

NEW HORIZONS

≡ *in the* ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ≡

12 Senior Saints Keep Learning //
by *Patricia E. Clawson*

AUG - SEPT 2014

20 Review: C. Stewart's *Letters to Pastors' Wives*
// by *Kathleen Curto*



What the General Assembly Shows about Our Church

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New Horizons

in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church

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While Alan Quick (ruling elder at Covenant OPC in Komoka [London], Ontario) and his wife, Kathy, were vacationing in Israel, Alan took time out to enjoy the latest issue of *New Horizons* magazine while floating on the Dead Sea.



WHAT THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY SHOWS ABOUT OUR CHURCH



CLIFFORD L. BLAIR // The Orthodox Presbyterian Church held its General Assembly in Grand Rapids, Michigan, from June 4 through June 9 on the grounds of Kuyper College. It was my good fortune (providentially speaking) to be a commissioner and to be asked to share some highlights from the week. What follows is

by no means a minute-by-minute or motion-by-motion account of the Eighty-first General Assembly, but some observations of one participant. If you are looking for details, a daily report (and extensive photos) are available online at www.opc.org. If you desire even more detail, you can look for the publication of the minutes.

Most people in the OPC have heard the phrase “General Assembly,” and many have some idea of what it is and does, but for others it may seem obscure. A brief description of how our church is structured may be helpful to some—think in terms of three layers:

1. The local church is overseen by the pastor(s) and ruling elders, together called the session. The session is responsible for the local min-

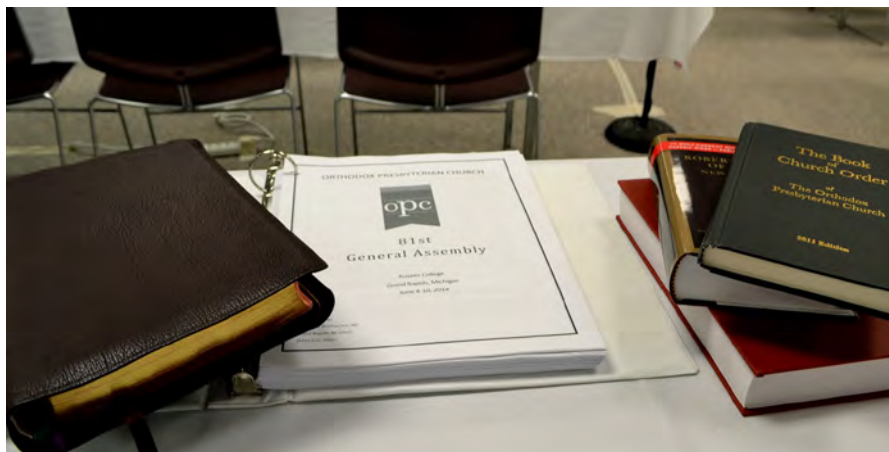
istry and the care of church members. At the end of 2013, there were 269 local churches (plus mission works) in the OPC, with a total membership of 30,758.

2. All the members of the local churches in a given area are part of what is called a regional church, and this is governed by a presbytery. The presbytery meets multiple times a year, when the ministers and a ruling elder from each of its congregations convene to oversee the work of the regional church.

It is the presbytery that examines men for the ministry, undertakes or assists in the work of church planting within its boundaries, and can be appealed to when problems cannot be solved in a local congregation. In the OPC, we currently have seventeen presbyteries.

3. The General Assembly, which normally meets annually, is the highest governing body of our denomination. Each presbytery is allotted a certain number of delegates, who are sent to this meeting. While much of our den-

omination’s work is done through standing committees that operate year-round—for instance, the Home Missions, Foreign Missions, and Christian Education committees—these committees report back to the General Assembly, which may approve, disapprove,



The agenda and important books used at the Assembly



Craig Troxel, moderator of the GA

1. The Orthodox Presbyterian Church Is Looking to Her Savior.

This year's Assembly met for nearly forty hours, spread across five days. Much of that work included making decisions on budgets and logistics. If that had been all that was set before the Assembly, it would have been a dry business indeed. Happily our deliberations were punctuated with scheduled moments of praise and meditation.

By stated rule, each assembly opens with a sermon by the outgoing moderator, in this case Jeffery Landis, pastor of Covenant OPC in San Jose, California. On Wednesday evening, Pastor Landis took as his text Isaiah 66:15–24 and called on the gathered Assembly to look on their work in the light of the final judgment and the fact that “there are billions headed for hell.” With such stark facts before us, and the gospel hope as our charge, he said, we ought to take up our work as those laying battle plans for plundering the kingdom of Satan. It was a good and fitting start to our labors.

Following this, a new moderator, Craig Troxel, was elected, a few preliminary matters were taken care of, and the Assembly recessed to begin its work in earnest on Thursday morning. As an aside, I would note that moderating the Assembly is not a task for the faint of heart (or slow of wit). Dr. Troxel was up to the task, overcoming some moments of confusion with a gentle spirit and dry



Ross Graham, the new stated clerk

or alter their plans. The Assembly may also instruct the committees to undertake actions, or it may erect other committees for specific purposes. The Assembly approves the budgets of the committees and elects their members. More than this, the General Assembly serves as the final court of appeal in matters of discipline. Just as disputed matters may come from a local church to a presbytery for resolution, so too may they come from a presbytery to the General Assembly.

As I reflect on the week spent in Grand Rapids and the business of this year's Assembly, four observations about our church stand out:

humor.

On each of the four full working days of the Assembly, there is a devotional scheduled just before lunch. On Thursday, we heard from Roth Reason (Redeemer OPC, Danville, Pa.), who spoke from Acts 3 on the reality of the power of the Holy Spirit to change people. He spoke movingly of the proof he has seen in the life of his own father, who has only recently become a Christian.

On Friday, Jim Stevenson (Providence OPC, Tulsa, Okla.) exhorted the commissioners from Acts 20 to watch over the flock of Christ in their care, mindful that each of these was bought with the blood of Christ.



The commissioners of the Eighty-first General Assembly

On Saturday, Jonathan Shishko (Reformation Presbyterian, Queens, N.Y.) took the opening verses of 1 Thessalonians and observed that, despite the many problems that Paul addresses in the letter (problems that are in every church), his opening words are of profound and constant thanks to God for them. Those assembled were challenged to consider if they saw their own congregations with a similar heart.

On Monday, Archibald Allison (Emmaus OPC, Fort Collins, Colo.) opened to Ephesians 4:17–21 and spoke of the fundamental necessity that our knowledge of Christ be manifested in godly behavior.

In the midst of our labors, we enjoyed a Sabbath rest on the Lord's Day. The greater Grand Rapids area is blessed with many churches in the Reformed tradition, including six in the OPC. These six congregations opened their arms to us, all providing lunch and many furnishing transportation as well. In the evening, the churches joined together for a joint worship service. Originally this service was scheduled to



John Currie preaching at the communion service in Ada, Mich.

meet in a high school auditorium, but a confusion of schedules called for a last-minute relocation to Redeemer OPC in Ada. With many extra chairs placed in their large foyer, nearly seven hundred people were accommodated for a rich service, including the Lord's Supper and a fine sermon from Redeemer's pastor, John Currie, from 1 Corinthians 9:19–23.

Here I must say a word about the singing of the Assembly: with the opening sermon and the daily devotions, and whenever we returned from a break, we sang a psalm or hymn. It was delightful in our meetings to hear nearly two hundred voices giving themselves to song. What was pleasant during the week become truly magnificent on the Lord's Day, especially in the evening's

joint service. Before worship began, Pastor Dale Van Dyke (Harvest OPC, Wyoming, Mich.) led us in a number of hymns, and others followed during the service. The sound was simply beautiful, a foretaste of glory.

While we speak rightly of the work of the Assembly, there was in that work a consistent

testimony that our business was not simply ledgers and numbers. This was a meeting of Christ's church, suffused with his Spirit and mindful of his presence.

2. The Orthodox Presbyterian Church Is Thankful for Her Servants.

During the Assembly, there were a number of moments when we paused from our work to express thanks to God for the labors of particular individuals. Four were noteworthy:

1. *Richard Gerber.* Following the report of the Committee on Church Extension and Home Missions, Mr. Gerber, who has served as the associate general secretary of the committee for the past fifteen years and who is retiring at the end of the year, was given some time to reflect on his labors. He spoke of the Lord's faithfulness to the denomination, congregations, church planters and their families, and to himself across the years. He spoke warmly of his faithful wife, Rita, who, due to illness, was watching via the Internet. Following these reflections, Mr. Hilbelink, the committee president, presented a fulsome, framed resolution of thanks for Mr. Gerber's many labors in the OPC since his ordination in 1972. They included twenty-seven years pastoring two congregations and serving as the moderator of the Seventy-third General Assembly in 2006. The



Commissioners listening intently



Home Missions associate general secretary Dick Gerber (left) and general secretary John Shaw

resolution was read to the Assembly and recorded in the minutes. Mr. Gerber was then given a standing ovation. On Friday evening, his retirement was marked with a dessert reception.

2. *Paul MacDonald.* A resolution was also offered thanking God “for the gift of Paul S. MacDonald,” in light of his extended service to the denomination, which includes forty-two years on the Committee on Christian Education and thirty-three years as a trustee of Great Commission Publications—the longest continuous service in the history of the joint venture.

3. *Grace Mullen.* Miss Mullen, a member of Faith OPC in Elmer (Pole Tavern), New Jersey, served for many years in the Montgomery Library at Westminster Seminary. She is now battling cancer. The Assembly approved sending her a communication declaring (in part), “We thank God for your life and the many ways your gentle, quiet, and faithful service has enriched the life of our denomination.” The denominational archives have been named in her honor.

4. *JoAnn Vandenburg.* On Monday evening, Danny Olinger, general secretary for the Committee on Christian Education, introduced a special visitor to the Assembly. Mrs. Vandenburg has been a member of the OPC since its

inception. As a child, she accompanied her parents on a visit to Leith Presbyterian Church in North Dakota, and on December 27, 1936, she was present to hear what would be J. Gresham Machen’s final sermon. Over the years, she has often opened her home to presbyters meeting in her area. Following this warm introduction, the Assembly rose in a sustained ovation for a life of faithfulness.

Each of these things could be read as perfunctory duty, but the tone, and often the spontaneity, with which they were offered and received by the Assembly betokened a deeper feeling. It was manifest that the gathering was not merely a working meeting, but a gathering of saints who were thankful for those who had long labored in Christ’s

vineyard and to the God who had raised them up to his service.

3. The Orthodox Presbyterian Church Is Mindful of Her Connections.

One way in which the long business or difficult debates are broken up is by listening to addresses by fraternal delegates from other churches. Our Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations labors to foster cordial and cooperative relations with other denominations, particularly those in the Reformed tradition. To this end, they invite representatives of other churches to briefly address the Assembly.

Over five days, we heard eleven such addresses. We heard of how some denominations are growing, sending out missionaries, publishing solid Reformed materials, training pastors, etc. We heard of those that are engaged in the work of reformation, laboring to make their bodies more self-consciously Reformed. Many spoke warmly of how they have benefited from the labors of the OPC. J. Ligon Duncan, chancellor of Reformed Theological Seminary and the fraternal delegate from the PCA, said of the relatively small OPC that she is seen as a church that “punches above its weight.”

A simple testimony to the breadth of Christ’s kingdom was heard in the range of deliveries. While all the addresses were in English, and most in some American dialect, others came with more exotic accents: Welsh, Korean, Swiss, Dutch Canadian, Japanese.



General secretary Mark Bube presenting the Foreign Missions report

Ben Westerveld's long labors in French gave an inflection to his words as he spoke for the Reformed Church in Quebec. These words gave simple testimony to the richness of Christ's church and the promise of the Scriptures that he will have his own from "every tribe and tongue and people and nation."

On the note of foreign voices, I would be remiss if I did not mention the reports we heard from three of our missionaries: Sam Folta laboring in Asia, David Okken in Karamoja, Uganda, and Ben Westerveld in Quebec. Perhaps no three foreign fields could be more dissimilar! Yet these diverse cultures are united to each other and to us in their need of the gospel.

Among the fraternal delegates who addressed us was Casey Freswick of the United Reformed Churches in North America. Significant in his report was that the Synod of the URCNA (analogous to our General Assembly) had unanimously approved the Psalter section of the ongoing Psalter-Hymnal project, which our two denominations have been working on together for some years. Our Assembly also voted to approve this with an overwhelming majority and no debate. Indeed, former moderator Jeffery Landis, considering how easily this business was handled and how past assemblies had wrangled over this project, declared himself in a state of "shock and awe."

Work will now continue on the hymnal side of the project. Marking this significant step forward in the project, the URCNA invited the OPC to hold our annual meeting concurrently with theirs at a common location in 2016. This would prove logistically difficult for us, so we suggested 2018 (URCNA Synods do not meet every year), at which time we can hope to sing from the completed songbook.

4. The Orthodox Presbyterian Church Is Deliberative in Her Judgments.

Since the Assembly is the highest governing body of the church, it is appealed to for judgments and guidance.

The Eighty-first Assembly deliberated over a number of such questions; these three give a sense of the range of matters that may arise:

1. An overture was sent to the Assembly from one of the presbyteries, asking that a study committee be established to consider "whether and in which particular sense the concept of the Mosaic Covenant as a republication of the Adamic Covenant is consistent with the doctrinal system taught in the confessional standards of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church." While most members of the church—including

many officers—may find this question theologically obscure, one of our presbyteries has suffered from contention over it. They appealed to the Assembly for help. The Assembly heard discussion of both the doctrinal and the brotherly discord that has attended this issue. The Assembly's response was twofold: A motion was passed to send a visitation committee to the presbytery to promote the peace of the church. A second motion was passed to erect a five-member study committee to consider the doctrinal question.

2. The Assembly also heard an

GA COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

Class of 2017 (unless otherwise noted):

Appeals and Complaints: S. Scott Willet; Stuart R. Jones (alternate)

Chaplains and Military Personnel: Michael Jennings, Mark Rogers; Robert B. Needham (2015); Robert M. Coie (2016)

Christian Education: ministers Gregory E. Reynolds, A. Craig Troxel, David M. VanDrunen; ruling elders Timothy K. Jackson, Wallace B. King

Coordination: minister Stephen J. Oharek; ruling elder Paul H. Tavares

Diaconal Ministries: minister Nathan D. Trice; ruling elder Seth B. Long; deacon Christopher A. Sudlow

Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations: Charles A. Muether, Jack W. Sawyer, Chad B. Van Dixhoorn; Iain A. M. Wright (2015)

Foreign Missions: ministers Richard B. Gaffin, Jr., Mark A. Green, Frank J. Marsh; ruling elders D. Michael ("Miguel") Flower (2015), David J. Gregg, Jon W. Stevenson

General Assembly Arrangements: David T. Mahaffy, Edward K. Tress; Alan W. Montgomery (alternate)

Historian: David C. Noe, Danny E. Olinger

Home Missions and Church Extension: ministers Jeffery A. Landis, Larry G. Mininger, J. Mark Sallade; ruling elders Keith A. LeMahieu, James W. Van Dam

Pensions: minister Douglas L. Watson; ruling elders Garret A. Hoogerhyde, Steven G. Veldhorst

Trustees of the OPC: minister Stephen L. Phillips; ruling elder William C. Redington

Committee to Study Republication: Bryan D. Estelle, Benjamin W. Swinburnson, Lane G. Tipton, A. Craig Troxel, Chad B. Van Dixhoorn

Temporary Committee to Study the Care for the Ministers of the Church: David E. Haney, Lendall H. Smith, David Vander Ploeg, Douglas L. Watson, David Winslow, Jr.



The hottest-selling item at the Assembly

appeal regarding the orderliness of a decision made by a presbytery to resolve a dispute between two sessions within its bounds. The details of the case were complex, and the pastoral concerns were weighty. While passing over the particulars of the case, I would emphasize that it was handled with manifest patience. The Assembly sought to apply the rules of our polity, but without losing sight of the needs of the church members and officers involved. Another case, involving the discipline of a former minister who was appealing his censure, was handled with like gravity.

3. A third notable instance of deliberative action had to do with the matter of Army Sergeant Bowe Bergdahl. As many readers know, Sgt. Bergdahl, recently released after five years in Taliban captivity in Afghanistan, was a noncommunicant member of an OP congregation before enlisting in the Army. As there has been a great deal of media speculation about the circumstances of his capture and return, our church has faced numerous inquiries—many from people seeking guidance on how to pray. Our Committee on Chaplains and Military Personnel brought a recommendation that was received and perfected by the Assembly. The following was included in the minutes:

In the wise providence of our Sovereign Lord, we acknowledge thankfully, the 31 May release of Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl USA from Taliban captivity; and that he is in the custody of the United States Army. Consequently,

for those who ask how to pray, we suggest the following, or similar, petitions:

- For grace to resist the temptation to rush to judgment, in the absence of sufficient information
- Thanks to God for the release of Bowe
- For Bowe’s recovery from any and all ill effects arising from his captivity, with healing as well for his family members
- That truth will triumph and justice will be done
- That, in the months to come, it might please our Lord Jesus to use the events of the past five years to draw Bowe and his family increasingly closer to Himself and give them His peace.

There were more decisions made at the Assembly than these, but in these three you get a sense of the breadth of

the work. I was encouraged to see the depth and thoughtfulness in which the Assembly sought to come to the most helpful and God-honoring responses.

There is a cliché about the OPC (sometimes said with good humor, sometimes not) that the initials stand for “Only Perfect Church.” Anyone who has participated in the work of the church—locally, regionally, or at the Assembly—will be quickly disabused of the notion. The OPC is far from perfect, and yet anyone attending her General Assembly and there participating in her worship, hearing her gratitude, seeing her embrace of other Reformed denominations, and witnessing the judiciousness of her deliberations, knows that this imperfect church is yet an expression of our perfect Savior’s body. □

The author is the pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in Charlotte, N.C. The photos were taken by Tricia Stevenson and her daughter Rachel.

BOWE BERGDAHL AND THE OPC

Since the May 31 release of Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl from captivity by insurgents in Afghanistan, there have been media reports and articles that have speculated on his spiritual condition and his relationship to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, since he was a noncommunicant member of an OP church when he enlisted in the Army.

Some have wondered whether the Committee on Christian Education should respond officially to statements made about the OPC in the press. The Committee has declined to do so, since it believes that it is the General Assembly that speaks officially for the church, and even then only in a limited way. Further, the Committee believes it would be wise for pastors and elders not to fall into the trap of thinking that they must or even can answer for the church if and when the media wants to know “what the Orthodox Presbyterian Church thinks.”

The Assembly’s prayer motion concerning Mr. Bergdahl and his current situation that is quoted verbatim in this report makes several important points, including: (1) the OPC regards jumping to conclusions to be unwise and unrighteous; (2) the OPC believes that the weapons of our warfare are spiritual (e.g., prayer), not carnal; (3) the OPC’s paramount concern is the advance of the kingdom of God through the conversion of sinners and the building up of believers in the faith, not the advance of any nation of the world, much less of any political agenda.

—CCE president James S. Gidley and general secretary
Danny E. Olinger, on behalf of the CCE

HOW TO CRITICIZE OTHER CHRISTIANS



SAMUEL T. LOGAN, JR. // I am dismayed by the hurtful way in which Christians often criticize other Christians. I cringe when I read a statement like the following made about a PCA minister in good standing: “The truth is that ——— does not abide by the orthodox doctrines of the Christian Church. He uses a pseudo-

intellectual, philosophical approach to propagate a man-made gospel. He is promoting a false gospel that is far from biblical truth.”

Where do we go to get instruction about how we are to criticize other Christians whom we believe are speaking and/or acting unbiblically? Of course, the answer is that we go to the inspired and inerrant Scriptures. More specifically, we can go to the interpretation of Scripture provided by Q/A 143 and 144 of the Larger Catechism. Here is a quick summary of what the catechism says:

1. We must, of course, “appear and stand for the truth.” (This is absolutely essential, and it is something for which the OPC is well known.)
2. But we are to do so in a way that:
 - Protects and promotes the good name of our neighbor
 - Demonstrates a charitable esteem for our neighbor
 - Seeks to cover our neighbor’s infirmities
 - Freely acknowledges our neighbor’s gifts and graces
 - Actively defends our neighbor’s innocence
 - Demonstrates a readiness to receive good reports about our neighbor

- Shows an unwillingness to receive an evil report about our neighbor

Note the relative amount of attention that the catechism gives to speaking the truth (brief mention) and doing so graciously (extensive attention).

Jonathan Edwards confronted this problem during the Great Awakening. He believed that “censoriousness” (by both supporters and opponents of the Awakening) was the primary tool that Satan used to attack the Awakening.

In his *Treatise concerning Religious Affections*, Edwards, in the spirit of the Larger Catechism, says this:

But here some may be ready to say, Is there no such thing as Christian fortitude, and boldness for Christ, being good soldiers in the Christian warfare, and coming out boldly against the enemies of Christ and his people?

To which I answer, There doubtless is such a thing. The whole Christian life is compared to a warfare, and fitly so.... But yet many persons seem to be quite mistaken concerning the nature of Christian fortitude. It is an exceeding diverse thing from a brutal fierceness, or the boldness of the beasts of prey. True Christian for-

titude consists in strength of mind, through grace, exerted in two things; in ruling and suppressing the evil and unruly passions and affections of the mind; and in steadfastly and freely exerting, and following good affections and dispositions, without being hindered by sinful fear, or the opposition of enemies.

An excellent example of how to offer such criticism is provided by Brandon Crowe’s superb review of Andrew Lincoln’s recent book in the June 2014 issue of *New Horizons*. Dr. Crowe is very clear in expressing disagreement with the major thesis of Dr. Lincoln’s book. But Dr. Crowe does this carefully and graciously. He therefore models “speaking the truth in love.”

Yes, of course, we must speak the truth. But we must always do so in a way that protects and promotes the good name of our neighbor. To do either one of these things alone is to fail appropriately to “image” the Savior whom we profess to love and serve. To do *both* of these things is to change dismay and cringing into delight and worshipping. □

The author, an OP minister, is the international director of the World Reformed Fellowship.

BY GRACE ALONE: 44 YEARS IN JAPAN

// CALVIN K. CUMMINGS, JR.



Cal and Edie Cummings in 1971

Forty-four years ago, a jet from San Francisco landed at Haneda Airport in Tokyo with an eager couple on board. Recently married, Edie and I had come as missionary associates to assist the OPC Mission in evangelizing Japan. Edie had contracted to teach children at the Sendai American School. I would teach English as a second language at various schools and companies, and teach English Bible classes with churches and individuals.

Context and History

When we arrived in 1970, Japan was experiencing civil unrest. The atmosphere was electric. Amid this unrest, the Mission engaged in a battle to bring spiritual peace to a land where less than one-half of 1 percent (0.4%) of the population believe that Jesus is Savior and Lord.

Centuries before, Francis Xavier, a Jesuit priest from Portugal, had been the first follower of Christ to land on Japanese shores. Christians were considered subversives, disloyal to the emperor and un-Japanese, and 250,000 of them were martyred. Although Protestants renewed the missionary endeavor in 1850, to this day Japan remains largely ignorant of the gospel. Instead, the Japanese revere ancestors (Confucianism), practice stoic endurance (Buddhism), and fear numerous gods (Shinto). It is a land that has overlaid its polytheism with the materialistic secularism of the West, producing a technological age of mesmerizing gadgets.

To be sure, Christianity is not Japanese. But Christianity is for the Japanese. Armed with this belief, we plunged into the rocky soil of Nippon.

What We Learned

The Lord would test, stretch, teach, and shape us. Our first lesson had to do with becoming childlike again. Our communication abilities were reduced to pantomime and cre-

ative imagination—even to buy a bottle of milk from the local beverage shop. We came to realize it would take more than our good looks and winning personalities to survive, let alone carry on a meaningful conversation and hopefully see lives changed. We had to become like children and live in dependence upon our sovereign, gracious Creator and Lord. After forty-four years, we continue to realize how we have to be listeners and learners before we can be useful instruments in God's kingdom.

Around the corner from our relief center in Yamamotocho live a middle-aged couple. They lost a grown son in the tsunami. For nearly a year, Mrs. T. was unable to meet people or manage to go out, except for shopping. She was overwhelmed with grief. Her husband kept telling her, "Get over it. Others have lost loved ones too." Eventually she came to the Nozomi Center, where we sat and listened to her story. Some volunteers went to her house and washed muddy dishes. A staff member stopped by with a personal invitation to come to our "Friends' Lunch." We assured her it was "okay to grieve." We know that God knows our sorrow. Mrs. T. continues to come to all the events and the Bible study at the center. Step by step, we are able to walk slowly with her as she opens her heart, and we grieve with her and tell her of the hope that there is in a loving God who gave his Son that we might have eternal life.

Walking with Mrs. T. along the path of sorrow has taught us once again the truth of the saying, "People do not care how much you know until they know how much you care." As we listened to her story, the Lord opened her heart to the gospel.

The second great lesson we had to learn was that what we had done or accomplished in the past was in the past. There was no living off of one's reputation or prior accomplishments. Each day was to be a new day when God was going to teach us to trust and acknowledge him. It was humbling to learn that we could not rely on our résumés, past or future, but only on God to help us understand who the person in our path was and how he might become the person God would have

him be.

A young woman we came to know, the daughter of the second grade teacher of one of our children, had fallen in love with a young man and wanted to be married in a church. Neither was a Christian, but I was able to counsel them as to the biblical meaning of marriage and the biblical principles of family life over a six-week period of weekly meetings. I married them, and they soon moved to another part of the country for the husband's work. Less than a year later, the bride was sitting in my office, in tears. Her husband had left her for another woman, and she was pregnant. She refused to abort the baby, as her husband had wanted. By God's grace, she came to believe in Christ alone for her salvation and raised her son in the church as a covenant child.

The third lesson that we had to learn is that one's value and worth are not based on one's theological knowledge, training, or experiences. God had to show us that if we were trying by our credentials to find significance or acceptance, then we might as well present ourselves as the Savior and stop depending upon the Holy Spirit to change hearts. As much as we believed that God is God and we are not, our doubts, fears, worries, and complaints revealed the many "counterfeit gods" we had in our lives. We had to learn to repent and give up our counterfeits. We are still learning. God is not finished with us yet. He could use "cracked pots" like us to bring the gospel to the dark "swampland" of Japan, notorious for swallowing missionaries in the slough of despondency.

I have the chronic disease of "missionary righteousness." My reputation was at stake in the lives of my children. Whatever they did reflected on me. What would others think if my children disobeyed, broke the rules, or did not perform as model children? I had to look good in the eyes of the Japanese, the church people, and the folks back home—especially in the eyes of the church community. I had to learn to confess that my family had become an idol. My righteousness had depended upon their behavior. I needed to look good before others, and my family was my showpiece. Furloughs were especially tough, as we were in the public eye. I had to learn to repent daily of my missionary righteousness and the goal of having perfect children. I had to begin with preaching the gospel to myself each day.

Looking Back, Looking Forward

God has used us, and we have been privileged to be instruments in the hands of the Redeemer. We have been privileged to be partners

with others in preparing the soil, planting the seeds, weeding the garden, watering the land, pruning the branches, and seeing the fruit. We have been involved in English Bible classes, home Bible studies, children's VBS, summer camps, children's clubs, and student evangelism. We have prepared lots of meals, and spent hours listening and talking around our table, in the streets, in coffee shops, in hospitals, and wherever. We have been privileged to see Christian homes established, school kids who have become pastors and elders, and others serving in the church as teachers. This is the amazing grace of God at work.

Yet the work of making Japan a disciple of Christ has just begun. The fields are truly white for harvest. The recent earthquake and tsunami have opened up many opportunities to minister in this land where Christ is needed more than anywhere else in the world. Over 99 percent of the people of this land are without Christ, making Japan the world's most unreached nation. And although we never pray for disaster to strike anyone, it is evident that the disastrous events of 2011 have shown these fellow sojourners their weakness and caused them to look for help. Now is the time to move forward. Now is the time to hold out the word of truth and bring the hope of Christ to those who so desperately need him while they are still aware of their own weakness.

The gospel comes to hearts that know their need. But how shall these hearts hear unless someone tells them? "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of those who bring the good news." Will you become one with beautiful feet, bringing the message of salvation to Japan? Pray for Japan. Give for Japan. Go to Japan as an ambassador of Christ, bearing the good news of the risen Savior to a people who desperately need him.



Women's ministry at the Nozomi Center

SENIOR SAINTS KEEP LEARNING

// PATRICIA E. CLAWSON



Roy and Audrey Reid in 2001

Memorizing the 107 questions of the Shorter Catechism is daunting for someone of any age, let alone a 91-year-old man who has been in and out of the hospital with heart problems. Yet that didn't stop Roy Reid, a former trustee of Westminster OPC in Hamden, Connecticut, who learned the catechism during his last two years on earth.

With a fluctuating memory, it was an arduous task, but Mr. Reid wanted to learn more about his Lord and the Scriptures, said his pastor, Jonathan Holst. Although Mr. Reid knew many Scripture passages, he wanted more structured material. After observing the adults and children recite the catechism during opening exercises of Sunday school, he developed his own system to learn the catechism. "It was a struggle for him to maintain the answers," said Pastor Holst. "He said, 'This is what I'm going to try to do for better or for worse. Whether I make it or not remains to be seen.'"

Only the session knew of his efforts as he focused on two or three questions weekly and repeated and repeated what he had learned. "Roy was an example to all the men of the church and the ladies, in spite of several brutal challenges in his life," said Pastor Holst. "It required more discipline and more perseverance than someone half his age. I didn't think he'd get to the end, but I was wrong. Roy's perseverance, faithfulness, and humility were precious jewels of our congregation."

His success, which was noted in *New Horizons* three weeks after he died, showed Pastor Holst "the evidence of the truth of Christ's promise in John 14:26: 'The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.'"

Mr. Reid is among several OP senior saints who have shown that it's never too late to learn. While Mr. Reid memorized the catechism, others have learned Scripture passages or hymns.

When Bill Stephens was in his sixties, he memorized the Shorter Catechism, but lost it without continual review. When the former elder from Emmanuel OPC in Whippany, New Jersey, was 75, he memorized all 176 verses of Psalm 119 in a year. He knew the verses so well that he recited the entire psalm backwards to his wife, verse by verse, but he let that go too. At age 82, he rememorized it in eight months, but without continual review he forgot much of it. Now at 92, he sometimes thinks about the verses and tries to apply them.

"It's good to have the Scriptures right in your mind so that you can readily recall them when you have a problem or when you want to praise the Lord," said Mr. Stephens. "Different people have different abilities to memorize, but anybody can memorize Scripture. Just keep trying until you master it."

When Robert Ream first discovered the Shorter Catechism, he was so deeply impressed that he memorized it. "I said to myself, where has this been all my life?" said the former elder at Calvary OPC in Glenside, Pennsylvania. He found the catechisms extremely helpful when he taught at a Christian academy, as well as in his own spiritual life. At 84, Dr. Ream advocates learning it at any age. "The sooner that young people get it memorized, the better it is," said Dr. Ream. "Even if they don't understand it now, they will grow into it."

Yet Dr. Ream admits that his "forgetter" is very active. Now he memorizes hymns, which he finds very difficult and which need constant repeating. "As you get older, your afflictions increase," said Dr. Ream. "I'm choosing hymns dealing with trials and suffering." After learning "What'er My God Ordains Is Right," he shared it with others. "It enables you to persevere," he explained.

Copies of the Shorter Catechism and the Heidelberg Catechism sit on the table next to Arlena Mahaffy, so that our former missionary to Eritrea can review them from time to time. With the use of magnifying aids, the 96-year-old also reads books on Reformed doctrine, even though she is legally blind with severe macular degeneration. Her computer

enlarges Bible verses to make them readable. When her eyes tire, she uses audio devices to listen to sermons on tape and often falls asleep listening to the Bible.

“The older I get, the more aware I am of how little I know,” said Mrs. Mahaffy. “I need to study the Scriptures deeply and study these doctrines. I have more time to think about them and meditate on them now.”

When she was on the mission field raising and home-schooling seven children, she didn’t have the time to study as she does now. She tries to keep up with what she has memorized. Once she went to bed and couldn’t remember Psalm 23, so she searched and searched her memory until she recalled it, and now she says it perfectly.

“As you get older, it gets harder and harder to remember things,” said Mrs. Mahaffy, who reviews what she has memorized. “You need to keep working mentally. Stay in the Scriptures and memorize what you can.”

Despite their years and health concerns, these seniors keep putting on their memory caps to learn and relearn the catechisms, Scripture, and hymns while they inch closer to glory.

MacDONALD HONORED

The following resolution of appreciation was entered into the minutes of the 81st General Assembly on June 9 for Mr. Paul S. MacDonald, longtime member of the Committee on Christian Education:

Whereas Mr. Paul S. MacDonald has served faithfully on the Committee on Christian Education for forty-two years (1972–2014), and

Whereas Mr. MacDonald has served faithfully on the Board of Trustees for Great Commission Publications for thirty-three years (1980–2014), the longest continuous service in the history of the joint venture,

Therefore, be it resolved, that this Eighty-first General Assembly go on record as offering our thanksgiving and praise to Almighty God for the gift of Mr. Paul S. MacDonald, who with humble dedication performed extraordinary service to the Committee on Christian Education and Great Commission Publications and to the entire Orthodox Presbyterian Church, and to Jesus Christ, the only Head of the Church, who in his sovereignty has employed his servant for the good of his kingdom.



Paul MacDonald

ABCs of PRESBYTERIANISM

The Sword of the Spirit

Larry Wilson

We often say that our Lord Jesus is gathering and ruling his church “by his Word and Spirit.” For example, the OPC’s Form of Government says:

“There is therefore but one King and Head of the church, the only Mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ, who rules in his church by his Word and Spirit.” (1.2)

If the Holy Spirit is the vicar of Christ (the agent who mediates his presence and rule in this world), then the tool that the Holy Spirit especially uses is God’s Word. The sword of the Spirit is the Word of God (Eph. 6:17).

Again and again, the Bible links God’s Word and God’s Spirit (e.g., Gen. 1:1–3 [cf. Ps. 33:6]; Isa. 34:16; 59:21; John 3:34; 6:63; Acts 4:31; 1 Thess. 1:4–6; 2:13; 5:19–20). God’s Word is as closely connected to his Spirit as speech is to breath. When 1 Thessalonians 2:13 says that “the word of God ... is at work in you believers,” therefore, that’s another way of saying that the Holy Spirit is at work in you believers! Those aren’t two separate works. Instead, they are two sides of the same work: God’s Spirit is at work by and with God’s Word.

Yes, it is true that the Holy Spirit is sovereign. He is free to work apart from God’s Word. But that by no means authorizes you to seek the Holy Spirit apart from God’s Word. That by no means encourages you to seek his work apart from God’s Word. The Holy Spirit may not be bound to God’s Word, but you are!

Jesus said, “The sheep hear [the Good Shepherd’s] voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice” (John 10:3–4). The Good Shepherd leads his sheep by his voice—by his Word and Spirit! The Holy Spirit works by and with God’s Word, making it effectual in the hearts of God’s people. Thus, they hear the voice of the Good Shepherd and follow him. In this way, King Jesus rules his church.

☆ Congratulations

At Bethel OPC in Wheaton, Illinois:

- The **Shorter Catechism** has been recited by:
**Eleanor Patton, Nathaniel Patton,
Ariel Sanchez, and Gabriel Sanchez**
- The **First Catechism** has been recited by:
**Caleb Fikkert, Karis Fikkert,
and Annika VanDrunen**

EVERY CHURCH A MISSION FIELD

// JAMES W. VAN DAM



Ken Smith speaking at pre-Assembly conference on evangelism in the local church

Before the start of the Eighty-first General Assembly, more than 120 Orthodox Presbyterians gathered in Grand Rapids for a pre-Assembly conference on the topic of evangelism in the local church. Redeemer OPC in Ada, Michigan, generously hosted the event, providing a warm welcome, a comfortable venue, and satisfying refreshments.

The Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension invited Ken Smith, a retired minister in the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North of America, to lead the discussion. Dr. Smith spoke out of the experience of many years in the ministry, including many successes and failures. Yet the richest blessing of all for him was a closer walk with his Savior. He reminded us of our great privilege to enjoy union with Christ by faith, and he both challenged and encouraged us to pursue the work of evangelism in our families and our local congregations.

We know it is the Lord's work, and yet he allows us to be his instruments in it. Where do we focus our efforts, though, in such a potentially overwhelming task? How can we be fruitful in our efforts at evangelism? The answer, Dr. Smith argued, is that we must actively cultivate union and communion with Christ in ourselves and in fellow believers. In that process of growing in holiness, the Lord makes us fruitful gospel witnesses. Dr. Smith divided this thesis into three distinct topics: the people factor, the church factor, and the training factor.

Lecture One: The People Factor

John 15:4 speaks about our faith being exercised in union with Christ and how that union leads to fruitfulness in life. Dr. Smith applied that principle to the area of gospel witness. He encouraged us to focus on our own Christian walk and the walk of our family. As we grow in faith and holiness, diligently using the ordinary means of grace that Christ has given to his church (Word, sacraments, and prayer), we can expect new

opportunities for witness. In fact, regular use of the ordinary means prepares us for those opportunities for witness.

Dr. Smith offered illustrations from his own life. The evangelistic effectiveness of his ministry multiplied as he focused on reading Scripture, memorizing Scripture, and praying. In one specific example, Dr. Smith described how he and his wife befriended a young woman whose heart, to all appearances, was not only closed to the gospel, but reveled in its darkness. During the course of many conversations in their home, the Lord provided an opportunity for the Smiths to minister to her lost soul. The woman, Rosaria Butterfield, later wrote *The Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert* about her experiences in coming to know the Lord.

Lecture Two: The Church Factor

The call for the church to evangelize is clear, but how can local congregations become more evangelistic? Dr. Smith reminded us that church ministry should focus not only on addressing those outside the church as sinners who need to be saved, but also on encouraging those who are saved to mature in their faith and to have a vision for ministry. When we focus on our walk with the Lord, the fruit of evangelism practically falls into our laps.

Dr. Smith suggested several ways to encourage growth and fruitfulness within a congregation: preach the doctrine of union and communion with Christ; disciple church members to realize this union and communion experientially; teach them the practical how-to of communing with Christ through the Word and prayer; involve them in small-group fellowship, where they can fulfill the "one-another" commands; demonstrate how to respond to the Word in obedience; and think in terms of fruitfulness and spiritual reproduction. The Lord's arithmetic with churches involves not only addition (Acts 2:41) and subtraction, but also exponential multiplication (Matt. 13:23).

Lecture Three: The Training Factor

How do we equip believers to do the work of evangelism? Dr. Smith emphasized the “with-him principle.” Jesus appointed twelve disciples “so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach” (Mark 3:14). This was not deductive learning from lectures and books. Instead, Jesus opened his life to them. They were with him as he taught, as he healed, as he was criticized—and afterward they talked with him about why and how. Before theological seminaries were established, a man who wanted to become a minister often went to live in the home of an experienced pastor, watching his life and going everywhere with him.

To a lesser extent, this can still be an effective way of training young seminarians and other young believers. Dr. Smith offered a number of excellent skills and habits to encourage in this training period, including personal visits in homes and hospital rooms, frequent hospitality (the home can be fertile ground for much ministry), and patient care for new believers in the local church.

Other Presentations

In addition to Dr. Smith’s three talks, we also heard two other outstanding presentations. Bill Welzien serves as the pastor of Keys Presbyterian Church in Key West, Florida. But he has also given open-air gospel presentations three nights each week for the past twenty-eight years on Mallory Square. Usually positioned between a high-wire walker and a sword swallower, Bill presents the gospel through easel presentations to tourists from all over the world. He demonstrated one of his easel presentations for us, using dots and dashes to communicate the message of the gospel. You need to see him in action to really understand his method. (You can watch many of his presentations at www.youtube.com/user/KeysChristians.) Mr. Welzien explained how his regular work at Mallory Square has changed him. In the beginning, he looked for excuses to stay home. (For instance, “Those faraway clouds will probably bring rain. Maybe I should stay home.”) But now he eagerly anticipates another opportunity to witness. “When we step out in obedience,” he said, “we find that the Word is with us.”



People listening intently at the pre-Assembly conference

Home Missions Today

For up-to-date Home Missions news and prayer updates, e-mail HomeMissionsToday@opc.org.
New editions: August 13, 27; September 10, 24.

Dale Van Dyke, the pastor of Harvest OPC in Wyoming, Michigan, presented an engaging summary of the book *Surprising Insights from the Unchurched and Proven Ways to Reach Them*. The author, Thom Rainer, interviewed 353 people who had recently become active in a church after years or even a lifetime outside the church. Rainer also visited churches that he described as effectively evangelistic. Here are some of the conclusions from his study:

- Hiding the denominational name or identity, watering down difficult teachings, and lowering membership requirements do not appeal to new converts.
- The biggest factors that attract new converts are the pastor and his preaching (90%) and sound, clear doctrine (88%).
- Other lesser, though important, factors include friendliness, having been witnessed to, and personal relationships.
- Worship style ranked dead last as a factor (11%).
- The unchurched appreciate high expectations for membership. (Even a seemingly small thing like arriving early for worship communicates value.)
- Church members should be able to list the core purposes of the church: worship, teaching, prayer, evangelism, and service (consider Acts 2:42–47).
- Pastors of effective evangelistic churches have a functioning theology of “lostness” and communicate that through passionate preaching, pleading with the lost, and commitment to personal evangelism.

Pastor Van Dyke finished his presentation with a challenge that could be summarized like this: Major on the majors (concerning what the Bible teaches). Be biblical, have conviction, and be joyful. Give priority and passion to outreach. Develop effective small-group ministry and Sunday school that encourages teaching, growth, and fellowship. Pursue unchurched family members and colleagues. Uphold high expectations for members. Never forget the power of God!

That provides a quick summary of the conference, and I hope that whets your appetite for more. You can find audio downloads of the presentations on the OPC website (www.opc.org/feature.html). Judging from comments I heard during and after this conference, the participants were encouraged by the presentations to think more intentionally about the responsibility of their local churches to do outreach and evangelism. May God grant to the OPC an unashamed, evangelical fervor and concern for souls, combined with great biblical theology!

The author is a ruling elder at Knox OPC in Silver Spring, Md.

HOW GOD REPAYS THE CHEERFUL GIVER

// KARL E. THOMPSON

Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. As it is written, 'He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever.' He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. —2 Cor. 9:7–10

If we are going to support Worldwide Outreach the way we thought to, we are going to have to dig deep and try to give sacrificially. In a very real sense, if we give only when we feel like it, the work will not be properly supported and the job won't get done.

There will be things that you need to give up in order to give to the work of Worldwide Outreach. You might not be able to get a new car this year, or you might have to live with a slower computer. Perhaps you will need to get a more modest data plan on your phone, or you might need to pack a lunch instead of eating out. Maybe you will need to clip more coupons to squeeze more out of your grocery budget. There will be things that you just won't be able to buy, and that will be a sacrifice.

Yet 2 Corinthians 9:7 teaches us that God loves a cheerful giver. How does sacrificial giving go along with being a cheerful giver? A further examination of the context of this passage shows precisely why it is possible to give until it hurts and still be cheerful in the process!

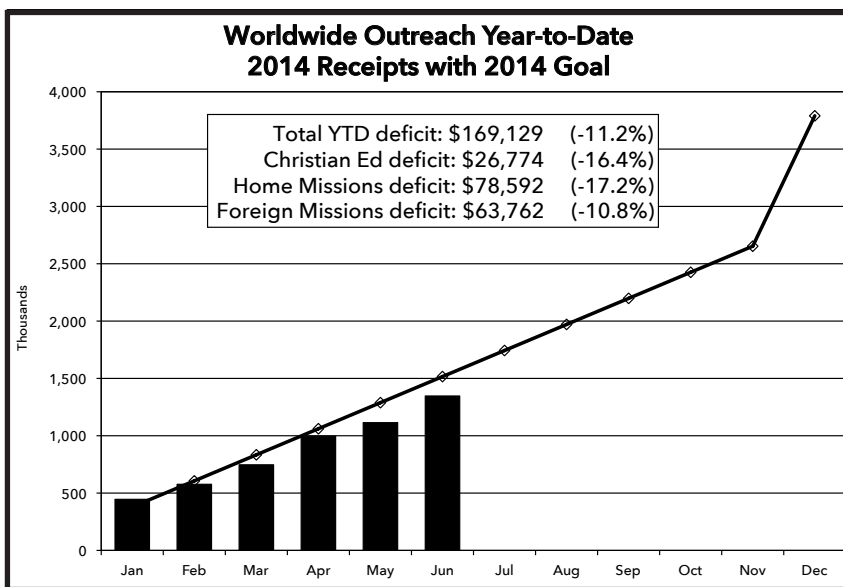
Look at verse 8. It teaches that God will give you everything you need. The word "all" appears four times in one verse. All those "alls" are there to emphasize the sufficiency of God's provision for us. Please note that the sufficiency that is promised does not mean having all the neat things others have, but having what we need to do God's will.

Verse 9 teaches us that God gives freely to those who are in need. I am not endorsing manipulative tricks to get people to put more money in the offering plate. However, it is emphatically true that you cannot out-give God. Give sacrificially and he will pay you back!

When God pays us back, he rarely pays us back "in kind." Verse 10 teaches us that when we give our money to God, he pays us back with righteousness. Now, as justified saints, we have the perfect righteousness of Christ, which does not need to be added to (2 Cor. 5:21). Let's be clear: giving money to the church does not make us more righteous in the eyes of God (Gal. 2:16). Giving to God loosens our grasp on the things of this world and teaches us to value eternal things, instead of passing things (1 Cor. 7:31). We learn that treasures in heaven are far more important than treasures on earth (Matt. 6:19–21).

To be clear, it is impossible to be a sacrificial giver when giving to the work of God. Jesus' words in Luke 6:38 seem appropriate here, as well as in their original context. God's Word gives you hope that he will repay you with the measure you use, pressed down, shaken together, running over: right back in your lap.

The author is the pastor of Menominee OPC in Zoar, Wis., and Old Stockbridge OPC in Morgan Siding, Wis.



Specific events that take place in September are in italics.

1. **Woody and Laurie Lauer**, Numazu, Japan. Pray that God would raise up men to lead his church in Japan. / **Chris and Megan Hartshorn**, Anaheim Hills, Calif. Pray that God's elect would be brought in to Anaheim Hills Presbyterian Church. / Thank the Lord for the faithful service of **Paul MacDonald**, who served on the Christian Education Committee for 42 years.
2. **Greg and Stella Hoadley**, Fargo, N.Dak. Pray that the Lord would add new families to Grace OPC. / **Eric and Donna Hausler**, Haiti. Pray for the church leaders in Port-au-Prince as they use Eric's teaching in their ministries. / **Matthew (and Melinda) Cole**, yearlong intern at Immanuel OPC in Bellmawr, N.J.
3. Affiliated missionaries **Jerry and Marilyn Farnik**, Prague, Czech Republic. Pray for this week's children's camp and youth outreach events. / Home Missions staff administrator **Sean Gregg**. / Committee on Coordination staff: **Jan Gregson**, assistant to the finance director; **Kathy Bube**, Loan Fund administrator; **Charlene Tipton**, database administrator.
4. **Drew and Sonya Adcock**, Williamsport, Pa. Pray that visitors to Omega OPC will join in communicant fellowship. / **Kaz and Katie Yaegashi**, Yamagata, Japan. Pray that many will visit Yamagata Chapel and hear the preaching of the Word. / Part-time staff accountant **Doug Watson**.
5. **Cal and Edie Cummings**, Sendai, Japan. Pray that seekers will respond in faith to the gospel. / **Tom and Martha Albaugh**, Pittsburgh, Pa. Pray that the Lord would add new families to Redeemer OPC Mission. / Short-term missions coordinator **David Nakhla** asks for fruit from this summer's short-term missions activities.
6. **Christopher and Ann Malamisuro**, Cincinnati, Ohio. Pray that contacts from Good Shepherd OPC's VBS will bear fruit. / Pray for missionary associates **Amanda McCrina**, Sendai, Japan, and **Mary York**, Prague, Czech Republic, as they share the gospel through teaching opportunities. / **Darryl (and Anita) Kretschmer**, summer intern at Providence OPC in Madison, Wis.
7. **Al and Laurie Tricarico**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for wisdom in developing strategies for ministry. / **Mika and Christina Edmondson**, Grand Rapids, Mich. Pray for the development of New City Fellowship. / Pray for stated clerk **Ross Graham** as he works with committees and individuals on their assignments from the General Assembly.
8. **Jonathan and Lauryn Shishko**, Queens, N.Y. Pray that Reformation Presbyterian Church's BBQ&A events in a local park will reach many. / **James and Jenny Knox**, M.D. and R.N., Nakaale, Uganda, on leave in the U.S. / Pray for the OPC's Great Commission Publications trustees: **D. G. Hart, John Muether, Greg Reynolds, Rodney King, Alan Strange, and Wallace King**.
9. Pray for missionary associate **Heather Foss**, Nakaale, Uganda, providing leadership at the Clinic in Jim Knox's absence. / **Ben and Sarah Miller**, Huntington, N.Y. Pray that God would allow Trinity Church to see the lost converted through outreach and evangelism. / Pray for the seminarians as they complete their **summer pastoral internships**.
10. **Mark and Michele Winder**, Collierville, Tenn. Pray that the Lord would bless Wolf River Presbyterian Church's outreach efforts. / **David and Sunshine Okken**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for the care and development of Nakaale Presbyterian Church. / **Matthew (and Trina) Patton**, yearlong intern at Bethel Presbyterian Church in Wheaton, Ill.

Mark and Michele Winder
11. Pray for **Brian and Dorothy Wingard**, South Africa (on furlough), as they speak to OP congregations about their mission labors. / **Everett and Kimberly Henes**, Hillsdale, Mich. Pray that the Lord would bless Hillsdale OPC's outreach efforts. / **Andrew (and Samantha) Fortenberry**, yearlong intern at Trinity OPC in Hatboro, Pa.
12. **Ken and Cressid Golden**, Davenport, Iowa. Pray that the Lord would encourage the people of Sovereign Grace OPC and provide more core families. / **Mark and Christine Weber**, Mbale, Uganda. Pray for Mark as he oversees the diaconal ministry in Mbale. / **Louis (and Lizette) Cloete**, yearlong intern at Redeemer OPC Mission in Pittsburgh, Pa.
13. Pray for new missionary associates (Mr.) **T. D.** (Asia), **Catherine Mill** (Uganda), and **Akiko Oshimizu** (Japan) as they begin their labors. / **Jim and Bonnie Hoekstra**, Andover, Minn. Pray for the discipleship and ministry of Immanuel OPC. / **Robert (and Shannon) Mossotti**, summer intern at Mid Cities Presbyterian Church in Bedford, Tex.
14. **Andrew and Billie Moody**, San Antonio, Tex. Pray for more visitors at San Antonio Reformed Church. / **Eric and Dianna Tuininga**, Mbale, Uganda. Pray for Eric as he prepares for the new term at Knox Theological College. / *New Horizons* staff: **Jim Scott**, managing editor; **Pat Clawson**, editorial assistant; **Sarah Pederson**, proofreader.

- 15.** Pray for Foreign Missions secretary **Abigail Cory**, who is marrying Alex Yates tomorrow morning. / **John and Wenny Ro**, Chicago, Ill. (downtown). Pray that more people will attend Gospel Life Presbyterian Church's outreach Bible studies. / **Robert (and Adelinda) Canode**, yearlong intern at Providence Presbyterian Church in Pflugerville, Tex.
- 16.** **Brandon and Laurie Wilkins**, Crystal Lake, Ill. Pray that the Lord would bless Christ Covenant Presbyterian Church's witness and add new families. / **Bob and Martha Wright**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for Bob as he directs the completion of building projects. / **Sean (and Amanda) Severns**, summer intern at Calvary OPC in Tallahassee, Fla.
- 17.** Pray for our missionary associates in Uganda: **Erika Bulthuis, Taryn Dieckmann, Leah Hopp** (on home leave), **Jesse Van Gorkom**, and **Christopher and Chloe Verdick**. / Home Missions associate general secretary **Dick Gerber**. / **David Haney**, director of finance and planned giving for the Committee on Coordination.
- 18.** **Kent and Laurie Harding**, Doniphan, Mo. Pray that Sovereign Grace OPC's summer outreach efforts will bear fruit. / **Heero and Anya Hacquebord**, L'viv, Ukraine. Pray for follow-up with contacts who attended last month's English/Bible camp. / Army chaplains: **Jonathan (and Marion) Gibbs** and **Graham (and Carla) Harbman**.
- 19.** Pray for the needs of retired missionaries **Betty Andrews, Greet Rietkerk, Young and Mary Lou Son**, and **Fumi Uomoto**. / **Phil Strong**, Lander, Wyo. Pray that God would open doors for Grace Reformed Fellowship to share the gospel. / **Timothy (and Leslie) Ferguson**, summer intern at Emmanuel OPC in Wilmington, Del.
- 20.** **Daniel and Jill McManigal**, Mercer Island, Wash. Pray that people will be drawn to Hope Presbyterian Church and find it a warm and inviting place. / Associate missionaries **Octavius and Marie Delfils**, Haiti. Pray that the preaching of God's Word will bear much fruit in Haiti. / **Jeff (and Diane) Downs**, yearlong intern at Covenant OPC in Orland Park, Ill.
- 21.** **Ben and Heather Hopp**, Haiti. Pray for Ben's teaching and preaching ministry in Port-au-Prince and on La Gonâve. / **Tim and Joanne Beauchamp**, Bridgton, Maine. Pray for unity and fellowship among the people of Pleasant Mountain Presbyterian Church. / **Adrian (and Rachel) Crum**, summer intern at Providence OPC in Temecula, Calif.
- 22.** **Sacha and Martina Walicord**, Mt. Vernon, Ohio. Pray for Knox Presbyterian Church's efforts to reach the lost. / **Mark and Jeni Richline**, Montevideo, Uruguay. Pray for a bold witness as they interact with unbelievers. / Pray for **the Psalter-Hymnal Committee** as they work on the hymn portion of the project.
- 23.** **Mr. and Mrs. F.**, Asia. Pray for Mr. F. as he resumes his ministry on the field following a yearlong furlough. / Home Missions general secretary **John Shaw**. / Summer interns: **Bulut Yasar** at Amoskeag Presbyterian Church in Manchester, N.H., and **Brian Guinto** at Reformation OPC in Olympia, Wash.
- 24.** Pray for **Lacy Andrews**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of the Southeast, as he visits mission works and organized congregations throughout the region. / **Ben and Melanie Westerveld**, Quebec, Canada. Pray for small groups that meet for worship each week. / **Jeffrey (and Maryfrances) Carter**, yearlong intern at Calvary OPC in Glenside, Pa.
- 25.** Pray for tentmaker missionary **T. L. L.**, Asia, as she and the other teachers prepare for the fall term at the university. / **Jeremiah and Elizabeth Montgomery**, State College, Pa. Pray for new contacts at Resurrection OPC. / Pray for **Danny Olinger**, Christian Education general secretary, who speaks at Mid-America Reformed Seminary tomorrow.
- 26.** **Todd and Julie Wagenmaker**, St. Louis, Mo. Pray that the preaching of the Word at Gateway OPC will bring edification and conversion. / Missionary associates **J. B., T. D., and H. L.**, Asia. / **Robert (and Grace Marie) Holda**, summer intern at New Covenant Community Church in Joliet, Ill.
- 27.** Pray for missionary associate **M. W.**, Asia, as he concludes his term of service and returns to the U.S. / **Robert and Christy Arendale**, Houston, Tex. Pray that recent visitors to Cornerstone OPC will become more involved. / **Timothy (and Alison) Cho**, summer intern at Grace OPC in Vienna, Va.
- 28.** **Mike and Katy Myers**, Hartwell, Ga. Praise God for his continued blessing on Heritage Presbyterian Church. / **Mr. and Mrs. M.**, Asia (on furlough). Pray that Mr. M. will give a vision for missions to the churches he visits. / Summer interns: **Daniel Adams** at New Hope OPC in Frederick, Md., and **Joseph Johnson** at Trinity Church in Novato, Calif.
- 29.** Pray for Foreign Missions general secretary **Mark Bube** as he reports to the Committee on Foreign Missions this week. / **Jay and Andrea Bennett**, Neon, Ky. Pray that the Lord would bless Neon Reformed Presbyterian Church's outreach and evangelism efforts. / Navy chaplains: **Tim (and Janine) Power**, and **John (and Linda) Carter**.
- 30.** **Christopher and Della Chelpka**, Tucson, Ariz. Pray for the discipleship and ministry of Covenant OPC. / Pray for Foreign Missions associate general secretary **Douglas Clawson** as the Committee begins meeting today. / **James Jordan**, yearlong intern at Church of the Covenant in Hackettstown, N.J.
- 31.** Foreign Missions administrative assistant **Linda Posthuma**. / Pray for **Larry and Kalyann Oldaker**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of Ohio, as he preaches regularly and gives counsel to church planters and overseeing sessions. / **Janet Birkmann**, Diaconal Ministries administrative assistant.

NEWS, VIEWS, & REVIEWS

MICHAEL BORG ORDAINED AND INSTALLED AT BRADENTON, FLA.

Gail Mininger

On May 30, the Presbytery of the South ordained and installed Michael Borg as pastor of Providence Presbyterian Church in Bradenton, Florida. Pastor Larry G. Mininger officiated at the service of ordination and installation. Michael's twin brother, the Rev. Kyle Borg, pastor of Winchester Reformed Presbyterian Church (RPCNA) in Winchester, Kansas, preached on "Fulfill the Ministry" from Colossians 4. Rev. Eric Hausler, Michael's former pastor, gave the charge to the new minister. Jim Heemstra, former regional home missionary, who helped found the Bradenton church, gave the charge to the congregation. Rev. Joel Fick prayed. A reception followed the service.



At Michael Borg's ordination: (front row) Rev. Eric Hausler (Naples), Rev. Larry Mininger (Orlando), Rev. Michael Borg (Bradenton), Rev. Kyle Borg (RPCNA, Winchester, Kans.), Rev. Chad Mullinix (Fort Lauderdale), elder Al Hanna (Bradenton); (back row) retired elder Jim Heemstra (Ada, Mich.), Rev. Joel Fick (Gainesville), elder Matt Folkert (Bradenton), elder Bill Montgomery (Gainesville), elder Ron Pohler (Bradenton)

UPDATE

MINISTERS

- Licentiate **Michael S. Borg** was ordained as a minister and installed as pastor of Providence Presbyterian Church in Bradenton, Fla., on May 30.
- **R. Irfon Hughes**, formerly a PCA pastor, was installed as part-time associate pastor of Shiloh OPC in Raleigh, N.C., on May 30.

LETTERS

THE COST OF SEMINARY

Editor:

I am grateful that the June 2014 issue of *New Horizons* opened a discussion on the cost of a pastor's education in the OPC. Reading the two articles dealing specifically with that cost, I thought a reader could easily come away with the impression that it is the responsibility of

two parties: the pastor and perhaps his home congregation when pursuing the ministry. It seems to me there's at least one other party: the congregation(s) the man is eventually called to serve. Implicitly, every congregation in the OPC has asked their pastor to acquire a rather expensive education so that he may serve them.

Even amongst those who graduate from university and seminary without education debt, it's exceedingly rare to find a man who has anything like the savings or retirement funds he might have had, had he been working during those years. As with any man who invests heavily in an education, the pastor needs to recoup that investment through the labors which that education makes possible. The more presbyteries, sessions, and congregations realize this simple fact, the less we as a denomination will have to be concerned about pastors who reach retirement age without the means to support themselves into old age.

Not all our churches will be able to pay their pastors salaries commensurate with their educational investment. Nonetheless, just as every congregation recognizes it must eventually pay down the mortgage on its building, so it should also make paying its pastor a proper wage an eventual goal. After all, "the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel" (1 Cor. 9:14).

Matthew Kingsbury
Aurora, Colo.

REVIEWS

Salvation by Grace: The Case for Effectual Calling and Regeneration, by Matthew Barrett. P&R, 2013. Paperback, 417 pages, list price \$24.99. Reviewed by Pastor D. Patrick Ramsey.

Matthew Barrett, assistant professor of Christian studies at California Baptist University, has written a fine book on the

Reformed doctrine of monergistic regeneration. This doctrine, which Barrett says is the key difference between Calvinism and Arminianism, teaches that God alone regenerates (imparts new life to) sinners, so that they will respond positively to the gospel. By contrast, synergistic regeneration teaches that God regenerates on the basis of the sinner's response to the gospel. The difference between these two positions is stark. The Calvinist believes that God makes the determinative decision in salvation, while the Arminian gives that role to the sinner.

After a historical sketch in chapter 1, Barrett defends monergistic regeneration from a biblical and theological standpoint against contemporary Arminians and a modified position recently espoused by Millard Erickson, Gordon Lewis, and Bruce Demarest. To accomplish his goal, the author examines the doctrines of total depravity and spiritual inability (chapter 2), effectual calling (chapter 3), and regeneration (chapter 4). He then summarizes (chapter 5) and critiques (chapter 6) the Arminian position. Finally, he considers the modified position (chapter 7).

As far as the readers of *New Horizons* are concerned, the author is preaching to the choir. Monergistic regeneration is not a controversial subject in the OPC. This is not to say that everyone will agree with everything in the book. For instance, this reviewer takes exception to Barrett's view on the presence of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. Nevertheless, this is a very good book and, for a number of reasons, a useful one even for people already convinced of its main message.

First, the comprehensive and cogent biblical presentation will reinforce this important truth and help you articulate it to others. Second, it will help you understand the diversity of the Arminian position. Barrett is careful to note and address the various opinions, interpretations, and nuances among Arminian theologians. In this regard, I wish the author had interacted with the Arminian interpretation of Scripture more throughout the book,



instead of mostly dealing with it in the later chapters. Third, it will inform you of a recent modified view and show that, despite a claim to the contrary, this new view cannot be considered Reformed. Lastly, this book will remind you that the glory of God is at stake in this debate. While the author may overreach when he says that the Arminian position

robs God of *all* his glory in salvation (p. 277), he is certainly correct in arguing that “only monergistic grace can fully preserve the sovereignty, glory, and majesty of God” (p. xxvii).

This book is an abridged version of the author's doctoral dissertation. As such, it is a lengthy, technical book, filled with quotations and footnotes. But do not let this intimidate you, because it is clearly written. If you are interested in this subject, then this would be a book worth reading.

***Letters to Pastors' Wives: When Seminary Ends and Ministry Begins*, edited by Catherine J. Stewart. P&R, 2013. Paperback, 288 pages, list price \$14.99. Reviewed by OP member Kathleen Curto.**

A book written specifically for young pastors' wives should help them face the daily challenges they will meet. It should be comforting and reassuring, to cheer and hearten them in the midst of trials that are bound to come. Most importantly, it should provoke them to personal piety and godliness.

Letters to Pastors' Wives achieves these goals. It is a remarkable collection of letters, written by wives of men in gospel ministry, addressing eighteen different subjects related to ministry. The chapters are simply written and well organized, and they include questions at the end for discussion.

The authors quickly dispel the notion

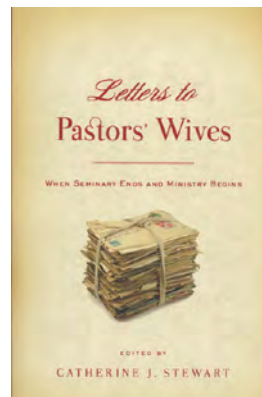
that being a pastor's wife is a thankless and burdensome job. As Catherine Stewart states in her introduction, “There is no right type of pastor's wife, only the one whose heart is wholly set on serving Christ.... We are not called to fit into a certain mold but to be helpmeets to our husbands” (p. 16). Because these authors understand this truth, this book, though it is as practical and helpful as can be, is mostly devotional, convicting and comforting the reader.

The authors are honest and open in their discussions. They offer many personal experiences and are willing to share their weaknesses and struggles. Joan Hamilton, writing on “Sharing Her Husband,” admits, “I know that I have not always got it right and I am still learning. I have not reached the point where this sharing of myself, my husband, our family, and our home is always easy. Holding these treasures on my open palm is a daily challenge and requires a daily coming to God for his help and grace” (p. 143).

Helpful as well is the excellent theology presented throughout the chapters. “The Lord's Day: A Hard Day's Rest” is a clear presentation of why we believe the fourth commandment is still applicable today. The reader is often encouraged in the use of the means of grace, and almost every chapter clearly points to Christ as our refuge. The chapters on “Bereavement” and “Depression” encourage us to do our duty and to look beyond ourselves—seemingly hard words, but helpful because they were written by women who have experienced God's grace in the midst of deep affliction.

I found the chapters on “Humility,” “Respecting My Husband,” “The Importance of Friendships,” and “Conflicts within the Church” particularly helpful. I wish I had been able to read these exhortations earlier in my own experience as a pastor's and missionary's wife.

Although this book is designed for pastors' wives, it would be of great encouragement and comfort to any woman in the body of Christ. Mrs. Stewart says,



“We write as beggars, showing another beggar where God has so graciously fed us along the ups and downs of our own lives immersed in Christian ministry” (p. 15). Her exhortation to “put on a spirit of holy joy in Christ and be the kind of helpmeet your husband needs” (p. 37) sums up what this book is about. Well done, ladies!

***God’s Word Is...: The Bible’s Metaphors for Itself*, by Faye Hake. Rivendell Press, 2012. Paperback, 333 pages, list price \$13.42. Reviewed by OP minister Allen D. Curry.**

Sometimes conservative Christians limit their interest in what the Bible says about itself to inspiration and inerrancy. But if we do, we miss much of the rich teaching of the Bible about its own character.

Faye Hake examines the way the Bible looks at itself. She explores the multitude of riches found in the figures of speech that describe the Word of God. She not only opens up the various metaphors, but also shows their usefulness in Christian lives.

Hake guides the reader through a study of the Bible as lamp, map, path, rain, bread, mirror, fire, pure gold, sword, hammer, counselor, foundation, great spoil, double-edged sword, and honey.

By constantly comparing scripture with scripture, the author also helps the reader gain a better grasp of the overall teaching of the Bible. In all of her reflections, she directs the reader to what the Bible has to say about itself.

The author demonstrates the relevance of each metaphor to practical Christian living. She makes many references to her years as an OP missionary in Taiwan. The reader is invited into her home and her heart as she explains the meaning and use of each metaphor.

The author tries to keep her work centered on the Lord Jesus. She always looks at the way the Word made flesh can be related to the written Word. Many theologians avoid this matter, but Hake does a good job of reminding the reader of this vital relationship.



Mid Cities Presbyterian Church in Bedford, Texas, recently celebrated its eighth anniversary as an organized congregation of the OPC, and on May 4, 2014, celebrated its first anniversary in its new building.

Faye Hake has garnered many illustrations of what she is trying to communicate from her years of homeschooling her own children and working with other parents. Her stories of home life are down-to-earth, sometimes amusing, and generally to the point.

Throughout the book, the reader will find genuine transparency. She connects with the reader as she talks about her life with nine children, a missionary husband, and life on different continents. She is not embarrassed to discuss how the devil has attacked her and how the Word has confronted and comforted her. Her openness about some of her personal struggles gives the reader the sense that she is writing about real-life Christianity.

One of the strongest points in the book also proves to be a difficulty at times. While Hake is to be commended for trying to maintain a consistent Christological focus, she sometimes misses the point she is trying to make. There are times when she tells the reader that we should recognize that Christ was the living Word, and then she spends all her time looking at something about Christ without tying it to him as the incarnate Word.

This reservation is minor in compari-

son with the usefulness of the book. Parents and teachers will find a multitude of helpful insights in this fine work.

***Reading for Preaching: The Preacher in Conversation with Storytellers, Biographers, Poets, and Journalists*, by Cornelius Plantinga, Jr. Eerdmans, 2013. Paperback, 147 pages, list price \$14.00. Reviewed by PCA minister and professor T. David Gordon.**

This book is an adaptation of the 2012 Warfield lectures that Dr. Plantinga delivered at Princeton Theological Seminary. He urges preachers to read literature—not



merely as an end in itself, but also as a means to the end of preaching well. Language is to a preacher what boots are to a hiker—an essential tool for success. Yes, the Holy Spirit is necessary to someone *believing* a sermon, but skillful expression is necessary to someone *understanding* it, and no one can believe a message he cannot comprehend. Plantinga is surely right: “Good reading can tune the preacher’s ear

for language, which is her first tool. A preacher who absorbs one poem a day will tune his ear, strengthen his diction, and stock his pond with fresh, fresh images” (p. x; yes, Plantinga intentionally alternates the male and female pronouns when referring to the preacher throughout the book, as he explains on p. xiv).

This book is not a “cultural literacy” list (à la E. D. Hirsch, Jr.), though a nice list of recommendations is included at the end (pp. 127–30). This book is much more about *why* preachers should read than *what* they should read. Plantinga assumes (and applauds) that preachers will read theology (“The preacher’s daily bread is Scripture and Scripture scholars,” p. 10). He challenges them to augment such reading with nontheological literature, and each chapter is a link in the chain of his compelling argument. The introductory chapter is followed by chapters on how good literature cultivates diction and provides ready illustration (chapters 2 and 3). More interestingly, Plantinga argues that nontheological literature contains a rich mine of wisdom, both general (chapter 4) and specific (chapters 5 and 6: wisdom regarding how varied and particular life is, and wisdom about the paradox of sin and grace). This brief book is rich in insightful comments, often memorably expressed.

I wish this book had been available when I wrote *Why Johnny Can’t Preach* (2009), in which I attempted to make a similar case in my final chapter. I may have persuaded no one, and perhaps Plantinga will not do so either. More likely, Plantinga’s book will encourage and reenergize those who are already at least semiconverted. They will return to literature with greater zeal and less guilt, and thus to their pulpits with renewed vision and refined diction, just as they did when they first read C. S. Lewis’s *An Experiment in Criticism* (1961), which reads like a first cousin to Plantinga.

For those who are tempted to dismiss Plantinga’s apologetic for literate preachers, I would gently remind them that Scripture itself regards skillful language with glowing praise: “A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver” (Prov. 25:11). The sermons of those who embrace Plantinga’s vision will surely be

more fitly spoken.

***The Beauty and Glory of the Father*, edited by Joel R. Beeke. Reformation Heritage Books, 2013. Hardback, 156 pages, list price \$25.00. Reviewed by OP pastor Jonathan B. Falk.**

The first ten essays of this volume are based on messages given at the August 2012 conference at Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary on the topic of the fatherhood of God. The final essay is a summary of the last three conferences held by the seminary on “the beauty and glory of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.”

The first two messages urge us to see the beauty and the glory of the Father displayed in his beloved Son, Jesus Christ. Bartel Elshout, in the first chapter, takes us on an instructive tour through the Old and New Testaments, showing that the Father’s love for the Son is revealed in all things, from creation to redemption to our glorification with Christ. Elshout reminds us that the Trinity is a relationship of love: “The Father, in the person of the Son, also in the person of the Holy Spirit, reciprocates and communicates the full essence of His love and person to the Father.” The theme for the remaining essays is established by affirming that the Father’s love for his Son is the motive for all of his divine activity.

One of the chapters of this anthology addresses the teaching of the Puritan Richard Sibbes on the mercy and faithfulness of the Father. Abundant footnotes guide us through his central message, which is “the story of God’s love,” wherein the Father chooses sinners to be his people, indeed, to be his “best friends.”

The two chapters by Derek Thomas project the power and clarity of a preached sermon. The first message is from the familiar text of Isaiah 6, which confronts us with the holiness of God and his judgment against sin. But Thomas concludes with a powerful exposition of the “Father’s holy love ... that cost the

death of His Son, an unimaginable cost.” The second message by Thomas develops the response of Jesus to the request of Philip in John 14:8, “Show us the Father, and it is enough for us.” In this chapter on “Seeing the Father in the Face of Jesus,” Thomas gives us such a clear explanation of the relationship between the Father and the Son that we could use it to instruct our young children.

The final essay, entitled “The Need for a Trinitarian Piety,” is by Ryan McGraw. I wish that I had had this chapter (and its ample footnotes) at hand during my years of ministry in New England in my encounters with Unitarians and other liberals. And I would have

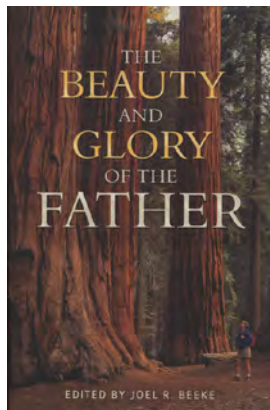
benefitted from this biblical and historical study in correcting Pentecostals who separate the work of the Holy Spirit from Christ.

All of the conference speakers quoted from the King James Version. If they had used even the NKJV, it would have made this useful volume more accessible to a new generation interested in learning about the fatherhood of God.

***Revelation: Let the One Who Is Thirsty Come*, by Sarah Ivill. P&R, 2013. Paperback, 400 pages, list price \$16.99. Reviewed by PCA member Diane Poythress.**

Who doesn’t want to know about the future? What Christian thinks he has the book of Revelation all figured out? The last book of Scripture

can be so enigmatic that Christians shy away from it. But Sarah Ivill has mined good Reformed commentaries to produce a worthwhile Bible study for women. It is both theological and practical.



Midwest Women's Presbyterial

September 27 • Momence, Ill.

- All women welcome
- Theme: "To Everything a Season"
- Keynote speaker: Sue Hollister
- Afternoon breakout sessions
- At Momence OPC, 4132 N. State Route 1-17, Momence, IL 60954
- September 27, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- Continental breakfast and lunch served
- Accommodations and nursery available
- Contact Carmen McKenna at 630-916-0816 or cmckenn5@yahoo.com

The book covers the text of Revelation in twenty-one lessons of about the same length. The introduction helpfully outlines the structure, symbolism, and theology of Revelation. A list of questions at the back of the book is intended for use with each portion of Scripture. These questions concentrate on prayer, observation of facts, interpretation within the context of the whole of Scripture, and application for learning and living. Each chapter builds around these categories. Particularly helpful are the extensive notes about the Old Testament background. One appendix addresses the three views of the millennium with a table of Bible verses. Another appendix compares the Trinity with the counterfeit trinity.

While alternate views receive some mention, the traditional Reformed perspective of covenant and Christology remain central. For example, the twenty-four elders represent the church from both the Old and New Testament, and yet are also actual individuals. Also, the 144,000 are understood as the entire church, but space is given to explain the literalist view as well. Not everyone will agree with every interpretation presented in this book, yet each reader will interact with a well-reasoned, biblically based, Reformed interpretation.

✓ Ministry-Minded Families Wanted!

Providence Presbyterian Church in Manistee, Mich. (an OP mission work), is seeking mature, Reformed Christian families and individuals to relocate and help us evangelize our community. We are looking for individuals who will add their voices to our worship and their talents to our ministry in a place where the Reformed faith is virtually unknown. Manistee has a population of only 6,000 and is predominantly blue collar and Polish Catholic. Beautiful and surprisingly affordable, the city is located on the shore of Lake Michigan among miles of uncrowded beaches and hundreds of thousands of acres of national forest lands for hunting, fishing, hiking, skiing, and other activities. Information packet available. Please contact Pastor Markus Jeromin at 231-887-4252 or jeromin.1@opc.org.



The chronological format and the interspersed personal stories that accompany each chapter invite the reader into a more approachable study. For those who want a deeper study, there are questions with research "homework" preceding each chapter analysis. The accompanying charts clarify many points. These, along with the normal set of questions, make the book suitable for group discussion. It is also devotionally inspiring for individual study. For example, concerning the scroll with seven seals, she comments, "No matter our strength ... it pales in comparison to what is needed to unfold the sovereign decree of God and open the way for judgment and salvation before us. Without someone greater than the angelic beings and ourselves we are hope-

less to satisfy God's demand for holiness, righteousness, and justice before him" (p. 68). Also, the book is not encumbered by scholarly discussions of critical apparatus and translation, as might be addressed in Revelation 22:18-19. Yet, concerning this verse, the book counters a common Arminian misinterpretation with a single sentence.

This is a Bible study book that edifies the mature and stabilizes the young, especially through the continual references to parallel passages. Mrs. Ivill often explains how various passages apply to one's mind, heart, and hands, so that the reader is not left with knowledge alone. Rather, a challenge to live in the light of God's Word enhances this accessible study of Revelation for groups as well as individuals.



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I Peter 4:10 (ESV)

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