

# NEW HORIZONS

≡ *in the* ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ≡

**3** Singing the Psalms  
with the Psalmist //  
*by Eric B. Watkins*

MARCH 2014

**5** Why Should We Sing  
All 150 Psalms? //  
*by Peter J. Wallace*



**The Psalms in Worship**  
and the Psalter-Hymnal Project

# CONTENTS

## FEATURES

- 3** Singing the Psalms with the Psalmist  
*By Eric B. Watkins*
- 5** Why Should We Sing All 150 Psalms?  
*By Peter J. Wallace*
- 7** Do We Really Need a Psalter-Hymnal?  
*By Donald M. Poundstone*

## DEPARTMENTS

- 10** Foreign Missions  
*An Unexpected Journey*
- 12** Christian Education  
*The Psalter-Hymnal Project reviewed*  
• *ABCs of Presbyterianism* • *Out of the mouth ...*
- 14** Home Missions  
*Naples, Florida*
- 16** Stewardship  
*Funding the war*
- 17** Prayer Calendar
- 20** News, Views, Reviews

Cover photo © Dan Hayes / <http://www.flickr.com/photos/zi-dan/2287257032/>

## New Horizons

in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church

**Editor:** Danny E. Olinger  
**Managing Editor:** James W. Scott  
**Editorial Assistant:** Patricia E. Clawson  
**Cover Designer:** Christopher Tobias  
**Proofreader:** Sarah J. Pederson  
**Editorial Board:** The Committee on Christian Education's Subcommittee on Serial Publications

© 2014 by The Committee on Christian Education of The Orthodox Presbyterian Church. All rights reserved.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version*, copyright © 2001, 2007, by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Articles previously published may be slightly edited.

**New Horizons** (ISSN: 0199-3518) is published monthly except for a combined issue, usually August-September, by the Committee on Christian Education of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, 607 N. Easton Road, Bldg. E, Willow Grove, PA 19090-2539; tel. 215-830-0900; fax 215-830-0350.

Letters to the editor are welcome. They should deal with an issue the magazine has recently addressed. Their language should be temperate, and they may not charge anyone with an offense. They should be brief, and they may be condensed by the editor.

Send inquiries, letters to the editor, and other correspondence to the editor at [olinger.1@opc.org](mailto:olinger.1@opc.org).

Send address changes to [CCEsec@opc.org](mailto:CCEsec@opc.org). Allow six weeks for address changes.

The digital edition (PDF, ePub, mobi) and an archive of previous issues are available at [www.opc.org](http://www.opc.org).

Views expressed by our writers are not necessarily those of the editors or official positions of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

Copies are distributed free to members and friends of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Nonmembers are asked to donate \$20.00 for an annual subscription (USD \$30.00 if sent to addresses in Canada; \$40.00 elsewhere abroad). A free e-mail PDF subscription is also available. Requests for a subscription should be sent to [CCEsec@opc.org](mailto:CCEsec@opc.org) or the address below.

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 N. Easton Road, Bldg. E, Willow Grove, PA 19090-2539.

*New City Fellowship OPC is a new church plant on the southeast side of Grand Rapids. A daughter plant of Harvest OPC (Wyoming, Mich.), New City sits at the crossroads of three monocultural communities—Hispanic, African-American, and Caucasian—and hopes to reach them with the gospel. Renovations are currently being made to prepare their building for the beginning of worship services on March 30. Pastor Mika Edmondson asks us to join with them in seeking “wisdom, humility, love, and faithfulness as we serve the Lord’s people and the surrounding community with the gospel.”*





# SINGING THE PSALMS WITH THE PSALMIST



ERIC B. WATKINS // Edmund P. Clowney once observed that in Hebrews 2, Jesus is portrayed, not merely as the recipient of our worship, but also as the one who, through his resurrection, leads and even participates in our worship of his Father in heaven. This is truly a remarkable idea!

Hebrews 2:11–12 says, “For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers, saying, ‘I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise.’”

The quotation in this passage is taken from Psalm 22:22. The ascription of that psalm reads: “To the choirmaster: according to The Doe of the Dawn. A Psalm of David.” It is noteworthy that the Psalm comes unambiguously with music, and that it was meant to be sung. The Psalms, in so many ways, are not simply the heart-cry of the individual, but the heart-cry of the congregation. They were meant to be sung, not simply as personal ballads, but in the setting of the whole church, the gathering of God’s pilgrim people in the sanctuary of his presence.

## Abandoning the Son

Perhaps one of the more perplexing features of this particular psalm is that it begins with that most painful expression from Jesus at the cross, “My

God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Ps. 22:1). The moment these words come from the lips of Jesus, we understand how utterly abandoned he truly is: his Father has left him. This is quite beyond me, and it hurts even to think about it. Thus far in his life, Jesus has made it clear that his Father is *always* with him. Jesus is the perfect Son, perfectly obedient, perfectly pleasing to his Father in heaven. And his Father is the perfect Father. He always delights in his Son, and is always with him. But at this moment, as the paramount expression of human rebellion and cruelty overtakes Jesus, his Father abandons him. As Jesus’ soul begins to sink into that dark mire of death, his all-powerful Father refuses to intervene and come to his rescue. If the covenant *promise* is “I will be your God and you will be my people,” then the covenant *curse* is effectively “I will *not* be your God and you will *not* be my people.” Jesus is left all alone.

I cannot pretend to fully understand this. The ironies are too strong for me; the paradox is too profound. But I

can relate it, to some extent, through a recent family trial. When our son Carl was four years old, he had a very serious double infection. He spent roughly a week in the ICU of a children’s hospital. Twice he was prepped for surgery and left waiting while doctors debated whether or not to cut him open, as they were not sure what they would find inside him. I cannot say that I had ever before known such a feeling of helplessness, coupled with such a strong desire to intervene. There was not a moment in that entire week that we left our son alone. He knew that we would never leave nor forsake him. Through every procedure, we were there, and while they worked on one side of him, we held the other. He was never alone.

Late one night, while holding his little hand and helping him walk the hallway, I could not help but notice the children in other rooms. It was a collage of broken, little bodies. Babies in oxygen tents, little boys wrapped in casts like mummies, little girls hidden behind a maze of tubes and tape. Most of these kids had families like ours beside



Carl Watkins, no longer ill

them. But some were alone—all alone and fighting for their lives. I was overcome by emotion; never in my life have I been filled with such compassion for other human beings. I wept over them. I prayed for them. I felt knit to their struggle. Still, I must confess that for all the compassion that I felt for these little, hurting children, there was not a single child on that floor for whom I would give my son—my Carl. None. If that is selfish, so be it. But it is honest.

Then it really hit me. God the Father had not simply given his Son for helpless little children like the ones in this hospital; he had given his Son for defiant rebels like me—and like you.

I thought a lot about Psalm 22 then, and in particular its piercing first question, “Why?” Why would God allow this to happen to his Son? I wish you could find your reflection in a mirror now, for there is the answer to Jesus’ question. The answer is you and me—his church. God abandoned his Son to that wretched cross, so that through his agony and abandonment, the Son of God might truly “taste death for everyone” (Heb. 2:9) and thus redeem us from eternal death. God’s precious Son stood in our place, sharing in what we deserve, so that we might join him in his place (heaven) and share in what he deserves!

But we cannot separate the redemptive sufferings of God the Son from the redemptive plan of God the Father. We might think of it this way: was it harder for Jesus to die on the cross for us, or for

the Father to stand back while his enemies tortured and crucified his beloved Son? You may have your own answer, but I believe it would be easier for me to give up my own life than to give up the life of my son.

This has caused me to step back in amazement and to love our Father all the more! I do not pretend to understand this great mystery. I do not pretend to understand the willingness of the Son to go the cross, or even more the willingness of the Father to give up his Son. But in the absence of understanding, there is faith and deep gratitude. We do not have to understand all of God’s ways in order to love him and thank him dearly for his grace and glory.

### The Psalms and the Christian Life

Is this not the nature of the Christian life? We believe in a God whom we cannot actually see. We follow a voice that we do not audibly hear. We are held by a hand that we cannot physically feel. This is also the nature and emotion of the Psalms. They encompass virtually every aspect of our lives and emotions. They catalogue every expression of the soul in poetic form. They summarize our spiritual experiences, both highs and lows.

But if Clowney is right, the Psalms do not simply capture and express the experiences of God’s people; they also draw us into the heart of Christ himself. They are *his* Psalms—not perfectly, for the Psalms contain confessions of sin that Jesus did not need to make for himself. Yet in so many ways they express the songs of the soul that Jesus would sing as he made his own pilgrimage through the dark valleys of this world to the highest peak of the hill of the Lord.

Martin Luther was right in calling the book of Psalms “the Bible in miniature form.” For not only is the story of the soul sung in the book of Psalms, but so also is the story of redemption sung there. The Psalms, like Genesis, begin with the hope of the blessed man who is to shun evil, keep God’s laws, and be-

come like an everlasting tree that bears fruit unto God. The book of Psalms, like Revelation, ends in the jubilant sanctuary of God, where the voices of God’s redeemed people are heard in concert with a myriad of joyful sounds, all forming one voice of praise that rises before God’s throne. In the middle of the Psalms is the story of redemption, with the trials and suffering of the psalmist displaying for us not simply the story of David, or even typifying the story of Israel, but telling ahead of time the story of Jesus, whose lonely exile on the cross would redeem the sin-laden people of God.

This is why the book of Hebrews beautifully leads us to the pastoral conclusion: “Jesus is better.” He is better than Moses, Aaron, and David as he fulfills his office of prophet, priest, and king perfectly and perpetually. He is better than the angels, for they are simply servants sent to attend the redemption that Jesus came to accomplish through his death and resurrection. He is better than the sacrifices of the old covenant, as his sacrifice needed to be offered only once. He is even better than the word spoken of old, for he is God’s final word (Heb. 1:1–2), which not only pierces our soul (Heb. 4:12), but also gives us eternal life. Simply put: Jesus is better!

### Jesus, the Songwriter

Who is the best songwriter you have ever heard? I would like to suggest the answer: Jesus. He is the author and finisher of our faith (Heb. 12:1–2)—and the author and finisher of the Psalms. He is the heavenly poet who inspires the psalms of David’s soul and ours, and assures us that God will never leave us nor forsake us (Heb. 13:5). Jesus not only leads us into the presence of his Father to hear us sing, but also joins the choir! We love to sing the Psalms because they are God’s inspired songs. And who better is there than Jesus to help us sing them? □

*The author is pastor of Covenant Presbyterian Church in Saint Augustine, Fla. He quotes the ESV.*

# WHY SHOULD WE SING ALL 150 PSALMS?



PETER J. WALLACE // “In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away” (Heb. 8:13). If the Mosaic covenant is obsolete and vanishing, then why should we sing the Psalms? Aren’t the Psalms the songbook of an obsolete covenant?

It is true that the Psalms are the songbook of an obsolete covenant—in the same sense that the Ten Commandments are the law of an obsolete covenant—and the whole Old Testament itself is an obsolete covenant! And yet, Paul writes that “all Scripture [the whole obsolete testament] is breathed-out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16–17). Furthermore, there is not a single sentiment in the Psalms that is not echoed in the New Testament as well.

I would suggest that the Westminster Confession’s threefold division of the law provides us with a helpful way to think about the Psalms as well:

1. Even as “the moral law doth forever bind all” (19.5), so also the five books of the Psalms express “a perfect rule of righteousness” (19.2)—and, for that matter, a perfect rule of piety.

2. There are many ceremonial references in the Psalms, “prefiguring Christ, his graces, actions, sufferings, and benefits” (19.3), such as references to ceremonial cleansing in Psalm 51,

and offerings and sacrifices in numerous psalms.

3. There are many judicial statements in the Psalms, “not obliging any other now, further than the general equity thereof may require” (19.4)—such as the particular statements regarding Edom, Babylon, Philistia, or Doeg the Edomite.

In the same way that we should study the whole law in order to (1) learn what duty God requires of us, (2) learn about Christ from the ceremonies, and (3) learn equity from the judicials, even so we should sing the whole Psalter in order to (1) learn what piety God requires of us, (2) learn about Christ from the types and symbols, and (3) learn equity from the way that the Psalms speak of rulers and nations.

In the *Trinity Hymnal* editions of 1961 and 1990, the OPC followed a principle of “selective psalmody,” which used partial psalms or highly paraphrased psalms in order to give David a new covenant flavor. In so doing, *Trinity Hymnal* omitted most of the “darker” themes of the Psalms—themes of judgment, death, and cursing. But according to the New Testament, the

way the Psalms talk about judgment, death, and cursing are not obsolete! As we will see, Jesus and the apostles speak in very similar ways—sometimes even quoting the “worst” parts of the Psalms! Historically, psalmody has always been at the foundation of good hymnody. When all 150 psalms are sung and prized, you will find the best hymns. When psalmody deteriorates, hymnody also follows. The following essay is a brief summary of my argument.

## Why Should We Sing?

What is our biblical warrant for congregational singing? I would suggest that Revelation 15:2–4 provides a clear example or model of congregational singing. The congregation of those who have conquered the beast and its image “sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb.” The book of Revelation provides the pattern for biblical worship—showing, indeed, that the pattern of Old Testament worship was modeled after heavenly worship. I would suggest that congregational singing is a part of the eschatological pattern that we seek to imitate and in which we participate by faith.

## What Should We Sing?

What does this have to do with the question of *what* the Christian church should sing? The songs of heavenly worship are *not* simply the Psalms of the Old Testament. The song of Revelation 15 is described as “the song of Moses” and “the song of the Lamb.”

If the pattern for Christian worship is the heavenly pattern, then there is no biblical warrant for exclusive psalmody. Nonetheless, since the Psalms are the God-inspired hymnal of the Old Testament church, they provide the foundation and pattern for the New Testament hymnal.

Why should we sing all 150 psalms? Because it is right and proper to sing God’s word back to him. This is why our congregation sings versions of Deuteronomy 6, Habakkuk 3, Jonah 2, Joel 2, Zephaniah 3, Zechariah 9, Micah 7, and the songs of Daniel, Zechariah, Mary, Simeon, Hannah, Deborah, and Moses (Ex. 15). Too often we assume that the songs of the church are “prayers,” but in fact, the songs of the church may also be where the church takes up the Word of God on our lips and sings it back to him. After all, many psalms are not “prayers,” but recitations of the mighty deeds of God. Singing is not just the “prayers of the people,” but also the admonition of the Word of God!

## But Do We Have to Sing *That*?

This may help us think about the more challenging psalms. After all, there are some psalms that are really *hard* to sing. For example, Psalm 137:8–9 says:

O daughter of Babylon, doomed to be destroyed, blessed shall he be who repays you with what you have done to us! Blessed shall he be who takes your little ones and dashes them against the rock!

This passage declares a blessing on the one who destroys “daughter Babylon” (cities are often called “daughters” in the Old Testament). Given that Revelation 17–18 speaks of the fall of Babylon and her destruction, it is worth

noting the cry of the heavenly host in Revelation 19:1–2:

Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, for his judgments are true and just; for he has judged the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with her immorality, and has avenged on her the blood of his servants.

We need to remember that *vengeance* is a good thing. Scripture warns us not to take revenge, but also gives us God’s promise, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord” (Rom. 12:19). Therefore, according to Paul in Romans 12, we should pray that God will bring vengeance against those who seek to destroy us.

Of course, this raises a serious question: when is it appropriate to pray for God’s destruction of our enemies? After all, Jesus *did* pray, “Father, forgive them” (Luke 23:34), and Stephen cried out to Jesus, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them” (Acts 7:60). It is worth noting that this same attitude is present in the Psalms. David says in Psalms 35 and 109 that he prayed for his enemies and afflicted himself in fasting for their healing when they were sick. But there comes a time when David asks God to destroy them. Likewise, we need to understand that Jesus’ prayer, “Father, forgive them,” does not mean that we never pray for vengeance.

Paul explains this in Romans 11:9–10, where he applies the curses of Psalm 69:22–23 to first-century Israel:

Let their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a retribution for them; let their eyes be darkened so that they cannot see, and bend their backs forever.

Here Paul says that David’s imprecation against his enemies should be applied to rebellious Jews in his own day. Paul will not seek to make God’s curse come to pass (he will not wage war against rebellious Israel), but he will pray that God will make it happen.

Paul says in Romans 12:14, “Bless those who persecute you; bless and do

not curse them.” Some would say that this is conclusive evidence that Christians should never curse those who persecute them. And it is true that Christians should not revile and swear like the nations do. But remember that five verses later, Paul says, “Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, ‘Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord’” (Rom. 12:19). In other words, Christians should never seek to *do* anything to curse their enemies, but we should *pray* that God will bring vengeance—as in Psalm 94.

## Conclusion

Congregational singing is where the church participates in the songs of the heavenly assembly. As such, we should use the songs of the old covenant in the same way that we use readings from the old covenant. And as the word of Christ dwells in us richly, perhaps once again in our daily lives we will begin “teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in [our] hearts to God” (Col. 3:16).

While we often prefer to avoid themes of darkness, depression, cursing, and death, we cannot do so without ignoring New Testament teaching on the subject. One of the best ways of renewing our understanding and piety in such matters would be to resume singing the “hard” psalms, singing them in the light of the glory of Christ.

Of course, congregational singing should not be limited to the 150 psalms, but it will always be nourished and enriched by the Psalter. But the relation between psalmody and good hymnody will have to wait for another essay! □

*Peter Wallace, an OP minister, serves as stated supply at Michiana Covenant Presbyterian Church in Granger, Ind. He served on the Composition Subcommittee of the Psalter-Hymnal project. His blog “Cross and Kingdom” at <http://michianacovenant.org/cross-and-kingdom> contains an expansion of this article.*



# DO WE REALLY NEED A PSALTER-HYMNAL?



**DONALD M. POUNDSTONE // Our church's Psalter-Hymnal Committee deserves credit for translating and versifying the book of Psalms and setting individual psalms to singable music. Sadly, this is the best that can be said for a radical and unnecessary project.**

The concerns we raise here admittedly come several years late. There ought to have been thorough discussion by the whole church in 2006, when the idea for a Psalter-Hymnal surfaced, and before our General Assembly voted to go full-speed ahead. And now the work has gotten entangled in a quest for better ecumenical relations with a sister church.

## **How We Got *Trinity Hymnal***

So it's past time to recall the history of an Orthodox Presbyterian songbook. Shortly after our church was founded in 1936, officers and congregations realized there was no hymnbook in print that was suitable for use in our worship. In the mid-1940s, we decided to produce our own songbook. It took more than fifteen years to reach publication. Along the way, the General Assembly studied the place of song in worship and eventually rejected the recommendation to publish a book containing psalms *exclusively*, with no specifically Christian hymns. The church also refused to include all the psalms for singing in our

new hymnal.

*Trinity Hymnal* finally appeared in 1961. It contained hundreds of excellent hymns and a wide but selective collection of psalms, psalm versions, and paraphrases. *Trinity Hymnal* quickly became much beloved and highly esteemed, both in the OPC and by schools and other churches. About 800,000 copies have been sold over a span of fifty years.

In the mid-1980s, after the Presbyterian Church in America joined us in the joint venture of Great Commission Publications, we determined to revise our hymnal. About 150 songs were deleted and replaced by new selections. Revisers, however, maintained the same balance of psalms and hymns, desiring "to make a good hymnal even better!"

*Trinity Hymnal* contains a marvelous, albeit imperfect, collection of hymns and psalms. Most people in our church have found it more than adequate, yet it remains open to revision and improvement. The Christian hymns express the fullness of biblical truth, suitable for a variety of occasions.

The psalms included cover fundamental teachings in the book of Psalms: God is the almighty Creator and sovereign ruler of heaven and earth; our God, Yahweh (the LORD), is the universal King, the only true and living God; he is holy and just, full of love and mercy, and forgiving to those who fear him; he is the gracious Savior and Protector of his people; he raised up David and his descendants to govern his elect nation of Israel as kings; God's moral law is holy, righteous, and good; and much more besides. What precious, enduring truth revealed in the Old Testament is missing from this catalog and thus absent from our current hymnal?

## **The Notion of Total Psalmody**

Unless, of course, God commands us to sing all 150 psalms. This has not been proved. One member of the Psalter-Hymnal Composition Committee wrote of his conviction that God nowhere directs his people—either in the Old or the New Testament—to sing all the biblical psalms in worship. This view has been the overwhelming consensus

within the OPC since her founding, and I concur in it. But a few years ago, without concerted or church-wide discussion, the General Assembly suddenly decided to abandon this consensus. This is what I mean by speaking of the Psalter-Hymnal project as a *radical* one. A founding member of our church recently called it “revolutionary”!

Rather than embracing the “total psalmody” view of a Psalter-Hymnal, I’m convinced we ought to continue our venerable practice of using carefully selected metrical psalms, psalm versions, and paraphrases for sung praise and prayer in our corporate worship, along with scripturally faithful hymns.

Why? Briefly—and maybe too bluntly—not all the psalms as originally written are suitable for corporate *Christian* praise and prayer. Let me explain. We need to recognize that the Psalms flow out of and reflect the “old,” that is, the Mosaic, covenant understanding and expression of biblical faith. Now, the old covenant reveals much that remains forever true: the existence and power of the Lord God, who is worthy of all praise and thanksgiving; God’s mighty works of creation, providence, and redemption, which deserve our admiration and gratitude; the sin and desperate guilt of fallen humanity; the way of salvation by divine grace through faith in a redeemer; the reality of answered prayer and the forgiveness of sins; and so on.

The Old Testament points us to Christ. But the Psalms, and the rest of the Old Testament, were written before the incarnation of the uncreated Son of God, prior to his earthly life and ministry of humble obedience and love, and before his death on the cross as an atoning sacrifice, his glorious resurrection, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the church. Our Lord Jesus, both in his teaching and in his way of life, revealed the fullness of God’s will for us.

Let’s think about the differences in outlook between the Old Testament, as represented by the book of Psalms, and the words and example of our Savior and his apostles. What are the notes

sounded in the Psalms that Christians find troubling?

The first problem we usually feel is *the invocation of curses or imprecations* against enemies. The Psalms repeatedly seek and celebrate the destruction of human adversaries (see Pss. 35:1–8; 69:22–28; 109:1–20; 137:7–9). Such words and wishes occur in more than thirty psalms. Christians have sought to understand these expressions in different ways, sometimes—mistakenly, I think—by drawing a sharp contrast between the supposedly wrathful God of the Old Testament and the benevolent, loving, heavenly Father of the New Testament.

However we finally explain those psalms, desires for revenge clash noticeably with attitudes commended by Christ and his apostles (see Matt. 5:43–45; Acts 7:59–60; Rom. 10:1; 1 Tim. 2:1–2).

We don’t have space to discuss this problem at length here, but consider these words of Prof. Mark D. Futato in his recent commentary on Psalm 109:

The psalmist was praying against those who persecuted him. The theocracy, God’s reign in Israel from the time of Moses to the time of Christ, was a shadow of future events (Heb. 10:1). One of those events is the final judgment of God. The destruction of the Canaanites in the days of Joshua was a shadow of the final judgment and not, therefore, normative for how we are to deal with our neighbors who do not believe in Jesus. The imprecations against the wicked in the book of Psalms were also shadows of the final judgment—appropriate for the era of the theocracy, but not for this present age. The gospel era is one of kindness, tolerance, and patience—intended to bring people to repentance and faith (Rom. 2:4). This is the day of salvation (2 Cor. 6:2). And this is why Jesus taught us to love our enemies and to pray *for* them, not against them. This is why Paul taught us to pray that God would bless our enemies (Rom. 12:14; 1 Cor. 4:12).

Like the psalmist we leave vengeance to God, but unlike the psalmist we pray that God would bless those who bring pain into our lives. (Cornerstone Biblical Commentary, *Psalms and Proverbs*, pp. 348–49)

To be sure, a righteous God will finally judge unrepentant sinners and consign the wicked to everlasting punishment. But it is not for us to invoke curses on those who oppose the gospel and us. God calls believers instead to love, serve, and evangelize the lost.

The so-called imprecatory psalms, however—like a broken website for a government spending program—are just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to problems for Christians in the Psalter.

A second, and related, issue concerns *our response to suffering and persecution*. For the psalmists, insults and afflictions are typically bad experiences to be abhorred and avoided. While the authors normally end up seeking refuge and finding comfort in God, they frequently speak words that verge on despair (see Pss. 25:16–20; 88:15–18; 89:46–51; 120:5–7).

Our Savior, on the other hand, taught his disciples the glories of being insulted (Matt. 5:11–12). If the world hates Christians, it’s because it first hated Jesus (John 15:18–21). The apostles learned this lesson well and rejoiced at the privilege of suffering for the name of Christ (Acts 5:40–41). We know, in ways that old covenant believers couldn’t, that the insults and sufferings we experience as Christians identify us with the Son of God (1 Pet. 4:12–19).

We still feel, of course, intense mental and physical pain. But countless martyrs over the centuries have faced torture and death, not with complaints and cries of anguish, but in the comfort of God’s peace and the assurance of heaven. Christians regularly celebrate—and desire to imitate, if necessary—such remarkable courage.

Champions of the Psalter often boast that the Psalms give voice to every human emotion—from anxiety, fear,



and frustration to depression, grief, anger, and animosity. This is true enough. But the real question is, do the psalms adequately express responses to life's trials that the New Testament commends to Christian believers? Christ and the gift of Holy Spirit have made a big difference!

The third difficulty in singing all the psalms as written is *the attitude displayed toward the nations*. The Old Testament looks forward to a day when Gentiles will worship the God of Israel. At the same time, pious Jews for hundreds of years before Christ looked upon heathen neighbors with fear, contempt, and hostility. Egypt, Canaanite nations, Moab and Edom, Assyria and Babylon—these were Israel's bitter opponents and frequently the enemies they sought to kill in holy war under the theocracy.

The coming of Christ, and his finished work of salvation, changed the way believers look at Gentiles. The resurrected Jesus sent out his church with the power of the Holy Spirit to make disciples of all nations and proclaim the gospel to every creature (Matt. 28:18–20; Mark 16:15). This momentous development in the history of salvation renders hostility toward foreigners, so common under the old covenant, out of place in this age. There's no basis for Christians to sing against foreign peoples the harsh sentiments found in the Psalms.

Finally, to take one more example, there's *the matter of a future life*. We know expressions in the Psalms that suggest the hope of enjoying God beyond this world. But in addition, at least four times in the book of Psalms, we read that physical death marks an unwanted and silent end (see, for example, Pss. 6:5 and 88:10–12).

However we try to make these gloomy words sound Christian, they in fact differ greatly from the transparent confidence and joy made known to us through Christ's empty tomb. Jesus is the resurrection and the life, and whoever believes in him will never die (John 11:25–26). Paul assures believers that to

depart this world and be with Christ is great gain (Phil. 1:21, 23). The living hope that Christians possess through union with our Lord in heaven is not compatible with old covenant expressions of dread, anxiety, or uncertainty about the future.

Please don't misunderstand these concerns about the content of some psalms. I love singing many of the psalms; they express praise and thanksgiving for the majesty and glorious works of God. It's also true that many psalms point us toward the fullness of New Testament spiritual life.

But we also ought to recognize the limitations of the Psalter's outlook, especially when compared to God's final revelation in the New Testament. This is why we should follow in the footsteps of hymn writer Isaac Watts, who famously said three hundred years ago that we must strive to give King David a Christian voice. A minister in our church told me he believed God gave us the psalms in order to teach us how to write hymns. How true!

Herein lies a serious problem with the Psalter-Hymnal project. The committee was tasked with producing a complete collection of psalms with "as much accuracy" as possible. In other words, it was charged with *denying* David a clear Christian voice! I hesitate to

use such an inflammatory word, but—to speak frankly—this makes a *fetish* of the Psalter. Why should we think God is most highly pleased when we sing his praise in words belonging to what the Epistle to the Hebrews calls an "old" and now "obsolete" covenant (8:13)? We possess, thankfully, accurate and reliable translations of the Psalms in our English Bibles. But there's nothing wrong with infusing old covenant songs and prayers with new covenant truth, insight, and understanding.

If there are better and useful psalm settings on offer, let them be tested—published and used for a while in a separate volume—and then added to *Trinity Hymnal* in future revisions. A Psalter-Hymnal is not necessary for the OPC and may well promote disunity or even the dividing up of our church into small, competing units.

I hope and pray there's still time, and that we'll seize the opportunity to discuss these matters openly and get them right. We owe it to our children and grandchildren. Even now, there's no need for us to make a huge, costly, and long-lasting mistake. □

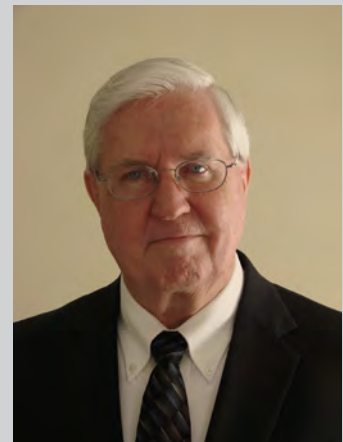
*The author, a retired minister, is stated clerk of the Presbytery of the Northwest and a member of the Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension.*



## New GA Stated Clerk Named

As authorized by the Eightieth (2013) General Assembly, the Board of Trustees of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church has appointed a man to serve as stated clerk of the General Assembly for a period of three years, beginning at the next assembly in June.

He is the Rev. Ross W. Graham, who recently retired as general secretary of the Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension. He will replace the retiring George R. Cottenden. Please pray for a smooth transition, as preparations for it are already being made.



Ross Graham

# AN UNEXPECTED JOURNEY

// T. L. L.



The author, a tentmaking missionary who teaches English to university students in East Asia

I enjoy watching movies with my students and having discussions afterward. Recently, after watching the first installment of *The Hobbit*, I turned to a student and said, “My life is like that hobbit’s.” A hobbit’s life takes place in pastoral landscapes painted in greens and blues. It is contented and naively blissful, full of steady goodness, with maybe a hint of occasional bickering, but lots of comfort food and time to read books. The story chronicles the journey of an uprooted hobbit sent into a scorched wilderness on a quest of which he had no real conception. The movie’s subtitle, *An Unexpected Journey*, is an oddly appropriate description of the journey the Lord has set for me.

I was born in Singapore into an ethnically Chinese family. My parents were first-generation evangelical Christians who taught me the Bible and were active in church. Alongside were the idolatrous practices of my grandmothers, neighbors, and nanny. When I was five, I asked Jesus into my heart because I understood that my sin, along with those gold and porcelain statues, brought fear and evil, and I had no power to do anything about it. But I knew and believed that Jesus loved me and that his blood shed on the cross would protect me and my family from evil.

My parents’ faith took them abroad to the U.S. to study in Christian seminaries and to plant Chinese churches. This journey intersected with Reformed theology when I was a high school and college student. At that age, besides “knowing quite a lot” (I thought), I had hopes for academia. I was studying at a secular university in San Diego toward a B.A. degree in classical and Chinese literature with minors in medieval history and Chinese studies. I prayed every day for more “wisdom”—although it’s doubtful I knew what that meant. At least, the exposure to paganism, Eastern philosophy, East-West mysticism, existentialism, postmodernism, and Marxism was enough to make me realize that I didn’t understand my

own faith well enough to defend it, and this sent me to seminary.

I enrolled in an M.A. program in biblical studies and suddenly the journey became unexpected indeed. I was entering that curiously precise and holistic world of Reformed hermeneutics, exegesis, and theology. I was facing that huge chasm between my sinful mind and puny knowledge as a creature versus the infinite wisdom of the Creator’s Word and will in the history of redemption. Suddenly acquiring wisdom wasn’t simply a matter of reading books; it included seeing myself, as I had as a child, in all my weakness before God every day! Thank God for Christ, his grace, and forgiveness. But as my certainty of God’s love grew, my future didn’t seem as certain anymore.

After graduation, I didn’t know what to do, so I decided on a yearlong break from school and moved to Kent, Washington, where I attended Immanuel OPC. There I found a teaching job and began to see biblical ecclesiology at work. I experienced the loving care of Christ’s body, which made me realize God’s grace in his corporate covenant community. OP missionary S. F. visited Kent and left an impression about short-term field work in East Asia. However, I was on track to work toward other things that people normally do: build a family, get a job, get involved in church, tithe, live in a nice house, watch TV, and go on trips.

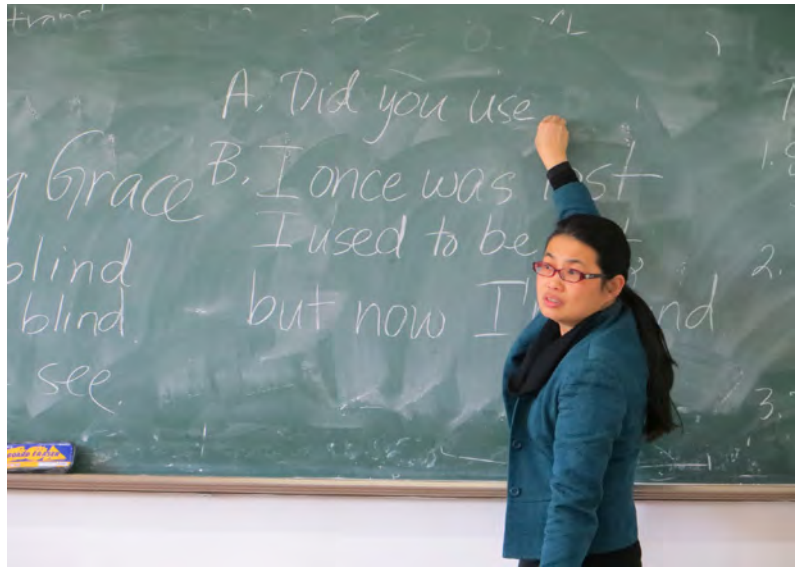
In spite of being given these good blessings, the next ten years were hardly easy. The Lord placed me on a journey that was fraught with the loss of my comfortable, normal life and the loved ones who accompanied such a life. It was an emotionally draining time that finally ended in the loss of what I had loved and desired most in this earthly life. God was tearing my personal idols away. I questioned, cried, and felt all the grief of sin, sadness, anger, and guilt. I didn’t understand this part of the journey, in which there was such pain and so many questions of “Why?,” “What did I do?,” and “What’s next?” I knew God, but I couldn’t see the dangers ahead, the way out,



or why he would take my comforts away. But somehow in the darkest nights, a gracious reprieve came: "I know that my Redeemer lives."

In hindsight, I realize that every difficulty I felt pushed into was followed by an understanding of the Lord's great interest in my growth. Amazingly, I became the recipient of many remarkable efforts by my Christian brothers and sisters to rebuild my life spiritually, practically, emotionally, and intellectually. God sent comfort through his Word and his church. Along with my family, they encouraged me to use the gifts and education that God had given me by going back to school and teaching children's Sunday school, women's Bible studies, and Greek to laypeople. The Lord had met my losses, grief, and inadequacies with a fuller understanding of his love and that of his people.

In 2008, I took a short trip to East Asia with my parents, and S. F.'s presentation so many years before came to mind. I really had no thought of pursuing field work, but I did want to try teaching in East Asia. It was only



*The author teaching an important concept in English*



*Some of the author's students*

for a year, and I was free from full-time commitments. My local church, Lynnwood OPC, and my family were supportive. It was time to say to my Sunday school children, "Remember Abraham and Sarah, who didn't have a home in the land, but lived in tents because they were looking for a city that God had prepared in heaven for them? Now I get to do that for one year. Will you go with me in your thoughts and prayers?"

It's been three and a half unexpected years, and now I've been appointed to serve as a tentmaker missionary. I'm starting to expect the unexpected. Every opportunity surprises me, not least because people want to know why I live the way I do. Praise the Lord for this journey of faith, which points to Jesus Christ, who loves and saves. I see now that he has been equipping me throughout my life for this context, which requires

all the resources of philosophical, cultural, and biblical knowledge, as well as practical understanding and counseling. I can teach. I can love the sinner and the downtrodden as I have been loved. I can look at the irrationality of sin and place my trust in the Lord. I'm grateful to serve the church as it has served me. The day-to-day struggles of my job are often wearying and frustrating—it's not a hobbit's life! Yet the Lord always reminds me of his loving sovereignty, which has brought me to this place for this time.

Thank you for being with us here in your thoughts and prayers. In the midst of this wilderness, seeds are being planted every day. Even letters and packages bring people to my home, where I can say, "Someone is thinking of me and you. He provides." There is much hungering and thirsting, and God's promises come to mind. "The LORD will continually guide you, and satisfy your desire in scorched places, and give strength to your bones; and you will be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water whose waters do not fail" (Isa. 58:11 NASB). There's fruit in the wilderness. It's not only in the lives of others around me, but also in my heart, which is learning to answer that critical question, "Is God enough for you?" The fruit is, "Yes. He has to be."

## What's New

### // Appointments

**Miss Amanda L. McCrina** (Covenant OPC, LaGrange, Ga.) has been appointed to serve a one-year term as a missionary associate in Sendai, Japan. She plans to arrive on the field later this month.



# THE PSALTER-HYMNAL PROJECT

// DANNY E. OLINGER  
AND ALAN D. STRANGE



Singing proposed Psalter selections at Bethel Presbyterian Church in Wheaton, Illinois

Last year at the Eightieth (2013) General Assembly, the Committee on Christian Education, working with the United Reformed Churches in North America (URCNA) Psalter-Hymnal Committee, presented a “First Reading” of 238 metrical psalms, 19 psalm paraphrases, and 15 psalm partials for the psalms portion of a proposed OPC-URCNA Psalter-Hymnal. The CCE also posted the psalm selections on OPC.org for the feedback of the entire church. At the upcoming Eighty-first (2014) General Assembly, the CCE plans to present these psalms again in a “Second Reading,” for an up-or-down vote on their inclusion in the proposed Psalter-Hymnal. The URCNA Psalter-Hymnal Committee will also be presenting the same psalms for approval to their Synod 2014, which this year will meet before the OPC General Assembly meets. How did the Psalter-Hymnal project get to this point?

## Overture to the Seventy-third (2006) General Assembly

The Seventy-third (2006) General Assembly started this process by adopting the following response to an overture from the Presbytery of Ohio:

That the Seventy-third General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church authorize its Committee on Christian Education to seek to develop a *Psalter-Hymnal* by 2011—which includes musical settings of all 150 psalms, in their entirety, with as much accuracy and as little archaic language and confusing syntax as possible—for use in our congregations; that it authorize the Committee on Christian Education to appoint a special Psalter-Hymnal committee.

Having been authorized by the General Assembly to seek to develop a Psalter-Hymnal, the CCE formed a special committee to investigate the interest in OPC churches. As part

of that investigation, the special committee sent a survey to ministers and sessions. When asked if the church they served was satisfied with its current hymnal or psalter, 93 sessions answered yes and 43 sessions answered no. When asked if the church they served would be interested in using a psalter-hymnal produced by the OPC, 112 sessions answered yes and 23 sessions answered no.

From this feedback and its own additional study, the CCE concluded that, while many Orthodox Presbyterians were satisfied with *Trinity Hymnal* (original or revised), there was also an interest in adding a Psalter-Hymnal containing all 150 psalms for singing that were well-translated and versified with appropriate tunes, together with excellent hymns, both old and new. In the CCE’s opinion, adding such a Psalter-Hymnal to supplement—not replace—*Trinity Hymnal* would enhance the biblical worship of the church.

The CCE then communicated its findings to the Seventy-fourth (2007) General Assembly and stated its intention to develop a Psalter-Hymnal containing settings of all 150 psalms and a selection of the best hymns from the history of the church. The CCE also communicated that it would consult with other Reformed churches through the OPC Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations regarding this project. This report was presented to the Seventy-fourth (2007) General Assembly, and no opposition was expressed in the CCE’s disclosure that it had determined to develop a Psalter-Hymnal as mandated by the Seventy-third (2006) General Assembly, which had given a completion date target of 2011.<sup>1</sup>

## Work on the Psalter-Hymnal

The CCE next established a Psalter-Hymnal Special Committee from its membership to oversee this project and to implement the mechanisms necessary to see this through to publication. Appointed to the Psalter-Hymnal Special Committee were the Reverends Alan Strange (chairman) and

Stephen Pribble, Dr. Darryl Hart, and the General Secretary, the Reverend Danny Olinger.

The Psalter-Hymnal Special Committee, in turn, determined to carry out its work through the erection of a Composition Subcommittee and a Production Subcommittee. In addition to Msrs. Strange (chairman), Pribble, and Olinger, those accepting invitations to serve on the Composition Subcommittee were the Reverends Peter Wallace, Larry Wilson, Brian Estelle (Hebraist), and Terry Johnson (Presbyterian Church in America), ruling elder James Blake (Calvin OPC, Phoenix) (who could not continue after a year), and Dr. Timothy Shafer (Westminster OPC, Hollidaysburg, Pa.). Mrs. Timothy (Lou Ann) Shafer accepted an invitation to serve as musical editor, and Dr. Dale Grotenhuis (URCNA) agreed to serve as a consultant (but died in 2012). Mr. Olinger and Dr. Hart, along with Dr. James Scott, were appointed to the Production Subcommittee.

### The Composition Subcommittee's Work on the Psalms

The Composition Subcommittee began its work by tasking its Hebraist, Dr. Estelle, to translate every psalm from the Hebrew with detailed explanation of each psalm's meaning and particular nuances of English translational choices. Before the Subcommittee approved any text and tune for a particular psalm, Dr. Estelle would share the results of his study and answer questions concerning the theme and affect of the psalm.

The Subcommittee then considered extant psalm versions from multiple hymnals, Psalters, and Psalter-hymnals, including the *Trinity Hymnal* original (1961) and revised (1990) editions, *Trinity Psalter* (1994), the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America (RPCNA) *Book of Psalms for Singing* (1973), the RPCNA *Book of Psalms for Worship* (2009), the Christian Reformed Church (CRC) *Psalter Hymnal Centennial Edition* (1959), the CRC *Psalter Hymnal* (1987), and the Free Church of Scotland *Sing Psalms* (2003). Original translations and tune arrangements were also considered.

In the working process of discussing and then selecting psalm selections, the Subcommittee adopted as a starting point the psalm list created by Dr. Wallace and the members and friends of Michiana Covenant Presbyterian Church in Granger, Indiana. A wiki (a web application that allows people to add or modify content in collaboration with others) was created for the members to post comments. The wiki also allowed the members to see the recommended selections, texts, and tune, and even to hear the selections played. E-mails were exchanged, teleconferences were held, and numerous in-person meetings took place.

After five years of labor, in which the Subcommittee had worked on translations and tunes for the Psalter selections from Psalm 1 to Psalm 150, a set list was prepared for the CCE to review at its October 2011 meeting. The list was also forwarded to the URCNA Psalter-Hymnal Committee for its study.

[Continued on page 19]

## ABCs of PRESBYTERIANISM

### Jesus Christ Is Building His Church (2)

Larry Wilson

The one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church is heavenly. We embrace her by faith, not by sight.

She will not be an object of sight until the Second Coming. Then, when Jesus Christ appears, the church he is building will also appear (Col. 3:4). We will be "caught up together" around him in the air (1 Thess. 4:17). Then we will see "the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" (Rev. 21:2). And we will hear "a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God'" (Rev. 21:3).

In the meantime, our Lord Jesus keeps building his one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church. He keeps gathering his elect through the preaching of the gospel. He keeps adding to the church daily those who are being saved (Acts 2:47).

Thus, the heavenly church inevitably manifests herself in visible form. The Spirit of Christ keeps drawing the Lord's people together to meet with Christ as his Word is ministered. This is why our Lord cautions us not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together (Heb. 10:25). Our churches visibly manifest the one heavenly church that Christ is building. The church Christ is building becomes especially apparent in the world when congregations gather for worship, and when believers fellowship with one another in love.

As the indwelling Spirit of Christ powerfully works by and with the Word, love in the local church keeps growing until it spills over, so that we love Christ's sheep in other congregations and in other groups of congregations. The church becomes visible in broadening circles. The world sits up and takes notice. It says, "God is really among you" (1 Cor. 14:25) and "See how they love one another" (cf. John 13:36).

## ● Out of the Mouth . . .

I told my three-year-old that a new baby named Paul had been born in our church family. "I know that name!" she exclaimed. I was glad she had been paying attention to the Bible stories. "Yeah," she continued, "we have a room at our church with that name—the Fellowship Paul!"

—Amanda Dean  
Tallahassee, Fla.

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



# AN OPEN DOOR OF OPPORTUNITY IN NAPLES

// ERIC R. HAUSLER



*Mission team teaching a new hymn prior to the morning worship service at Naples Presbyterian Church in Naples, Florida*

In Paul's first letter to the Christians in Corinth, he mentions his desire to visit them in the future, but for the time being he will remain preaching and teaching in Ephesus, where, he says, "a wide door for effective work has opened to me" (1 Cor. 16:9 *ESV*). Paul saw before him a significant opportunity in Ephesus for great usefulness in preaching the gospel and building the church. From my new vantage point as a church planter in Southwest Florida, I believe that I can say the very same thing as Paul!

In early 2013, I responded to a call from the Home Missions Committee of the Presbytery of the South to come down to Naples, Florida, to begin another OP church. After fifteen years of planting and establishing the congregation of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in Ada, Michigan, my wife and I believed this call was "of the Lord" and that he had opened a wide door of opportunity for us.

As new empty nesters, Donna and I moved back to Southwest Florida last summer and immediately began rounding up the many contacts interested in forming a new OP congregation.

From the time we first responded to this call until today, we have experienced the Lord's hand of blessing and sovereign providence again and again. The Lord provided a wonderful place for us to worship in the conference room of the new Holiday Inn Express and Suites just off a major thoroughfare, and there we held our first worship services on November 3, 2013. Many seemingly random conversa-

tions with strangers have ended up being ideal opportunities to invite people to worship. One conversation with an old friend developed into a weekly opportunity for me to preach in two different cell blocks at the Collier County Jail on Monday afternoons, and as a result of the jail ministry, the family of an inmate has visited our church on Sunday evenings.

Since worship services began, we have seen our attendance fluctuate with vacationers and snowbirds attending along with our core group, but generally we have some 30–40 people attending the morning service, and about 20–30 people come for the evening service. We have counted nearly 60 people for worship on more than one occasion, which leads us to believe that the Lord will cause this little church to grow as he gives us more and more opportunities for ministry and as more people move into this community.

Naples itself is poised for great growth, especially in the east and south parts of town, which we are targeting. Collier County's population grew by 27 percent in the decade since 2000, to 320,101, almost three times faster than the growth rate of the nation's population. And recently our local newspapers have reported that Florida is likely to become the third

most populous state in the nation, bumping New York down to fourth. We definitely see that coming growth here in East Naples, as three major housing developments are currently under construction with 1,000, 1,600, and 2,210 residences, respectively.

Although there are NAPARC (North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council) churches 20–30 minutes to the north or south of us, East Naples and South Naples



*Collier County Jail, where Eric Hausler preaches on Mondays*





A mission team from Redeemer OPC in Ada, Michigan, led by Pastor Jim Mong (back, far right), with Pastor Eric Hausler (back, far left) and his wife, Donna (front, second from right)

have no Reformed witness. We therefore have a wide-open door of opportunity to reach an ethnically and economically diverse part of town, with several large Hispanic and Haitian neighborhoods, and now new, gated housing developments just across the highway. Who will reach this rapidly growing community with the gospel of the grace of God? Who will be the salt and light to the laborers in the booming tourism industry and to those relocating here to make Naples their new home? We believe that Naples Presbyterian Church has been established for such a time as this, and here is how you can help:

1. Pray regularly for us. Intercede for the little “seedling” that the Lord has planted here, asking God to protect us, provide for us, and bring about healthy growth.
2. Spread the word that the Lord has begun a new OP church in Naples. If you know of someone who lives in the area that might be interested, please let him or her know. And whenever you hear people mention the city of Naples, tell them what has recently begun here with our new church. You could be just the one to make a difference in their lives.
3. Send a team of youth and adults to come and help us by canvassing neighborhoods in the east and south parts of Naples and by making our church known through various service projects in our community. We can help you find lodging nearby and set up a schedule for ministry. A team of youth, college students, and adults from Ada, Michigan, came during winter break, which was a great boost to our new congregation.
4. Lastly, consider joining us in the work! We are praying

### **Home Missions Today**

For up-to-date Home Missions news and prayer updates, e-mail [HomeMissionsToday@opc.org](mailto:HomeMissionsToday@opc.org).  
New editions: March 12, 26.

for mature believers and whole families who might be willing to move here and join us in this strategic city on the beautiful southwest coast of Florida along the Gulf of Mexico.

As Naples Presbyterian Church is in its infancy, these five principles form the vision statement of what the presbytery’s Home Missions Committee approved as priorities for this new church:

1. *Preaching and Teaching for Changed Lives*—through the faithful proclamation of the gospel and the relevant instruction of God’s truth for our lives according to the Calvinistic, Reformed faith.
2. *Wholehearted, God-Honoring, Biblical Worship*—of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with true affection and joy, sincerity of heart, readiness of mind ... all according to the Word of God.
3. *Growing in Christ*—promoting spiritual growth and providing personal care through the eventual ministry of elders and deacons and an expanding network of Bible studies.
4. *Serving the Lord*—mobilizing individuals to use their gifts, talents, and passions to serve the Lord and his church.
5. *Impacting Our World*—through prayer, encouragement, giving, and serving, both at home and abroad.

With so many evidences of God’s marvelous provision over this past year, and because during the months since our arrival we have seen numerous encouraging, divine appointments with people here in Naples, we echo the psalmist in saying, “The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy” (Ps. 126:3 NIV). Please pray with us, that we would remain faithful to the Lord Jesus as we seek to establish a new church in this important city, making use of this wide door that the Lord has placed before us to preach the gospel. And in the end, may the Lord exalt his name and his word above all things, through the ministry of Naples Presbyterian Church! To God be the glory—great things he is doing in our midst.



A large gated community under construction in Naples

# FUNDING THE WAR AGAINST SATAN

// GLENN D. JERRELL

During WW I and WW II, the concept of “funding the war” described the crucial task of providing the resources needed for victory. And isn’t the preaching of the gospel even more necessary and urgent? How about the tasks of Christian education, home missions, and foreign missions? What priority do they have locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally? Are we persuaded of giving with a sense of what we are funding? Do we see the ministries at the end of our dollars as life-and-death issues—the preaching of Christ crucified in the church and to a lost world?

In the New Testament we read, “Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil” (Eph. 6:11). We are the church militant! Do not underestimate the enemy! After all, “your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour” (1 Peter 5:8). The Scriptures also teach us to “take every thought captive to obey Christ.” Your whole life is engaged in this struggle—and that includes your giving. Resources for gospel ministry are needed now!

While Satan’s attacks stretch throughout history, the response of God is sovereign and the fulfillment of his promises is enduring. God said to that ancient Serpent, “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel” (Gen. 3:15). God fulfilled this promise in the coming of his Son and in Christ’s death on the cross. The battle over sin and its misery is won by the Savior as he fulfills the ancient promise on the cross.

The warfare between God and Satan should generate a life-and-death sense of urgency to support and sustain gospel ministry with all the means that God gives us and to do so from generation to generation. The title of John Bunyan’s book reflects this: *The Holy War, Made by King Shaddai upon Diabolus, for the Regaining of the Metropolis of the World or the*

*Losing and Taking Again of the Town of Mansoul.*

Do you know that those who serve on the denominational Committees on Christian Education, Home Missions, and Foreign Missions have a passion for ministries that are not happening or are restrained in their scope because of finances? At this moment, they are giving thanks to God with the rest of the church for the giving that met the 2013 Worldwide Outreach budget—they had prepared for cuts in ministry in view of possible shortfalls in giving.

Those serving on these committees are passionate for the gospel, zealous for discipling, and ready to have the gospel run far and wide! They are not complainers. They are not the disgruntled of the earth. Rather, they are endeavoring to serve Christ and his church with every dollar that comes to them for God-glorifying ministry! Each of our general secretaries, as he serves the church with grace, has stories he could tell of ministry denied because of lack of funds. You would rejoice with what these general secretaries and Committees would facilitate in the service of Christ, if they had expanded resources.

J. I. Packer wrote: “Today, pastors often tell us that when people become Christians, the last thing in their life to be touched by God’s transforming grace is regularly their wallet.”

Realistic budgets and projections of giving must be drawn up as the people in the churches pour out their hearts in offering to God, remembering that “the war to end all wars” focuses on the cross and the empty tomb. Take up your cross and follow Christ. There is a greater victory to be won through WWO than even in WW I or WW II. May we have more and more opportunity to rejoice with the angels of heaven!

*The author is the regional home missionary for the Presbytery of Michigan and Ontario.*

## Worldwide Outreach in 2013

We rejoice to report that contributions to Worldwide Outreach totaled \$3,858,433 in 2013, exceeding our goal of \$3,695,000. The Committee on Christian Education received over 103% of its request, and the Committees on Foreign Missions and on Home Missions and Church Extension received nearly 105% of their requests.

Contributing to this success was \$769,325 from the Thank Offering. An additional \$221,694 was received in January, to be credited to Worldwide Outreach in 2014, and some more Thank Offering receipts are still expected. This pushes the total well beyond our \$850,000 goal. This gives us a good head start in the new year!

## MARCH

1. **Ben and Melanie Westerveld**, Quebec, Canada. Pray that the Lord would open the hearts of seekers and that they will believe. / **Joshua and Jessica Lyon**, Carson, Calif. Pray that recent visitors to Grace OPC will feel at home there. / Air Force chaplain **Cornelius (and Deidre) Johnson** and National Guard chaplain **David (and Jenna) DeRienzo** (deployed).
2. **Joseph and Carla Fowler**, Gastonia, N.C. Pray for continued faithfulness as Reformation OPC moves toward particularization. / **Heero and Anya Hacquebord**, L'viv, Ukraine. Pray for safety for the people of Ukraine during times of political unrest. / **Tony (and Mica) Garbarino**, yearlong intern at Covenant OPC in San Jose, Calif.
3. **Ben and Heather Hopp**, Haiti. Pray for short-term teams going to Haiti to assist in ministry activities. / **Jonathan and Kristin Moersch**, Capistrano Beach, Calif. Pray that Trinity OPC will have a bold and faithful witness to their community. / **Mark Lowrey**, publications editor for Great Commission Publications.
4. **Bill and Sessie Welzien**, Key West, Fla. Pray for Keys Presbyterian Church, that God's elect will be brought in. / Associate missionaries **Octavius and Marie Delfils**, Haiti. Pray that God would bless the saints in Port-au-Prince as they gather weekly for worship. / Pray for **the Psalter-Hymnal Committee** as it meets with representatives of the URC this week in Wheaton, Ill.
5. **Eric and Donna Hausler**, Haiti. Pray for Eric as he translates material into Creole for use in the Haitian churches. / **Kim and Barbara Kuhfuss**, Eau Claire, Wis. Pray that God would bless Providence Reformed Church's outreach efforts. / *New Horizons* staff: **Jim Scott**, managing editor; **Pat Clawson**, editorial assistant; **Sarah Pederson**, proofreader.
6. Home Missions staff administrator **Sean Gregg**. / **Brian and Dorothy Wingard**, South Africa. Pray that they will have opportunities to build good relationships with the students at Mukhanyo Theological College. / Pray for short-term missions coordinator **David Nakhla** as he adjusts to his additional responsibilities as the administrator for the Committee on Diaconal Ministries.
7. **Mark and Christine Weber**, Mbale, Uganda. Pray for Mark as he meets with the OPCU presbytery's diaconal committee. / **Tom and Martha Albaugh**, Pittsburgh, Pa. Pray for God's Spirit to direct and empower the gospel witness of Redeemer OPC Mission. / **David (and Kathryn) Landow**, yearlong intern at Emmanuel OPC in Wilmington, Del.
8. **Drew and Sonya Adcock**, Williamsport, Pa. Pray for the continued development of Omega OPC's ministry. / **Bob and Martha Wright**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray that many Karimojong will hear the gospel through the diaconal outreaches. / Pray for General Assembly stated clerk **George Cottenden** as he works on a procedural manual for the stated clerk's office.
9. **Eric and Dianna Tuininga**, Mbale, Uganda. Pray for Eric as he mentors pastors in the village churches around Mbale. / **Todd and Julie Wagenmaker**, St. Louis, Mo. Rejoice with Gateway OPC that an international student has come to faith and wants to be baptized. / **Yevgeni Koh**, yearlong intern at Bonita OPC in Bonita, Calif.
10. **Ben and Sarah Miller**, Huntington, N.Y. Give thanks with Trinity OPC for financial generosity in 2013. / Missionary associates **Leah Hopp** and **Christopher and Chloe Verdick**, Nakaale, Uganda, and **Mary York**, Prague, Czech Republic. / Army chaplains: **Kyle (and Laurel) Brown** and **Stephen (and Lindsey) Roberts** (deployed).
11. Pray for **David and Sunshine Okken**, Nakaale, Uganda (on furlough), as they maintain a busy furlough schedule. / Pray for **David Crum**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of Southern California, as he assists new church plants. / **Caleb (and Erika) Smith**, yearlong intern at Bethel Presbyterian Church in Wheaton, Ill.
12. **Everett and Kimberly Henes**, Hillsdale, Mich. Pray for Hillsdale OPC's new community Bible study. / Pray for Foreign Missions associate general secretary **Douglas Clawson** as he travels to East Africa to assist with the training of future church leaders. / **Jeff (and Dawn) Scott**, yearlong intern at Covenant Grace OPC in Roseburg, Ore.
13. Foreign Missions administrative assistant **Linda Posthuma** and secretary **Abigail Cory**. / **Jonathan and Lauryn Shishko**, Queens, N.Y. Pray that the Lord would provide Reformation Presbyterian Church with a building to rent for Sunday evening and weekday events. / **Andrew Moody**, website technical assistant.
14. **Andrew and Billie Moody**, San Antonio, Tex. Pray that the Lord would send new visitors to San Antonio Reformed Church. / Pray for Foreign Missions general secretary **Mark Bube** as he presses for the advancement of OP foreign missions. / **Jeremy Logan**, yearlong intern at Covenant Presbyterian Church in Mansfield, Ohio.
15. **Al and Laurie Tricarico**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for the Mission's interpreters, aspiring to train for church leadership. / **Ken and Cressid Golden**, Davenport,



The Okken family



Iowa. Pray that God would send more core families to Sovereign Grace OPC and continue to encourage the members. / **Micah Shin**, yearlong intern at Cedar Presbyterian Church in Hudsonville, Mich.

- 16.** Home Missions general secretary **John Shaw**. / **Mark and Jeni Richline**, Montevideo, Uruguay. Give thanks that new members are committed to the life and activities of the church. / Pray for Christian Education general secretary **Danny Olinger** as he meets this week with the Committee on Christian Education.
- 17.** **James and Jenny Knox**, M.D. and R.N., Nakaale, Uganda. Praise God for the high quality care provided at Akisyon a Yesu Presbyterian Clinic. / **Kent and Laurie Harding**, Doniphan, Mo. Pray for the Holy Spirit to grant God's grace and wisdom to Sovereign Grace OPC's officers. / Pray for the Subcommittee on Ministerial Training as they approve **interns** to serve in 2014.
- 18.** **Sacha and Martina Walicord**, Mt. Vernon, Ohio. Pray for Knox Presbyterian Church as it works toward particularization. / Pray for missionary associates **James Durham** and **Jesse Van Gorkom**, Nakaale, Uganda, as they assist in the Mission's diaconal ministries to the Karimojong. / Navy chaplain **Bryan (and Shelly) Weaver**.
- 19.** Pray for missionary associates **Erika Bulthuis** and **Taryn Dieckmann**, Nakaale, Uganda, teaching at the Mission's thriving preschool. / **Daniel and Jill McManigal**, Seattle, Wash. Pray that God would provide musical accompanists for Hope OPC. / **Louis (and Lizette) Cloete**, yearlong intern at Redeemer OPC Mission in Pittsburgh, Pa.
- 20.** **Phil Strong**, Lander, Wyo. Pray that the Lord would bless the people of Grace Reformed Fellowship with love for one another and a strong witness. / **Mr. and Mrs. M.**, Asia. Pray for Mr. M. as he assists with the examination of indigenous men for ordination. / **Thomas (and Erin) Tkach**, yearlong intern at Calvary OPC in Glenside, Pa.
- 21.** **Mr. and Mrs. F.**, Asia (on furlough). Pray for Mr. F. as he speaks at a missions conference in New York this week-end. / **Tim and Joanne Beauchamp**, Bridgton, Maine. Pray for Pleasant Mountain Presbyterian Church's continued growth and spiritual development. / **Andrew (and Elizabeth) Barshinger**, yearlong intern at Faith OPC in Elmer, N.J.
- 22.** **Mark and Michele Winder**, Collierville, Tenn. Pray that recent visitors will return and seek to unite with Wolf River Presbyterian Church. / Missionary associates **J. B., T. D., and H. L.**, Asia. / **David Haney**, director of finance and planned giving for the Committee on Coordination.
- 23.** Missionary associates **Mr. and Mrs. I. and M. W.**, Asia. Pray that they will have fruitful contacts with their students. / Pray for **Lacy Andrews**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of the Southeast, as he works to plant churches in the region. / **Jeffrey (and Jennifer) Shames**, yearlong intern at Harvest OPC, Wyoming, Mich.
- 24.** Pray for tentmaker missionary **T. L. L.**, Asia, as she leads Bible studies each week. / **John and Wenny Ro**, Chicago, Ill. (downtown). Pray that God would bless Gospel Life Presbyterian Church with opportunities for outreach and evangelism. / **David (and Amanda) Franks**, yearlong intern at Covenant OPC in Orland Park, Ill.
- 25.** Pray for the health and well-being of retired missionaries **Betty Andrews, Greet Rietkerk, Young and Mary Lou Son**, and **Fumi Uomoto**. / Home Missions associate general secretary **Dick Gerber**. / Committee on Coordination staff: **Doug Watson**, accountant; **Jan Gregson**, assistant to the director of finance; **Kathy Bube**, Loan Fund administrator; **Charlene Tipton**, office assistant.
- 26.** **Brandon and Laurie Wilkins**, Crystal Lake, Ill. Pray that God would grant wisdom in identifying future officers for Christ Covenant Presbyterian Church. / **Woody and Laurie Lauer**, Numazu, Japan. Pray for the teaching and outreach ministries with which they work. / **Steven (and Sarah) Moulson**, yearlong intern at Trinity OPC in Hatboro, Pa.
- 27.** **Cal and Edie Cummings**, Sendai, Japan. Pray for a bold witness as they interact with unbelieving contacts. / **Jeremiah and Elizabeth Montgomery**, State College, Pa. Pray that God would bless Resurrection OPC with a more permanent facility. / **Shane (and Rachelle) Bennett**, yearlong intern at Knox OPC in Silver Spring, Md.
- 28.** **Robert and Christy Arendale**, Houston, Tex. Pray that returning visitors will join Cornerstone OPC and for deepening fellowship within the body. / **Kaz and Katie Yaegashi**, Yamagata, Japan. Pray for the spiritual growth of new believers. / **Jeremy (and Maricruz) Boothby**, yearlong intern at Christ Covenant Presbyterian Church in Amarillo, Tex.
- 29.** Pray for missionary associates **Adam and Sarah Thompson**, as they share the gospel through teaching opportunities. / **Mike and Katy Myers**, Hartwell, Ga. Pray for new visitors and for opportunities to reach the lost. / **Broc (and Morgan) Seaman**, yearlong intern at Providence OPC in Temecula, Calif.
- 30.** **Jay and Andrea Bennett**, Neon, Ky. Pray that God would bless Neon Reformed Presbyterian Church's outreach and evangelism efforts. / Pray for missionary associate **Amanda McCrina**, Sendai, Japan, as she adjusts to life on the mission field. / **Josh (and Kristen) McKamy**, yearlong intern at New Life OPC in Montoursville, Pa.
- 31.** Pray for affiliated missionary **Linda Karner**, Japan, as she teaches classes at Covenant Christian School International. / **Jim and Tricia Stevenson**, Tulsa, Okla. Pray that the Lord would add to the number of Providence OPC and raise up officers. / **Kevin (and Marianne) Olivier**, yearlong intern at Pineville Presbyterian Church in Pineville, La.

# PSALTER-HYMNAL

[Continued from page 13]

## URCNA and OPC Working Together

Talks between the two churches about working together began in November 2010, when CCE members met with the members of the URCNA Psalter-Hymnal Committee at Lynwood URC in Lynwood, Illinois. The two groups discussed sharing the fruits of each other's labors and a potential working arrangement.

The CCE petitioned the Seventy-eighth (2011) General Assembly to issue a formal invitation for the OPC and the URCNA to join together in producing a Psalter-Hymnal. The Seventy-eighth (2011) General Assembly passed the following motions: (1) that the General Assembly approve the Psalter-Hymnal Special Committee working together with the URCNA Psalter-Hymnal Committee with a view to producing a joint OPC/URC Psalter-Hymnal, and (2) that an official invitation from the Assembly be extended to the URCNA Synod (next meeting in New York in 2012) to work together to produce a Psalter-Hymnal for use in a wide range of confessional Presbyterian and Reformed Churches.

The URCNA Synod 2012 accepted the invitation. Representatives from the respective Psalter-Hymnal Committees then met to lay out a plan for the work to go forth in a combined manner. Presenting an interesting dynamic to the discussions was the fact that the URCNA Psalter-Hymnal Committee had worked on presenting first a list of hymns to its Synod while the CCE through its Composition Subcommittee had worked on presenting first a list of psalms to the General Assembly. Consequently, the Psalter-Hymnal Special Committee requested the opportunity for the CCE to finish its Psalms review and for the Composition Subcommittee to have time to make necessary amendments from the CCE review prior to meeting jointly.

## CCE Review of the Psalms

Spread over three in-person meetings between October 2011 and October 2012, the CCE review included singing each selection, accompanied by volunteers from the Philadelphia-area congregations at Calvary OPC in Glenside, Pennsylvania, and with volunteers from the Wheaton and Hanover Park congregations at Bethel OPC in Wheaton. The CCE recorded comments from the volunteers on how to improve the selections. It also deliberated internally regarding the selections. The CCE finished its process of review at its October 2013 meeting and asked its Composition Subcommittee to incorporate its feedback and to recommend a final list of psalms to be sent to the URCNA Psalter-Hymnal Committee. The Composition Subcommittee met in person in January 2013 to review the CCE's comments and also to recommend which psalm selections put forth by the URCNA should be added.<sup>2</sup>

The Psalter-Hymnal Special Committee and Dr. Shafer met with the URCNA Psalter-Hymnal Committee in Mt. Olive, Michigan, in March 2013. The two committees agreed on the 238 metrical psalms, 19 psalm paraphrases, and 15 psalm partials that were put before the Eightieth (2013) General Assembly for a "First Reading."

## Review of Psalms prior to the Eighty-first (2014) Assembly

After the first reading, all interested OPC and URC parties were welcome to study the Psalter proposal and suggest changes through the end of 2013. The Psalter-Hymnal Special Committee, in addition to working with these comments and with the URC, is now consulting with musical, linguistic, and poetic authorities to make this list of psalms the best product possible.

Lord willing, the final amending of the psalms list will take place on March 4 and 5, 2014, when the Psalter-Hymnal Special Committee and URCNA Psalter-Hymnal Committee meet in Wheaton, Illinois. The CCE will put

the agreed-upon list of psalms to the Eighty-first (2014) General Assembly. The URCNA Psalter-Hymnal Committee will put forth the same psalms to Synod 2014.

## Work on Hymns

If the Eighty-first (2014) General Assembly and Synod 2014 vote affirmatively on the proposed psalms list, then the work will shift to the selection of the hymns. The URCNA Psalter-Hymnal Committee presented 285 hymns to Synod 2010 for review. It has been interacting with feedback from its consistories and amending its list of hymns. The Psalter-Hymnal Special Committee has sent to the URCNA a preliminary list of hymns from *Trinity Hymnal* that the CCE has approved for consideration. The goal of the Psalter-Hymnal Special Committee is to add from multiple sources to the list of potential hymns in 2014 with the goal that an agreed list of hymns from the two committees would be available for review at the Eighty-second (2015) General Assembly. This will constitute a "First Reading" of those hymns, with opportunity for online feedback for the rest of the year (as with the current psalms section), with a view to seeking approval for the hymns as a package at the Eighty-third (2016) General Assembly, followed by presentation to Synod 2016 of the URCNA. If both General Assembly and Synod approve, an OPC-URCNA Psalter-Hymnal would be printed for use in the churches by the end of the 2016 calendar year.<sup>3</sup>

1 Each year following 2007, the CCE has delivered to the General Assembly a detailed report of its work on the proposed Psalter-Hymnal.

2 At the CCE's October 2013 meeting, the Composition Subcommittee was dissolved, and Dr. and Mrs. Shafer (as musicologist and editor) were added to the Psalter-Hymnal Special Committee.

3 It is anticipated that the OPC edition would include the Shorter and Larger Catechisms. The URCNA edition would include the Heidelberg Catechism.

# NEWS, VIEWS, & REVIEWS

## IN MEMORIAM DORIS ELLIOTT

*Nancy Mehne*

Doris Harrison Elliott, 96, widow of the late Pastor Edwards E. Elliott (1914–1979), died on December 31, 2013, at her home in Lookout Mountain, Georgia. She grew up in Baltimore, Maryland, under the ministry of James Erskine Moore in Mount Washington Presbyterian Church, a Southern Presbyterian congregation.

Doris met her future husband through their mutual friendship with Heber McIlwaine, an OP missionary to Japan. Throughout her marriage, she was devoted to the OPC and supportive of her husband's pastoral ministries at St. Andrews OPC in Baltimore, Maryland (1943–1950), First OPC in San Francisco, California (1950–1956), and Garden Grove (now Westminster) OPC in Garden Grove, California (1956–1979).

She was a retired history, English, and remedial reading teacher. After her move to Lookout Mountain, Georgia, following the death of her husband, she generously volunteered her time to various Christian ministries, with special interest in Bethany Christian Services. She faithfully hosted OPC Covenant College students in her nearby home. In 1996, she became a charter member of Cornerstone Presbyterian Church (OPC) in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

She is survived by four children, Ned (June) Elliott, Nancy (Larry) Mehne, Beth Elliott, and Barbara (Bruce) Osborn, as well as six grandchildren and eleven great-grandchildren.

---

## UPDATE

### MINISTERS

- The pastoral relationship between **Joseph A. Auksela** and Westminster OPC in Bartlesville, Okla., was dissolved as of his retirement on January 1, 2014.



*Edwards and Doris Elliott at their twenty-fifth wedding anniversary in 1969*

- **James T. Hoekstra** was installed by the Presbytery of the Midwest as the organizing pastor of Immanuel Church (OPC) in Andover, Minn., on January 18.

- The pastoral relationship between **Samuel Rodriguez** and Mt. Carmel Church in Somerset, N.J., was dissolved as of December 31 by the Presbytery of New Jersey.

### MILESTONES

- **Doris Harrison Elliott**, 96, widow of Pastor Edwards E. Elliott, died on December 31.

---

## LETTERS

### NORTH AMERICAN CHRISTIANITY

Editor:

Permit a brief postscript to D. G. Hart's insightful survey and analysis of North American Christianity (February, p. 3).

Growing up in an Orthodox Presbyterian manse many years ago, I was told repeatedly to distinguish between the deadly errors of mainline modernistic churches, on the one hand, and the er-

rors of fundamentalists or evangelicals, on the other. The former deny cardinal, indispensable teachings of the Christian faith, while the latter depart from various distinctives of Reformed orthodoxy.

We do well to recognize the important difference between, for example, rejecting the deity or bodily resurrection of Christ and rejecting infant baptism or Presbyterian government. Our experience in recent decades suggests that evangelicals who hold a high view of Scripture may also be close to embracing the glories of sovereign grace and a more biblical doctrine of the church.

Don Poundstone  
Portland, OR

### EGALITARIANISM

Editor:

Gregory Reynolds, in "Democracy and the Denigration of Office" (February issue), claims that certain egalitarian thoughts are also narcissistic. But to believe that one has rights, or to think that one's views are on par with the views of others, or merely to exercise some freedom of choice, is not narcissistic. Church members do have rights, and sometimes hold views that are as good as those of any



elder. Thus, we need to practice some degree of egalitarianism in the church, while respecting the authority of the Scriptures and of our church officers.

Curt Day  
Bethlehem, PA

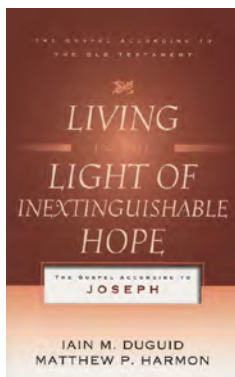
## REVIEWS

*Living in the Light of Inextinguishable Hope: The Gospel according to Joseph*, by Iain M. Duguid and Matthew P. Harmon. P&R, 2013. Paperback, 224 pages, list price \$14.99. Reviewed by Pastor Thomas A. Martin.

In *Living in the Light of Inextinguishable Hope: The Gospel according to Joseph*, Iain Duguid and Matthew Harmon liberate Joseph from splendid isolation as the hero figure in a morality tale and locate him in a complex web of relationships extending from his dysfunctional family of origin to his “great nephew” Jesus. The authors probe this web skillfully, laying bare the sins of the heart and their destructive consequences for human relationships. As they do so, we recognize ourselves—and our need for Jesus.

Where Duguid and Harmon succeed in their unflinching exposure of sin, they are equally effective in applying the balm of the gospel. This will commend the book to counselors ministering to sinners and to victims of sin. With its focus on broken relationships, the book is a case study in reconciliation and redemption (it is great source material for peacemakers!).

This volume is an excellent addition to P&R’s Gospel according to the Old Testament series, “written primarily for pastors and laypeople, not scholars ... designed in the first instance to serve the church, not the academy” (page xi). Here the academy has been brought into fruitful service of the church. Like other volumes in the series, this one is readily



accessible to laypeople. In fact, it is compelling reading!

The book is based on a series of sermons by the authors and is a vivid show-and-tell for aspiring preachers of Old Testament narrative. It is a useful hermeneutical key to patriarchal history for Sunday school teachers and parents. In addition, this is a valuable tool for the biblical counsel of victims of abusive relationships who need the healing power of the gospel. Each of the fourteen chapters concludes with questions “for further reflection,” making the book suitable as a study guide for individual or group use.

*Acting the Miracle: God’s Work and Ours in the Mystery of Sanctification*, edited by John Piper and David Mathis. Crossway, 2013. Paperback, 174 pages, list price \$16.99. Reviewed by OP prof. J. V. Fesko.

*Acting the Miracle*, edited by John Piper and David Mathis, is the latest contribution to a burgeoning field of conferences and books on sanctification. The book is based upon the most recent national conference of Desiring God Ministries and includes contributions by Piper, Mathis, Kevin DeYoung, Russell Moore, Ed Welch, and Jarvis Williams. Each chapter covers the speaker’s original conference address and concludes with a transcript of a Q&A session.

The book offers a helpful overview of sanctification in its doctrinal and practical aspects. Piper’s exegesis and doctrinal definition is matched by exegetically based pastoral and practical reflection from the other contributors. DeYoung, for example, resists the trend to find a silver-bullet motivation for sanctification and surveys a number of biblical ideas. Welch offers a useful chapter on bringing Scripture to bear upon certain common problems, such as ADHD, depression, and panic attacks. Psychiatric disorders do not mean that sanctification is stalled or that Scripture has nothing to say. Williams and Moore offer broad overviews of the role of the church and the means of grace in

the process of sanctification, which should encourage readers to reconsider the role of Scripture, prayer, and church discipline in sanctification.

There are, however, a few areas that will likely leave some readers looking for more information. Piper, for example, defines sanctification as “the action by which we bring our feelings and thoughts and acts into conformity to the infinite and all-satisfying worth of God” (p. 36). While Piper seeks to explain what he means by the “worth of God,” the definition is vague. His definition says nothing about God’s work in sanctification. By comparison, the Shorter Catechism offers a brief but precise statement that mentions God’s role and our responsibility (Q. 35).

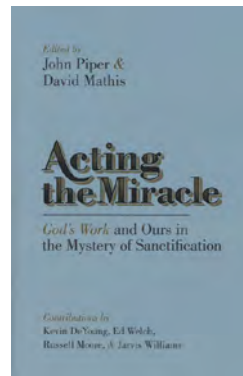
Another missing element is the slight attention given to the role of the law in sanctification. Only in the Q&A transcript does the third use of the law receive attention (pp. 148–50). On a similar note, as helpful and important as reading and meditating upon Scripture is, this book seems to reflect the idea that the center of gravity in our sanctification is in private devotions rather than the church gathered in worship. Private devotions are necessary, but the preaching of the word

and the administration of the sacraments must take center stage; these are God’s appointed and objective means of grace. The book briefly mentions the Lord’s Supper as a means of grace, but not baptism (pp. 142–43)—while identifying Christian biographies as means of grace (p. 143).

Readers can benefit from this book, but they should supplement their reading with the Westminster Standards to see what elements are missing, so they may be fully equipped to grow in holiness and sanctification.

*Kingdom, Come!* by Phil Ryken. Crossway, 2013. Paperback, 144 pages, list price \$12.99. Reviewed by Pastor Everett A. Henes.

“Your kingdom come” are words that are prayed all over the world by Christ’s



people. Every time we pray the Lord's Prayer, we say them, and every time we pray for Christ to return, we are praying for his kingdom to come. What do we mean by those words, though? And, perhaps more importantly, do they mean anything for us in this life while we wait for that kingdom to come? These are some of the questions that Phil Ryken considers in this short book.

*Kingdom, Come!* is a collection of talks given at the chapel services of Wheaton College, where Ryken serves as president. Wheaton is stamped in this book from the dedication to Wheaton alumni to the numerous stories of Wheaton graduates and current students that serve to illustrate the points being made. However, his points apply across the board.

While the book is short and small in size, it is big in content. The first chapter points out the problem of trying to guess the timing of Christ's return. "Such prophecies," he explains, actually "push our expectation of the return of Christ and the coming of his kingdom too far out into the future" (p. 15). From there, Ryken moves to challenge the status quo in American evangelicalism, pointing out that the kingdom we are to seek is God's kingdom rather than our own desires. There is a danger in seeking our own kingdoms, because they are temporal. The good news, though, is that God's kingdom is a "forever kingdom" (chapter 4).

The second half of the book begins with an invitation to enter this kingdom, lest any reader miss it. The task of the church is well explained in the chapter titled "Proclaiming the Kingdom." In chapter 7, "When the Kingdom Doesn't Come," Ryken deals with the discouragement that comes and the temptation that we all face to disbelieve and use all that the Lord has given us for our own desires, when Christ's return seems to be delayed. This is what he calls the servants' test as he turns to the familiar Parable of the Pounds (Luke 19) to show that Jesus prepared his disciples for the delay.

The final chapter, "When the Kingdom Comes," seeks to show from the



Scriptures the beauty of God's kingdom. It is a kingdom where there will be no more pain and no more death. All of God's promises will be kept. This is the promise of the new creation. The book closes with a brief explanation of the closing chapter of Scripture. This is fitting, since the kingdom

(and king) we are waiting for is the same one that prompted John to pray, "Come, Lord Jesus!"

This book would serve well for a small group study or Sunday school class. It brings to our attention an all-important topic that seems to be on our minds only when we recite the Lord's Prayer. I have found it useful as a conversation starter with college students.

***Law and the Bible: Justice, Mercy and Legal Institutions*, edited by Robert F. Cochran Jr. and David VanDrunen. InterVarsity Press, 2013. Paperback, 269 pages, list price \$24.00. Reviewed by OP member Diane L. Olinger.**

*Law and the Bible* is a collection of nine articles, surveying the theme of civil law throughout the Bible. Each article is coauthored by an attorney and a Bible scholar. The Genesis-to-Revelation scope and the interdisciplinary approach make *Law and the Bible* a valuable resource for those who ask, What light does the Bible shed on contemporary legal systems, and particularly on Christian participation in those systems?

The focus of this book is on civil law, the law that orders human societies and is implemented and enforced by human government. The Bible addresses many areas of civil law, including evidence, civil and criminal procedure, court administration, and welfare regulations. However, the editors and most of the authors of *Law and the Bible* take pains to dampen our expectations of finding immediate applications to our current situation. Not every moral exhortation of Scripture

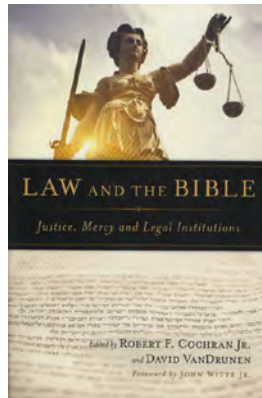
should be codified. Not every piece of civil legislation in Scripture would be appropriate for the modern nation-state.

Most of the authors are reticent when it comes to advocating for particular legislation, and merely suggest principles that should guide a Christian in making policy decisions. One exception to this reticence is the chapter entitled "Crying Out for Justice: Civil Law and the Prophets," by Barbara E. Armacost and Peter Enns. In discussing U.S. immigration law, the authors take a firm stand against "anti-immigrant legislation that is calculated to be oppressive" (p. 143) (examples include laws prohibiting illegal aliens from contracting for utilities, laws that require public schools to determine immigration status of students, and laws that empower local police as deputy immigration enforcers). "While it would be just to deport those who are in the United States illegally pursuant to fair procedures and policies, it is not just to mistreat them while they live among us" (p. 143).

Other topics addressed include civil disobedience (with a case study on apartheid in South Africa), form of government, war, abortion (very briefly), adoption, lawsuits by Christians, catastrophic climate change, and nuclear holocaust (the last two as part of a discussion of end-times prophecies in Daniel and Revelation).

Natural law is a theme set forth in the book's introduction and is revisited by a number of authors.

As Randy Beck and David VanDrunen write in their analysis of law from creation through the patriarchal period, "When the patriarchs have legal disputes with their pagan neighbors, they do not appeal to a parochial moral standard known only through special revelation, but they presume (as their pagan neighbors often do also) a standard that is accessible to all.... However Christians may develop a theory of natural law, the existence of a universal moral standard has many potential implications for how they approach legal life in a diverse society" (p. 45). Although VanDrunen does



## Titus 2 Seminar on Joy

March 29 • Vienna, Va.

Speaker: Jean Gaffin

Venue: Grace Presbyterian Church, 2381 Cedar Lane, Vienna, VA 22180

Time: March 29, 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Light breakfast and lunch will be served. Friday night accommodation is available.

All women are welcome to attend. Contact Emily VanDixhoorn at 703-255-2935 or evandixhoorn@gmail.com.

not mention his two-kingdoms theology explicitly, Robert F. Cochran Jr. and Dallas Willard, authors of the chapter on Jesus and the civil law, critique VanDrunen's argument that Jesus' demanding kingdom ethics apply institutionally only to the church and not the state, which is to enforce *lex talionis*, "an eye for an eye." According to Cochran and Willard, "This too neatly avoids the difficult work of determining the implications for the state of Jesus' teaching on love" (p. 173).

The style of writing in this volume is described in the forward as "learned but accessible" (p. 9), and that is a good description. This makes *Law and the Bible* useful not only to lawyers and law students, pastors and seminarians, but also to individual Christians with an interest in the implications of the Christian faith for civil law.

***Engaging with Keller: Thinking through the Theology of an Influential Evangelical***, edited by Iain D. Campbell and William M. Schweitzer. Evangelical Press, 2013. Paperback, 160 pages, list price \$15.99. Reviewed by Pastor Jeremiah Montgomery.

Like C. S. Lewis, Tim Keller has attracted both admirers and critics. In the very first sentence of *Engaging with Keller*, Ian Hamilton acknowledges that "Tim Keller has done immense good for the kingdom of God." Writing "first as an admirer," he



## Mid-America Seminary Interns

Churches are encouraged to apply for a seminary intern through the Committee on Christian Education of the OPC. Please also contact Mid-America Reformed Seminary to let us know of your interest in having a seminary student to further prepare him for the gospel ministry. Church sessions should contact Rev. Mark Vander Hart, Mid-America Reformed Seminary, 229 Seminary Drive, Dyer, IN 46311-1069; mvanderhart@midamerica.edu; tel. 219-864-2400, ext. 408; fax 219-864-2410.

hopes that "Dr. Keller will receive this critique of his theology and methodology in the spirit in which it is offered."

Like Hamilton, the present reviewer writes "first as an admirer of Dr. Keller." *The Reason for God* has given me tremendous help—both personally and as a pastor in a university community. As a church planter, I have also found the chapters on "contextualization" in *Center Church* quite useful. Although I disagree with Keller at significant points, I have never read or listened to him without benefiting. I thus approached *Engaging with Keller* with a critical eye.

Five of the six essayists hail from churches in Great Britain. These include three pastors in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in England and Wales, a recent moderator of the Free Church of Scotland, and the chairman of the International Conference of Reformed Churches. The only American contributor is D. G. Hart.

The opening essay,

## Positions Available

**Seminary Professor:** Mid-America Reformed Seminary announces an opening in Old Testament Studies. Applicants should be able to teach Hebrew and courses in Old Testament exegesis and biblical theology, and ordinarily have a postgraduate research degree in Old Testament. Membership in a Reformed or Presbyterian church is required, and ordination and pastoral experience is especially desirable. Applicants should send a copy of their curriculum vitae, including names of two references, to the Chairman of the Faculty Development Committee, Mid-America Reformed Seminary, 229 Seminary Drive, Dyer, IN 46311.

**Teachers:** Cornerstone Christian School in Lynden, Wash., seeks candidates for two teaching positions: grades 3 and 4 (full time) and grades 9-12 English, geography, and history (part or full time). Interested parties should contact Principal Darryn Kleyn at dkleyn@cornerstoneschool.us (360-318-0663) or Education Committee chairman Bob Lodder at blodder@trivan.com (360-319-1320). Complete applications, consisting of a résumé summarizing university and teaching qualifications, contact information for three references, and a statement of educational philosophy, should be sent electronically to either of the above e-mail addresses or by mail to Mr. D. Kleyn, Principal, Cornerstone Christian School, 8872 Northwood Road, Lynden, WA 98264. Learn more at [www.cornerstoneschool.us](http://www.cornerstoneschool.us).



“Keller on ‘Rebranding’ the Doctrine of Sin,” is perhaps the least persuasive. Campbell is correct that Keller tends to explain sin as idolatry and self-centeredness. Yet he is less convincing when he argues that this leads Keller to “dismiss a definition of sin as a breaking of God’s rules.” On the same page cited by Campbell in making his case (*Center Church*, 127), Keller himself asserts that “post-modern people” who argue for relative moral standards “must eventually be challenged about their naïve view of truth.”

Other contributions were more compelling. Although one may disagree with Schweitzer as to whether there is an aspect of self-choice among those in perdition, his essay correctly identifies a weakness in Keller’s explanation of hell: namely, that Keller is too quiet on the active judgment and wrath of God. Likewise, Naylor’s essay on “The Church’s Mission” presents a strong argument—reinforced by Hart’s historical odyssey into the roots and weaknesses of Keller’s own model.

How would Keller reply to his critics? According to the introduction, the editors invited Keller “to respond to these concerns within the pages of this book,” but he was too busy to do so. Here we must be fair. Keller’s critics should not immediately be faulted for *raising legitimate questions*. At the same time, he should not immediately be faulted for declining to reply to *unsolicited critiques*.

As a “public discussion of public teaching,” *Engaging with Keller* succeeds. Its overall tone is civil, and valid issues are raised. Yet in its aim to be an *engagement*, the book is too one-sided. For those of us who both admire Keller and appreciate his interlocutors, more’s the pity.

## WHAT IS YOUR OPC IQ?

How well do you know your church’s history? Not so well? Then be sure to go to OPC.org every day to learn more of the story of our denomination. The newly redesigned OPC website includes a daily feature, “Today in OPC History,” which highlights an individual or a congregation from our 78-year-old family history.

Look for upcoming features on Paul Woolley, LeRoy Oliver, the Boardwalk Chapel, Calvary OPC in Berkeley, California, and many others. Each feature includes a photo, such as the one below from 1943–1944, which shows OPC pastor and missionary Richard B. Gaffin, Sr., with the Sunday school class at Grace OPC in Milwaukee. Can you pick out the future OPC minister in this group? The answer: the boy in the striped shirt is:

Dick Gaffin



Sunday school class of Grace OPC in Milwaukee, Wis.



## In Time for Softball Season!

Back by popular demand, OPC baseball caps are now in stock, in time to outfit your entire team. With navy OPC letters against a khaki background, these are sure to be a hit this summer. Only \$10 each (postpaid). Order them now from the Committee for the Historian, 607 N. Easton Rd. Bldg. E, Willow Grove, PA 19090.

