.

Next, they address the importance of the historical titles in the Psalter (of which there are fourteen) and whether the psalms attributed to David represent his authorship. This should have included a more nuanced discussion of the meaning of the preposition attached to David's name. The rejection of David's authorship in some of the psalms is not merely due to a hyper-critical posture toward the Bible initiated by the German scholar Julius Wellhausen (1844–1918), although a reader of this book may gain that impression. In attempting to engage these problems, it is necessary to examine first the potential meaning of the Hebrew preposition "lamed" which is prefixed to the persons named in the titles. There are several possibilities for translating this: e.g., "for" David; "by" David, i.e., belonging to David as author; "to" David, i.e., perhaps in the sense of "dedicated to . . .", "with reference to, concerning, about,;" and finally, "for the use of David." In short, each psalm should be handled on a case-by-case basis. This reviewer also thinks that E. J. Young, in his *Introduction to the Old Testament*, has captured the right posture toward the titles. He states, "In defending [he says] the essential trustworthiness of the titles, I do not mean to suggest that as they stand they are above investigation or criticism. But a cautious and reverent criticism, it seems to me will be unable to dismiss them in their entirety as valueless witnesses of authorship."

***How to Read and Understand the Psalms, by Bruce Waltke and Fred Zaspel.* Crossway, 2023. Hardcover, 608 pages, \$49.99. Reviewed by Professor Bryan D. Estelle.**

Waltke and Zaspel have written a brilliant, Christ-centered, and easily accessible introduction to the Psalter. Although they acknowledge that the Psalms speak of Christ, they recognize that they do so in various ways. The book will appeal to the pastor preparing to preach as well as the layperson desiring to know more about how

to read the Psalms well.

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Having covered these and other preliminary issues, the authors compare the various kinds of psalms represented in

POSITION AVAILABLE

Pastor: First Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Portland, Oregon, is seeking a full-time pastor. Details can be found at www.firstopcportland.org/pastorsearch. For information or to submit qualifications, please contact elder Stephen Chapman at pastorsearch@firstopcportland.org.

NEW JERSEY PRESBYTERIAL

April 27: The New Jersey Women's Presbyterian is pleased to announce that Heero Hacquebord, OPC missionary to Ukraine, will be the speaker at our April 27 meeting at Immanuel OPC in Bellmawr, New Jersey. Breakfast is at 9:30 a.m. All women are invited to the Zoom portion of our meeting at 10 a.m. Email njwomenspresbyterial@gmail.com for the link.

the Psalter in chapters 8–13: Praise Psalms, Laments, Individual Songs of Grateful Praise (i.e., Thanksgiving), Songs of Trust (refuge), Messianic Psalms, and finally Didactic Psalms. The last two chapters discuss rhetorical criticism and the final arrangement of the Psalter. Finally, there are two appendixes attached that were originally published elsewhere.

In the chapter on Lament Psalms (chapter 9), the authors take up the issue of imprecatory psalms, those places in the Psalms that have been puzzling to

Christians where we have “prayers that God will avenge the psalmist for the wrong being done by an enemy by justly punishing the violator” (306).

The authors handle the subject relatively well and even mention that there is “an eschatological aspect to these psalms that we should not miss” (309). However, strangely missing from the discussion is another commendable approach that helps us understand the role of imprecations in the Psalms based on M. G. Kline’s concept of “intrusion ethics.” Kline, building on the eschatological concepts developed by Geerhardus Vos, helps us understand the intrusion (heaven, and the future “break-

ing in” on the earthly realm) of God’s actions, especially in reference to the common grace order. (For more on this, see my article “Why Christians Sing the Psalms,” at the website trinitypsalterhymnal.org.)

This book is a real treasure trove for the preacher or Sunday school teacher since the authors give many outlines of different psalms,

especially some of the “favorites,” or most memorable.

***God or Baal: Two Letters on the Reformation of Worship and Pastoral Service*, by John Calvin, translated by David C. Noe. Reformation Heritage, 2020. Hardcover, 192 pages, \$24.50. Reviewed by OP pastor Joel D. Fick.**

God or Baal is the aptly named title of two letters from John Calvin, recently translated and introduced by David C. Noe. The title, though not original to the letters, is fitting, as Calvin is pressing his addressees with the gravity and urgency of Joshua, who called God’s people to “choose this day whom you will serve” saying, “Now therefore fear the LORD and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness. Put away the gods that your fathers served . . . and serve the LORD (Josh. 24:14–15).

The book begins with a stellar introduction by Noe. He provides useful biography and helpful historical context for understanding both the tone and the personal nature of the letters. Here he also provides insight and illustration of Calvin’s “sophisticated and ferocious style” and of his mastery of Latin. Especially helpful is Noe’s discussion of *Nicodemism*. *Nicodemism* (a reference to Nicodemus who came to Jesus in secret) refers to those who “advocated remaining secret believers in the midst of Roman

Catholic practice.”

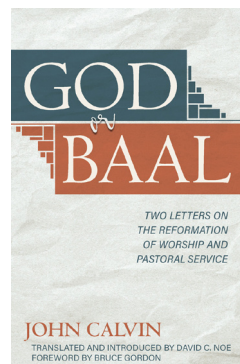
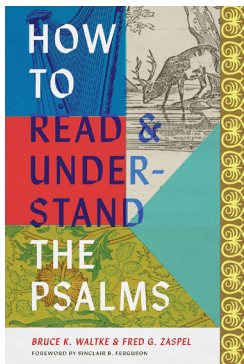
The letters, written to old friends in whom once burned the fires of Reformation thinking, are both personal in nature but vastly different in tone. The first letter, written to Nicolas Duchemin, is addressed to a “dearest brother” and one whom Calvin is “filled with the greatest anxiety for,” as he has not yet allowed himself to get free from “that Egypt” of Rome. The letter is Calvin’s advice and admonition to flee idolatry whatever the cost and “render to the Lord the confession of praise that he requires.” This first letter demonstrates Calvin’s clear thinking and polemical precision in arguing for true worship over against the idolatry of the Mass in which Christ’s death “is completely robbed of its glory” as a “unique and everlasting sacrifice.”

The second letter, written to Gérard Roussel, is harsher in tone and even a bit snarky. It’s written to a man who had once been formative in French reform and thus in Calvin’s life, but who in his ambition had betrayed the cause for a life of ease and elevation in the Roman church. Here the letter centers on what it really

means to be a minister and bishop in Christ’s church and how Christ will not excuse false shepherds. Calvin holds nothing back either in his criticism of those who are “prostituting the desolated church” as “bloodthirsty abuser(s)” or in his call for their repentance.

David Noe has done a wonderful service to the church

and its ministers in providing us with this translation and introduction. He gives us insight into the zeal, courage, and compassion of a young Calvin focused on the glory of God and the good of the church. The letters, though addressed to particular individuals, are filled with thoughtful and convicting applications of God’s Word and were clearly written with a broader audience in view. Now, thanks to Noe, we can be a part of that broader audience.





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