

NEW HORIZONS

in the ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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APRIL 2017

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New Horizons

in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church

Editor: Danny E. Olinger
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Editorial Board: The Committee on Christian Education's Subcommittee on Serial Publications

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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.

Send address changes to 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.

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 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.

On January 28, fourteen people from San Antonio Reformed Church (Andrew Moody, pastor) took a short mission trip to Austin to join with people from South Austin Presbyterian Church (Jim Cassidy, pastor) in reaching out to the neighborhood in which they meet for worship.



"FOR US AND FOR OUR SALVATION"



RICHARD B. GAFFIN, JR. // In making use of the Nicene Creed in our worship, we confess in part about the Lord Jesus Christ that he “for us and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; he suffered

and was buried; and the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father; and he shall come again, with glory, to judge both the living and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.” Together with the rest of the “one holy catholic and apostolic” church down through the centuries, we affirm what has achieved and continues to secure our salvation: the death, resurrection, ascension, and heavenly session of the incarnate Son, the eternal Son of God become man.

This confession prompts the question I want to consider here. How specifically is the resurrection “for our salvation”? What in particular is the saving efficacy, or “efficiency,” of the resurrection? Or, to ask the question negatively, without the resurrection, what would become of our salvation?

To the question of how Christ’s death is for our salvation, virtually every Christian will likely have a ready and heartfelt answer: he died that my sins might be forgiven, to bear in my place the eternal punishment my sin

deserves. Most if not all believers grasp in some measure the saving truth of penal substitution, of Christ’s “once offering up of himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, and reconcile us to God” (Shorter Catechism, 25). At the same time, however, it seems fair to say that in general Christians are not as clear about the answer to our question about the saving efficacy of the resurrection.

No Resurrection, No Salvation

It should be immediately apparent that the death of a *dead* Christ, a Christ who remains dead, achieves nothing for our salvation. Paul makes that clear in 1 Corinthians 15: if Christ hasn’t been raised, then our faith is “futile,” or “useless,” and we are “still in [our] sins”—entirely—and our situation all told is “most to be pitied” (vv. 17, 19). Minus the resurrection, death continues with unabated, invincible finality, and it does so as “the wages of sin” we so justly deserve (Rom. 6:23).

Certainly without the death of Christ there is no salvation, but then neither is there any salvation without

the resurrection. His resurrection, no less than his death, is at the heart of the gospel (Rom. 1:3–4; 1 Cor. 15:3–4). The resurrection is often viewed primarily as the awesome miracle that validates the truth of Christianity and the gospel. But it is more than such crowning evidence—much more.

Sin, Salvation, and the Resurrection

Salvation on its negative side is salvation from sin. All too evidently the destructive consequences of sin are virtually incalculable, its misery untold. At the same time, those innumerable consequences are basically twofold. First, sin affects our standing before God; it renders us guilty, liable to his just judgment and condemnation. Second, it affects our condition, in that it leaves us thoroughly corrupt and enslaved to Satan and sin as the power that dominates our lives. The depth of sin’s effects are such that, left to ourselves, apart from God’s saving grace, we are nothing less than “dead in ... trespasses and sins” (Eph. 2:1, 5). Sin leaves the sinner

both inexcusably guilty and helplessly enslaved.

“But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more” (Rom. 5:20, NKJV). As the effects of sin, in its abounding, are either one of two basic kinds, so too, in countering and alleviating these effects, grace—manifold, superabounding in its effects—is basically twofold. Grace is either judicial or renovative, reversing either our guilt-ridden standing before God or our corrupt, sin-enslaved condition. The role of the resurrection in bringing about that reversal can be seen here by focusing on justification and sanctification.

The Resurrection and Justification

For justification, a key text is Romans 4:25: Jesus “was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.” Earlier in Romans, Paul has said that Christ’s death was a propitiatory sacrifice, so that God might be “just and the justifier” of believers (3:25–26). Later he says that “we have now been justified by his blood” (5:9). In 4:25, however, justification is connected specifically with Christ’s resurrection in distinction from his sacrificial death.

How are we to understand that connection? On the basis of his life of obedience, culminating in his death as the representative sin-bearer and righteous substitute for sinners (Phil. 2:8; Rom. 3:25; 8:3; 2 Cor. 5:21), Christ’s resurrection is his own justification. This is so in the sense that the action of God in raising him from the dead—that enlivening act itself—vindicates him in his obedience and effectively demonstrates his righteousness. The resurrection, then, is a *de facto* declaration of his righteous standing before God. As an event, Christ’s resurrection “speaks,” and it does so judicially, in a legal manner.

First Timothy 3:16 confirms this. There Christ is described as “manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit” (NKJV). This almost certainly has in view the Holy Spirit’s action in raising Jesus from the dead (Rom. 8:11). This response by the Spirit was justly

warranted by the righteousness manifested in Jesus’ obedience “in the flesh,” that is, during his life on earth prior to the resurrection.

But the justification of Christ in his resurrection was not just for his own sake, apart from us; it was also for us, “for our justification.” Our justification flows from our union with him, by Spirit-worked faith, along with the other benefits of salvation manifested by that union (Larger Catechism, 69). Because of our union with him, then, we share in his justification; his resurrection-approved righteousness is reckoned as ours, imputed to us.

At the same time, this union preserves a key difference—a gospel difference—that is not to be missed. Christ’s justification, unlike ours, does not involve the imputation to him of the righteousness of another. Unlike us, he is declared righteous on the ground of his own lifelong, blood-bought righteousness.

Calvin has beautifully captured this reality:

Therefore, that joining together of Head and members, that indwelling of Christ in our hearts—in short, that mystical union—are accorded by us the highest degree of importance, so that Christ, having been made ours, makes us sharers with him in the gifts with which he has been endowed. We do not, therefore, contemplate him outside ourselves from afar in order that his righteousness may be imputed to us but because we put on Christ and are engrafted into his body—in short, because he deigns to make us one with him. For this reason, we glory that we have fellowship of righteousness with him. (*Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 3.11.10)

The Resurrection and Sanctification

How then is the resurrection essential for our sanctification—for the renovative side of salvation, for lives pleasing to God and marked by holiness? That question can be answered

along a number of lines, including the one we will follow here.

Again, as with justification, union with Christ is crucial. We are united with him in his death and resurrection, signified and sealed to us in baptism, “in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:4). Here the resurrection of Christ is linked specifically with the *newness* that marks the Christian life. That newness surely has in view Christ’s life as resurrected, the resurrection life he shares with those who are united to him.

The source and quality of this life are further clarified in Romans 8:11: “If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.” What God the Father did in raising Jesus from the dead he will also do for believers. The controlling thought here is the tie or unity that there is between the bodily resurrection of Christ and that of Christians.

The intrinsic nature of that unity is made most explicit in 1 Corinthians 15:20, 23. There Christ is described as “the firstfruits” of the resurrection. To extend the metaphor as Paul surely intends, his resurrection and ours are the beginning and the end of one, single harvest.

Christ’s resurrection is, as is often said, the guarantee of ours, but we should appreciate that this is so because his resurrection is nothing less than “the actual beginning of this general epochal event” (Vos, *Pauline Eschatology*, p. 45).

As believers, we can be sure of our own resurrection, not only because God has decreed it and promised it (which would surely be enough for us!), but because he has done more: that decree has been realized, that promise has already been fulfilled, in history; the resurrection harvest in which believers will share bodily at the end of history, when Christ returns, has already begun. It has entered history and become visible in

his resurrection.

The Resurrection, the Holy Spirit, and the Christian

Romans 8:11, as it highlights this resurrection unity, brings into view the activity of the Holy Spirit. God will resurrect us bodily, as he did Jesus, through the enlivening action of the Spirit. But more is said here than what will be true in the future. The Spirit of resurrection is the indwelling Spirit; he is already present in believers. This points us to a fundamental truth about the Christian life: life in the Spirit is sharing in the resurrection life of Christ.

That comes out clearly in the verses that immediately precede (vv. 9–10). Four combinations are present there: (1) “you ... in the Spirit,” (2) “the Spirit ... in you,” (3) to “belong to him [Christ]”—equivalent here to “you ... in Christ,” and (4) “Christ ... in you.” These expressions hardly intend to split the believer’s life into four different sectors; together they provide a unified, overall perspective on that life.

In this mutual indwelling, Christ and the Spirit are one. In their presence and activity, the Spirit is “the Spirit of Christ” (v. 9). There is no relationship, no union with Christ, that is not at the same time fellowship with the Spirit. There is no work of the Spirit in our lives that is not also the presence of Christ at work in us (see Eph. 3:16–17).

This inseparable bond between Christ and the Spirit does not begin with our experience; rather, it rests on what is first of all true in the experience of Christ. In 1 Corinthians 15, we are told that Christ, the last Adam, as the “firstfruits” of the resurrection harvest, became the “life-giving Spirit” (v. 45). At his resurrection, he was not only glorified by being transformed in his human nature by the enlivening power of the Spirit. He also came into a possession of the Spirit that was so climactic, so unprecedented, so overflowing, that it is properly captured by calling him the “life-giving Spirit.”

Note that this in no way compromises the personal distinction between

Christ and the Spirit. The eternal, essential distinction and equality between the second and third persons of the Trinity remain unchanged.

But because of who Christ, in his human nature, has *become* in his state of exaltation, he and the Spirit are now one in their work of giving life. This life is nothing less than resurrection life in the Spirit. As we have seen, this is not only a future hope, but already a present reality for believers.

Of course, the bond between Christ and the Spirit did not begin at the resurrection. Christ was conceived by the Spirit (Luke 1:35), and the Spirit later descended on him at his baptism by John (Luke 3:21–22).

The difference, the momentous difference, is this: At his baptism, Christ received the Spirit as an endowment to carry out the messianic task before him, the task that ultimately led to the cross. But in his exaltation, in his resurrection leading to his ascension (Acts 2:32–33), he received the Spirit as the consummate reward for having completed that assigned kingdom task. And he does not keep this reward for “his own private use” (Calvin); it becomes the consummate gift that he shares permanently with his people at Pentecost.

So, Jesus Christ—the resurrected, life-giving Spirit—has promised us: “I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matt. 28:20). He is with the church to stay, indwelling believers as he provides every spiritual blessing and resource that we need to carry out our kingdom task of discipling the nations. So, too, as the life-giving Spirit, he is present with us in a special, sacramental way when he invites us to commune with him at his table.

Even More Than That

How, then, was Christ resurrected “for us and for our salvation”? I have done little more here than to begin considering the answer. I have not yet taken note of what is as important as anything: Christ, “who died —*more than that*, who was raised,” intercedes for us at God’s right hand (Rom. 8:33–34).

And that intercession of Christ, resurrected and ascended, as gracious as it is hardly gratuitous, refutes any and every charge that would call into question the justification of God’s elect. Moreover, it insures, with an infallible efficacy, that “they can never fall from the state of justification” (Confession of Faith, 11.5).

Finally, consider Romans 8:29. God’s predestinating purpose for believers centers ultimately in their being “conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.” This “image” is the Son’s as he is resurrected, specifically in his now-glorified human nature. He is “the firstborn among many brothers” only as he is “the firstborn from the dead” (Col. 1:18).

Our privilege, great beyond our comprehension, is this: we have been chosen *in Christ* “before the foundation of the world” (Eph. 1:4) to the ultimate end that we be *like Christ*. This conformity to his image, already being worked in us by the sanctifying power of the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:18; Gal. 4:19), will be fully realized when, like him, we are raised bodily.

But there is more to this than what is ultimate for us. Even more ultimate in God’s predestinating purposes is what is at stake for the Son personally in our salvation, what he has invested for himself. This, as much as anything, is why from all eternity the Son willed, together with the Father and the Spirit, to become incarnate, to suffer and die. He did so, so that, having been resurrected triumphant over sin and death, he might have brothers like himself—brothers glorified not because of anything in themselves, but entirely because of his saving mercy. They will share with him in this triumph and magnify forever his own preeminent exaltation glory. And so his “kingdom shall have no end.”

Surely there can be no more ultimate perspective on Christ’s resurrection “for us and for our salvation” than this. □

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END-TIME LIVING



GEORGE R. COTTENDEN // **What time it is often determines the way you act. For example, you behave differently on Saturday morning, when you don't have to get to work or school, than you do on the other days of the week. You may even sleep in.**

In a football game, strategy changes at different times in the

game, especially once the two-minute warning has sounded and the team with the ball is eager to score.

What we eat and drink also depends on what time it is. If I want a good night's sleep, I avoid caffeinated coffee in the evening.

In each of these cases, the way we live is shaped by what time it is.

In 1 Peter 4:1–11, the apostle wants his readers to understand that we live in a certain kind of time that must govern our actions. He says, “The end of all things is at hand” (v. 7).

Similarly, the Epistle to the Hebrews begins, “Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these *last days* he has spoken to us by his Son.”

The apostle John says, “Children, it is the *last hour*, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the *last hour*” (1 John 2:18).

In 1 Peter 1:20, we read that Christ “was made manifest in the *last times*.” The last days, the last hour, the last

times—this is the period in which we live. These expressions refer to the years from the first coming of Christ until he returns in glory. This period is seen as one block of time that shapes who we are and the way we are to respond to the varied affairs of life.

Living with an Awareness of Who We Are in Christ

How are we supposed to live in the end-time? What is special about the period of time in which we live?

In the first place, we are to live with an awareness of who we are in Christ. We are to think in the same way he did when he was on earth. Peter says in verse 1, “Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking.”

The reference to Christ suffering in the flesh points back to what Peter said in 3:18: “For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the Spirit.” What is in view in this verse isn't simply Christ's suffering

in a general sense during the period of his humiliation. Rather, it refers specifically to Christ's suffering unto death on the cross.

Jesus endured a substitutionary death. He suffered, “the righteous for the unrighteous.” He died in the place of his people. He bore our guilt on Calvary. He took our place, so that the New Testament can say of us that we have died with Christ. Our union with Christ in his death defines who we are now. We are people who have died. We no longer have the same relationship to sin and death that we had before.

Peter picks up on this in chapter 4. The Christian who has suffered in the flesh, in the sense that Christ has suffered in the flesh, has “ceased from sin” (v. 1). The point is not that Christ was sinning and then stopped sinning because of his death. Rather, he bore our guilt and, having taken it to the cross, he no longer bears that burden. He has taken care of it once and for all.

United to Christ through faith, we too have died to sin. We have ceased from sin, not in the sense that we no

longer sin or are tempted to sin, but in the sense that we have been set free from the curse and bondage of sin. We are no longer slaves to sin. When temptations come, we have the ability, by God's grace, to resist them and turn away from sin to live in accordance with the will of God.

Believers have united to Christ, not only in his death, but also in his resurrection. This too has consequences for the way we live.

Near the beginning of his letter, Peter blesses God the Father because we have been "born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1:3). In that hope, we have been set free from the control of sin, "so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God" (4:2).

"Human passions" could be taken in the general sense of "human desires." It is true that union with Christ sets us free from being dominated by our desires. In the light of the next few verses, however, it seems that Peter is focusing especially on the sinful desires that dominate unbelievers. If we know who we are in Christ, we can live as those who are free from such desires to do the will of God as revealed in his Word.

Living with an Expectation of the Return of Christ

In verse 7, Peter points to a second truth that should shape our lives as we live in this present age. We are to live in expectation of the return of Christ.

He says, "The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded." He goes on to speak of conduct that should be seen in us because the end of all things is at hand. History has a goal. There is an end to the present order. We don't know when it will occur, but we do know that, ever since Christ's first coming, it has been "at hand."

This knowledge must shape the way we act. An approaching deadline can change the way you think about a project. Consider how knowing that a term paper at school or a project at

work is due tomorrow can concentrate your attention. Well, we are staring at a deadline. Christ is coming again. We don't have forever to show love or hospitality. We don't have forever to pray for and share the gospel with those who are lost in sin.

Peter says, "Be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers" (v. 7). He tells us to be a focused, praying people, self-controlled and sober-minded as we address ourselves prayerfully to the needs of our sin-cursed world.

"Above all," he says, "keep loving one another earnestly" (v. 8). This is not simply an emotional "I like you and I like to be around you" kind of love. Peter is describing love that is stretched taut. That is what biblical love looks like in practice. It is not something that just flows as emotions gush. It involves a disciplined application of the resources we have for the benefit of those whom we love.

This love "covers a multitude of sins" (v. 8). What sometimes gets in the way of our loving people is that they are not very lovable. We forget that we aren't very lovable either, but Christ still loves us. If we really love someone for Christ's sake, that love will cover a multitude of their sins. As we read in Proverbs 10:12, "Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all offenses."

This covering of sins, of course, does not mean ignoring them to the hurt of the sinner or of others. There are times when you have to approach someone about their sins so that they can get right with the Lord. But we are not to let those sins be barriers to a proper love for the sake of Christ.

This love involves showing hospitality to one another without grumbling. In the first century, hospitality was very important. Travelling missionaries needed believers to open their homes to them.

That isn't as often the case today. But hospitality can be shown in a variety of ways as we reach out to people to meet their needs, share our resources with them, and welcome them into our

homes. If we see ourselves as stewards of the gifts and resources that God has entrusted to us (v. 10), there is no room for grumbling.

Living with a Focus on the Glory of Christ

But there is still a third characteristic that shapes faithful end-time living. We are to live in such a way that our focus is on the glory of Christ.

Peter speaks first about God being glorified through Christ. We are to live "in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ." We have a variety of motives for why we do things, some good and some not so good. Is your dominant motive that you want to glorify God through Christ? God sent his Son to redeem a people who would be conformed to his image. As we live in the ways he has just described, the fruit of Christ's work becomes evident and God receives glory.

Peter ends the section with an ascription of praise. "To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen" (v. 11). Does "to him" refer to Christ or to God? The sentence structure makes the former slightly more likely. Also, there is a similar doxology in Revelation 1:5-6, where it clearly is Christ who is in view. But God is also glorified through Christ, because of the way the work of Christ shows itself in your life and mine.

Peter goes further, saying that Christ himself, the second person of the Trinity made flesh, receives glory. This is what Jesus prayed for in John 17:5, "And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed." As the second person of the Trinity, he always has had glory. Now, as the God-man, ascended to heaven and seated at the right hand of the Father, he is glorified when we live as those who know that we are in the end-time. Live then for his glory, as those united to him by faith and eagerly awaiting his return. To him be glory forever and ever. Amen. □

The author is a retired OP pastor.

THE REFORMATION OF CHURCH POLITY



JOHN MUETHER // Reformation historians commonly distinguish between first- and second-generation Reformers. Those in the first generation (most notably Luther and Zwingli) were pioneers in their proclamation of the formal and material principles of the Reformation, namely, the authority of Scripture and

justification by faith alone. Building on this foundation, the second generation consolidated theological insights into confessional statements and often focused their attention on the order and discipline that should characterize churches of the Protestant faith. The innovations of Roman Catholics, on the one hand, and the anarchy of Anabaptists and other radical Reformers, on the other hand, provided ample evidence of the dangers of a disordered church.

The Reformed wing of the Reformation sought especially to honor Christ as the only head of the church and thus came to express what can be called the regulative principle of church government: Christ's Word clearly reveals the structure of the church, and so the government of the church must find its basis in apostolic teaching and practice.

Developments in Strasbourg

This fine-tuning of church polity was a particular focus of Martin Bucer during his labors to reform the church in Strasbourg. In drawing up church ordinances for the city, a particular insight he drew from the New Testament was the importance of the role of the ruling

elder in the administration of church discipline.

In addition, Bucer argued that church councils must submit to Christ through the rule he has established in his Word. Delegates to councils must be chosen with prayer and fasting, and with careful examination, in order that their spiritual gifts would be displayed. Once commissioned, councils had to hear these delegates, lest they silence the voice of the Spirit. (Here is a point worth pondering at Presbyterian assemblies, when commissioners are tempted to end lengthy debate by means of the parliamentary device known as "calling the question.")

Meanwhile, as John Calvin was independently coming to many similar conclusions in Geneva, he was personally experiencing the effects of disorderly polity during his first tenure in that city. The question of who had authority to excommunicate provoked a dispute between Calvin and the political authorities. He and other ministers were banished in 1538 by the city council, which held, in Calvin's judgment, excessive control over the discipline of the church. When Calvin sojourned in Strasbourg from 1538 to 1541, the

role of the older Bucer was formative, especially in the development of Calvin's understanding of biblical church polity. From his vantage point in Strasbourg, Calvin also witnessed a negative example. In nearby Lutheran territories, the state was dominating the churches, and the pattern that developed was one of ecclesiastical subordination to civil magistrates.

It is important to underscore that Bucer, Calvin, and other reformers were not engaged in the art of invention. Rather, the reformation of polity was an exercise of rediscovery. Discipline through the office of the elder and a system of graded assemblies was not an innovation, but was found in Scripture and multiple patristic sources. Under Bucer's influence, Calvin grew more confident that the eldership was an institution ordained by Christ.

Calvin's Ecclesiastical Ordinances

Geneva's request in 1541 that Calvin return met with his great reluctance. He recoiled at the prospect of returning to a place of torture, where he would "die a thousand times each day." But willing to "bring my heart as a sacrifice and offering to the Lord," he returned

to the city where he would spend the rest of his life. Immediately, he set out to order the church through his Ecclesiastical Ordinances, which the council quickly adopted as law, with only a few modifications.

Biographer Alister McGrath observes that “if the *Institutes* were the muscles of Calvin’s reformation, his ecclesiastical organization was its backbone” (*A Life of John Calvin*, p. 111). The preface to the Ordinances explained that “the spiritual government of the kind which our Lord demonstrated and instituted in his Word should be set out in good order so that it might be established and observed among us.” A key feature of the Ordinances was the independent jurisdiction of an ecclesiastical court. Calvin wanted to protect the church’s right to excommunicate from interference by the civil authorities. The preface to the work assured the magistrate that the church could not usurp the state in its exercise of civil jurisdiction. These are two ordained powers; one is given the spiritual sword, and the other the secular sword. (To be sure, Calvin would experience ongoing resistance to this principle in Geneva, and it would take more than a decade to establish the city’s consistent practice.)

As with Bucer, Calvin outlined four offices in the church: pastors, doctors, elders, and deacons. The duty of the elder entailed “oversight of the life of everyone, to admonish amicably those whom they see to be erring or to be living a disordered life, and, where it required, to enjoin fraternal corrections.”

At the heart of Calvin’s ecclesiology was the consistory, meeting weekly, and composed both of lay elders and members of the Company of Pastors. Eschewing any notions of prelacy, he underscored the parity of elders in the exercise of discipline. The deliberations of the consistory were the acts of the living Christ, working through his servants who ministered only on the basis of his Word.

Contrary to the popular image of Calvin as a grim tyrant, care is expressed throughout the Ordinances that

its regulations be applied with compassion and forbearance. For example, in addressing ministerial indiscretions, the church must distinguish between “crimes which are intolerable” and “faults which on the other hand may be endured while direct fraternal admonitions are offered.” And in its conclusion the Ordinances note: “Yet all this should be done with such moderation, that there be no rigor by which anyone may be injured; for even the corrections are only medicines for bringing back sinners to our Lord.”

Calvin’s interests in polity, in turn, would serve to shape the growth and development of his *Institutes* through several editions. References to ruling elders, absent from the first edition in 1536, appeared first in the 1541 edition (after his Strasbourg experience) and were greatly augmented by 1559. Indeed, the fourth book of that final edition, “The External Means or Aims Whereby God Invites Us into the Society of Christ and Holds Us Therein,” is a sustained reflection on the church and its proper order. So vital was this order to the unity and harmony of the church that Calvin warned, “Whoever discounts it as not necessary, is striving for the undoing, or rather, the ruin and destruction of the church” (4.3.3).

Genevan church government came to characterize many Reformed churches through its missionary activities. The Scottish church implemented Genevan practice in its Second Book of Discipline (1578), with a Presbyterian structure of graded courts, from local sessions to presbyteries for regional churches and synods/assemblies for provincial and national levels. This eliminated bishops and superintendents. The strength and flexibility of such polity accounts for the remarkable spread of Calvinism beyond Europe, into the New World, Asia, and Africa. These churches were generally without reliance on supporting princes and often took root in seemingly hostile fields.

Contemporary Church Disorder

Late in his tenure at Geneva as

John Calvin’s successor, Theodore Beza commented in a sermon that church polity is the particular object of Satan’s attacks, because it is easier to overturn a church’s government than its doctrine. His warning could well have been describing the evangelical church today. The “regulative principle of polity” is the minority position in contemporary American Protestantism, which is dominated by disordered churches, many of which have no formal polity (including some that aspire to be “New Calvinist”). Of course, doctrine without order does not do away with conflict in the church; rather, it puts conflict resolution in the hands of tyrants.

Independent, celebrity pastors mock deliberative Presbyterian polity for its inefficient authority structures. One popular preacher rather colorfully suggested that Paul’s teaching on church discipline could be summarized in this way: a church planter must weed from his membership those who would stand in the way of his vision for the church. After all, “sometimes Paul had to put people into the wood chipper.” One might well imagine Calvin assessing that strategy as he did Roman Catholic discipline in his reply to Cardinal Sadoletto: “Among pirates and robbers there is apparently more justice and regular government, more effect given to law, than by all your order.”

The seeming precision of Reformed polity is no small part of the common charge that Reformed churches consist of the “frozen chosen,” so obsessed with decency and order that their growth is restricted. But concern for order is not a Spirit-quenching institutionalism. In Edmund Clowney’s memorable words, the Spirit of ardor is also the Spirit of order (*The Church*, p. 115). The Reformed tradition has understood that church polity is the vital tool whereby God “invites us” and “holds us.” It is the means by which we come to express our submission to the Lord and Head of the church, and to one another. □

The author, an OP ruling elder, teaches at Reformed Theological Seminary.

THE FORMING PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN EAST ASIA

// A MISSIONARY IN EAST ASIA



The author participating in an ordination service

In response to a call for a minister to serve in Colonial America, the Presbytery of Laggan in Northern Ireland ordained Francis Makemie in 1682 and sent him to Maryland, where the Lord used him to plant four Presbyterian congregations the next year. In 1706, he helped to organize the Presbytery of Philadelphia, which eventually evolved into the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (PCUSA). Several years ago, the OPC in America similarly sent me to East Asia, to assist in the organization of an indigenous Presbyterian church. It would most certainly be self-aggrandizing to place myself at the same level of historical significance as Makemie, particularly because my role in assisting the church here is far less central than Makemie's was, yet there are a few curious parallels.

When the first presbyteries of what would become the PCUSA were forming, the pastors comprising them were from different backgrounds. Some were trained in Europe at well-established Presbyterian universities. Others came out of Congregationalism and were trained at institutions like Harvard. Still others never had formal seminary training and were educated by pastor-mentors. But a common desire to establish a Presbyterian body in America united them. The men of the forming Presbyterian Church here in East Asia ("Church") have likewise come from different backgrounds and have been trained in different kinds of institutions. Some have been trained in America at well-established Reformed seminaries. Others have come out of various evangelical churches and have been trained in their denominational seminaries. Still others have been educated or are being educated by local or online seminaries or have been taught by pastor-mentors. But a common commitment to Christ, the Reformed faith, and Presbyterian polity is uniting them.

Although Makemie was sent to America by a presbytery in Ireland, it was never his goal to establish congregations that

were part of that body. From the very outset, God used him to establish a uniquely American church that would eventually write her own book of church order. Likewise, although Presbyterian missionaries from America, such as myself, are laboring to assist in the organization of the forming Church, it has never been our goal for this church to be responsible to the general assembly of a foreign denomination. To that end, I have been involved in the process of assisting the forming Church to write her own book of church order.

In the early years of the PCUSA, decisions needed to be made about the exact form of the Westminster Standards that would be adopted by that church. The most significant revisions that the American church made to the Standards were in regard to the relationship between the church and the state. Currently, I am the chairman of a committee that is working to revise the translation of the Standards and to make decisions about whether or not to accept the American revisions of the text. Given the unique position of the church within the state here in East Asia, consideration of these revisions is very important.

Like the PCUSA in its early years, the forming Church is vibrantly planting and organizing churches, as well as training leadership for them. There are currently six locations in this country where presbyteries are forming. And I am preparing to visit another location that seems to hold promise for a seventh presbytery. I teach at a seminary that currently has thirty-nine men studying in its Master of Divinity program and forty-seven in its Bachelor of Divinity program. The seminary is preparing these men to be pastors or other full-time ministry workers. I serve them as the chairman of a committee that helps to examine some of these men, along with other men from around the country, for licensure and ordination. Currently, the forming Church has ten ordained ministers and twenty-three licentiates associated with her. In 2017, I expect to be involved in the examination of more than twenty men seeking licensure or ordination.

Both the PCUSA and the forming Church were organized during the rapid development and political rise of the nation in which they were located. The political situation of both churches placed them in a strategic position to send missionaries to other nations and to have a great influence around the world. For many of her early years, the PCUSA was an evangelistic, Bible-preaching church, committed to the Westminster Standards, which aggressively sought to establish churches in other lands, taking advantage of the opportunities afforded by the nation in which she was established. Perhaps the Lord is also opening a great door for the Church here. She is situated in a very populous country, in which Christianity is experiencing explosive growth. Now, nations closed to citizens of Western nations—such as those in the Middle East and Northern Africa—are open to people from this country. Eventually, the Lord may send an army of missionaries from the now-forming Church to such places, where the greatest number of unreached people reside, to help complete the Great Commission.



A congregation in the forming Church

Being Realistic about the Future

I do not mean to suggest that everything is rosy. Just as controversies have torn American Presbyterians apart throughout her history, so too are there struggles in the Church here. Some congregations have leaders who have become Reformed and Presbyterian in their convictions, but the congregations they serve are opposed to any change in their church. The two pastors of a congregation that has served as a cornerstone for the forming Church have chosen to divide the church and plant a new congregation because they are unable to get along. Some Reformed churches are filled with strife caused by certain extreme strands of Reformed thinking. Many men being prepared for ministry often lack the opportunity to be properly mentored by another Reformed pastor in actual ministry situations in order to learn how to be an officer in a Presbyterian church. Often church leaders have trouble trusting other church leaders. Gossip and backbiting assail church unity. In addition, although the government has not aggressively sought to persecute the forming Church, it may change its mind and place great stress on member congregations.

A few years back, I taught a course at a seminary here

about Presbyterian and Reformed church history. After teaching about all the splits that have occurred in Presbyterian churches from the time of the Reformation to the present and discussing the current sorry state of the PCUSA, I asked my students, “Are you ready for this?” In fact, I sometimes wonder

if I am ready and whether what I am doing makes sense. I think that, in many ways, church planting is a lot like having children. We rejoice at our children’s birth, even though we know that they will suffer and someday die, but also knowing that those who are God’s elect will live again for all eternity and that God works out his plan through them.

If church history is our guide, it would seem that no denomination and very few

congregations have remained relatively healthy and faithful to the gospel for more than a few hundred years. Although there are some bodies that go through times of revival, the tendency is that churches go through a life cycle not at all unlike that of human beings. People are born and grow, often quite vigorously at first, and then reach maturity. When mature, they are most productive and give birth to future generations. Eventually, they get old, lose strength, have a tendency to easily become sick, and then die. So it is, too, with local churches and denominations. Because we live in a sin-cursed world, this is just the reality that believers face. No matter how biblical the doctrine and polity of a church are at her foundation, the principle of sin and death exists within her. But knowing this, we do not give up on seeking to plant faithful churches that are organized according to the principles set forth in the Bible, any more than we give up having children and seeking to raise them to be followers of Christ. We may be sad at what has happened to the PCUSA, but we are thankful to be in the OPC, which has her roots in the church tradition associated with Francis Makemie. Therefore, we seek, by God’s grace, to see the church built up through the planting of new, fruit-bearing local churches that are united into Reformed and Presbyterian denominations.

No one can predict the future of the forming Church. We pray that she will have a long and fruitful life. May God be gracious to me and others laboring for the health of the church in this country, so that she may in turn be used by the Lord to build the kingdom of God throughout the world.

REVIEW:
*CHOOSING
THE GOOD
PORTION*

// GEORGE MARSDEN



George Marsden with his mother, Bertha, and her mother, Edith Mish, in the early 1960s

When my wife, Lucie, was growing up in an Orthodox Presbyterian parsonage, her family almost always had several guests for Sunday dinner. Her mother, Rosemary Commeret, was an outgoing hostess who naturally expressed warm piety and upbeat enthusiasm. Her nickname, “Rosie,” fit her disposition, and she was a counterbalance to her husband, Ray. He was also a most welcoming and good-humored host, but was not inclined toward Pollyanna, as would have been apparent from the morning’s sermon. Rosemary, who also had a lovely singing voice, played an important complementary role in their ministries together. Rosemary passed away this past fall. Her story parallels that of many pastors’ wives who are included in this book of memoirs, written by women, children, and close friends of many who played invaluable roles as Orthodox Presbyterian women.

One of the good aspects of being part of a small denomination, especially for families of pastors and other church officers, is that all sorts of other people from around the country seem like part of an extended family. Some will be known by reputation nationally and may be encountered on occasion in person at a general assembly or when they and their family have visited one’s local church. Others are well-known regional figures who are regulars at one’s Bible conference.

Having been part of that extended family, and so having known many of the subjects of this volume, I found it to be a pleasure to read. In the interest of full disclosure, I should say that I have a weakness for Orthodox Presbyterian women. That started, of course, with my affection for my mother. But when I was a very young boy, the warmest grown-up I knew, outside my own family, was Eleanor Kellogg, the wife of our pastor, Ed Kellogg (who also scored high for outgoing enthusiasm). When Eleanor substituted at our Christian school, she played the piano in what I later came to think of as the Wheaton style—lots of extra notes. Our family kept up with

the Kelloggs over the years, and I never saw reason to change my view of their genuine, pious warmth. I am not surprised to learn that the Kelloggs lived by the rule, “Let not the sun go down on your wrath.”

Later, when I was in seventh grade, Dorothy Partington (later Anderson and Barker)—like Eleanor Kellogg, the subject of one of the chapters in this collection—became my favorite teacher. She had just turned twenty-two and had been out of college several years. She was extraordinarily smart, and she combined excellent pedagogy with liking games and having a good time. In another time and situation, she might have become a scholar or executive. Instead, she dedicated herself to serving the church in the two principal ways open to a talented woman: in Christian education and in what turned out to be a more challenging vocation, as a pastor’s wife. Later I saw her and her husband, Bob, in a struggling church in Hamden, Connecticut. (That church, by the way, was held together largely by the impressive family of Henry and Ruth Bacon, and Ruth’s role is rightly celebrated in one of these chapters.)

One more childhood impression comes from 1946, when our family stayed for a week in an apartment in Wildwood, New Jersey, next to that of the Hunt family. Bruce Hunt had been allowed to return to Korea, but the rest of the family had to stay behind. To my seven-year-old imagination, the five Hunt children seemed models of friendly, disciplined, well-behaved children. I can still picture them playing board games on the outdoor wooden steps of the frame building. The older girls took care of the younger twins, and everything appeared to be harmonious. The account of Katherine Hunt in this volume, based on her letters, reveals what a battle it could be for a single parent of five to provide such character-building discipline. Beyond that, Katherine Hunt’s letters are just one of the many reminders in this volume of the terrific sacrifices that those dedicated to missions have been willing to make.

The book recounts separations and the agonies of not knowing whether a husband will survive, arrests, house break-ins, kidnapping, and martyrdom. These make the most dramatic and some of the most moving reading.

One of the other moving chapters is that about Grace Mullen. A remark of hers during the time she was battling cancer was the inspiration for the volume. And as someone who has done more than anyone to preserve the resources for OPC history, this collection is a fitting tribute to her that she would have appreciated. Gracie was a good friend of mine from some years on the staff together at the French Creek Bible Conference, an institution we both loved and which had a significant influence on a number of the subjects in this volume. Later, as a historian, I appreciated Grace's deep knowledge and immense helpfulness. She was someone who exemplified the fruit of the spirit.

One feature that does not appear often in this volume is humor. But since that is a significant part of extended family histories, and also an important source of relief, especially when ministerial families get together, I will attempt one anecdote. This is strictly from within my own immediate family's history, and it relates to one of the stories in this volume. The section on Mary Eckardt (Bob Eckardt is my first cousin), refers mainly to the loss of their dear adult son Doug in a bike accident. But it also includes a story of the family's life-threatening experience when, with three boys in the car, they were pulling a trailer cross-country in 1994 to the general assembly in Portland. Their car broke down in the middle of the mountain road, and Mary's prayers were answered when a fire crew soon came by and helped them out. Meanwhile, their close friends, Ray and Rosemary Commeret (Ray and Bob Eckardt had been at Westminster together), were also going to the GA with four children in the car and pulling a trailer. Coming down a mountain road, their trailer started to fishtail badly, and the children thought they were going to die. At last the two exhausted and travel-weary families pulled into the assembly's parking lot at nearly the same time. Rosemary provided the needed comic relief when she asked Mary, "So when are you going to get *your* divorce?"

The Orthodox Presbyterian Church, in a significant sense, owes its existence to an extraordinarily intelligent and dedicated woman, "Minnie" Machen, who is the subject of the opening chapter of this book. If Minnie Machen had not been

[Continued on page 21]

☆ Congratulations

The **Shorter Catechism** has been recited by:

- **Kate Oftedahl**, *Covenant OPC, Tucson, AZ*

The **Children's Catechism** has been recited by:

- **Sarah Clifford**, *Grace OPC, Vienna, VA*

OUR MEMBERSHIP VOWS

The Gift of Faith

Glen J. Clary

If the Bible is God's self-authenticating Word, then why don't all people believe it? Why doesn't everyone recognize its divine authorship? Why do some people reject its authority?

Some people reject the divine authorship of the Bible for the same reason the existence of God is rejected, namely, they suppress the truth in unrighteousness (Rom. 1:18). The problem is not a lack of proof or evidence; it's not a failure on God's part to reveal himself or authenticate his Word. Instead, the problem is with the sinful human heart.

In rebellion against God, sinners refuse to submit to him. They reject the divine authority of Scripture because they want to be autonomous—ruled by themselves and not by God. Sinners cannot believe the gospel of Christ without the gift of faith, which God gives to his elect through the work of the Holy Spirit (John 6:37, 44).

The Holy Spirit must change the sinner's heart in order for him to be willing and able to believe (Acts 16:14). Without the gift of faith, he will not and cannot submit to the authority of God's Word (Rom. 8:7). Unless his heart is renewed by the Holy Spirit, he will continue to live in rebellion against God.

Faith is a gift from God, and God gives this gift to the elect; that is, to those who were chosen by him for salvation (Eph. 1:4–5; Acts 13:48). The elect will believe because God, by his Spirit, makes them willing and able to believe (John 6:37; 10:26–29).

Thus, the Holy Spirit enables us to see and recognize the Bible for what it truly is, the Word of God. Without the Spirit, we are spiritually dead in our sins and unable to believe (Eph. 2:1; John 6:44). Unless we are born of the Spirit, we cannot see the kingdom of God (John 3:3, 5).

● Out of the Mouth . . .

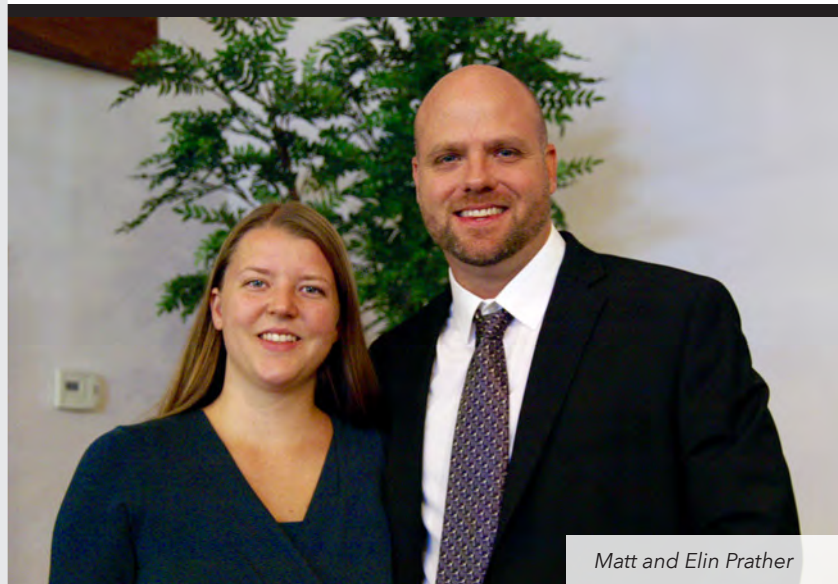
When my children asked about women on the mission field, I told them that they do find work—teaching, nursing, and such—but that only men should preach the word and administer the sacraments. Daniel, 8, concluded, "Ohh, I see; so ladies get to do the real jobs then."

—Jonathan Holst
Hamden, Conn.

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

THE LONG ROAD TO CORONA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

// SEAN D. GREGG



Matt and Elin Prather

It took Matt Prather a long time to get from San Diego to Corona, California. Although the physical distance is just one hundred miles, the spiritual journey that led him there was much longer.

Growing up the third of four children, he attended an Assemblies of God church with his family, and later a Calvary Chapel. It was in high school that Matt felt called to foreign missions. This call was confirmed by his pastor, and he was sent by a Calvary Chapel in San Diego to serve in Israel.

He spent about a year doing humanitarian work among Ethiopian and Russian immigrants. Later he helped establish and operate a guesthouse located in Galilee that served as a base for evangelism and Bible studies. Matt also spent two years studying Arabic in Jordan. He then returned to Israel more equipped to reach Arabic-speaking people in the region.

During his last five years in the Middle East, Matt began to come to Reformed convictions. He soon realized that his newfound understanding of Scripture would require him to leave his current position and pursue ministry with a Reformed church. Eventually he decided to return to the United States and enroll at Westminster Seminary California, where he met and became good friends with another former Calvary Chapel minister, Chris Hartshorn. But even though he was back in Southern California, he still wasn't very close to Corona.

Although Matt had become convinced of Reformed theology and had returned to the United States, he maintained relationships with his former colleagues. Near the end of his second year of seminary, he was asked if he would return to Israel for two weeks to help with an international pro-life conference. Matt agreed to go.

While he was helping with the conference, he met Elin, a Finnish conference participant. They hit it off right away, even before finding out that they were both Reformed (and the only

Reformed believers at the conference, for that matter). Matt ended up taking the next year off from seminary, during which time he married Elin and lived both in Israel and in Finland with her. After about a year and a half from having met, they were married and parents of an infant, and back in Southern California so Matt could complete his seminary training.

During seminary, Matt remained sure that he was called to missions, and he became convinced that the OPC was the right place for him to serve. He says Chris Hartshorn was a big factor in this, but also credits the influence of faculty members from the OPC.

After graduation, Matt interned at their home church with Mark Schroeder at Harvest OPC in San Marcos, California. He then interned for an additional four months at Westminster OPC in Westminster, California, while preparing for ordination exams.

About halfway through his internship at Harvest, Corona began to appear on the horizon. Chris Hartshorn and Dave Crum talked with Matt about becoming the church planter in Corona. Matt still felt the call to foreign missions, but he was happy to take the call to reach out to the lost in his own backyard.

A Group Gathers in Corona

After seminary, Chris Hartshorn became the church planter at Anaheim Hills Presbyterian Church in Anaheim Hills, California. As the congregation grew, several people from Corona began attending worship, each week driving on Highway 91, one of California's most congested roads. "We're

Home Missions Today

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

glad to have you here,” Hartshorn told them, “but don’t get too comfortable, because we want to plant a church in your community soon.”

It wasn’t too long before a Bible study began with the members of Anaheim Hills Presbyterian Church who lived in Corona and a few others. Chris normally led the Bible study, and Matt also led it several times to begin to get to know the group. Last fall, Matt was called to become the full-time church planter for them. He was installed as an evangelist on November 13, 2016. Worship services began on the following Sunday.

Everything fell beautifully into place. The group was able to sign a lease on a good location for worship, just one week before the first service—at the facility of Beth Shalom Messianic Jewish Congregation. Matt says it’s a beautiful location with adequate space, and the relationship between the two congregations has been good.

Several visitors attended the first service, and three of them have continued to worship with the group. The congregation has been actively inviting people to come to church, and some other visitors have come to worship over the past few months. Today about thirty-five people gather for worship each Lord’s Day. Sunday school follows the worship service, and the group gathers again for an evening Bible study and time of prayer at the Prathers’ home.

The group has come from varied backgrounds. Some were members of other Reformed denominations; others have come from broadly evangelical churches. A few were unchurched. Matt says that all of them are enthusiastic about the OPC, and they have a great desire to get the word out about their new congregation.

Matt and Elin and their two toddlers have begun canvassing the neighborhoods around the congregation’s meeting place, in order to let people know about the new church plant. Some weeks, members of the congregation join them. They knock on thirty to forty doors each time, and engage in conversations with those who answer and leave information about the church. The congregation prays that new visitors will come as a result of these efforts.

The Lord has blessed this young work. There are currently eleven people taking a new members’ class. Four men, including two who have previously served as deacons, are taking a leadership training class. The men have a joint Bible study with the men from Anaheim Hills Presbyterian Church, and they occasionally gather for breakfast as well. The women of Corona Presbyterian Church gather twice a month for fellowship and service.

The congregation is currently brainstorming, trying to figure out the best way to get into the fabric of Corona. Matt is continuing to develop the congregation’s efforts to work their way into the life of the community in an effort to reach more neighbors with the gospel.

Prayer Needs

Pray for Corona Presbyterian Church:

- For growth as a family and a group.
- For awareness of opportunities and courage to share the gospel.
- For wisdom in reaching out to Corona.
- That new visitors will find the congregation warm and welcoming.



The congregation of Corona Presbyterian Church

GIVING AND WORSHIP

// GEOFFREY L. WILLOUR

One part of a typical Reformed worship service that sometimes makes visitors uncomfortable is the collection, or offering. In fact, the “passing of the plate” during corporate worship can be awkward, and perhaps even a real turnoff, to some. After all, does not this practice give the appearance of supporting the cynic’s slander that “the church is only interested in your money”? And if this worship practice has such potential to be a stumbling block in the way of inquirers visiting the church and giving the gospel a fair hearing, why not just do away with the practice altogether and instead solicit tithes and offerings in other ways?

It is perhaps from such considerations that some churches today have done away with the practice of taking a collection during worship, instead providing ways for members to give outside of corporate worship. For example, some churches provide a locked offering box in the back of the sanctuary, where attendees can deposit their tithes and offerings, while other, more trendy churches provide kiosks in the foyer where offerings can be made electronically.

I share the concern that we not put unnecessary stumbling blocks in the way of church visitors and inquirers after the Christian faith. And certainly we need to avoid high-pressure tactics and seek to be sensitive and dignified in the soliciting of tithes and offerings from the congregation. At the same time, I suggest that we would do well to retain this time-honored practice of collecting the gifts of God’s people *during* the corporate, Lord’s Day worship service.

In defense of this practice, I would offer three considerations: (1) In Scripture, *giving to the work of the Lord is an act of special*

worship, and thus we would do well to retain the practice of taking the offering during the corporate Lord’s Day worship service. (2) Churches that remove the collection from the context of corporate worship unintentionally drive a wedge between giving and worship in the minds of God’s people. (3) Retaining the practice of collecting tithes and offerings during corporate worship reinforces the solemnity of our responsibility as Christ’s disciples to be good financial stewards of the financial resources with which God has blessed us.

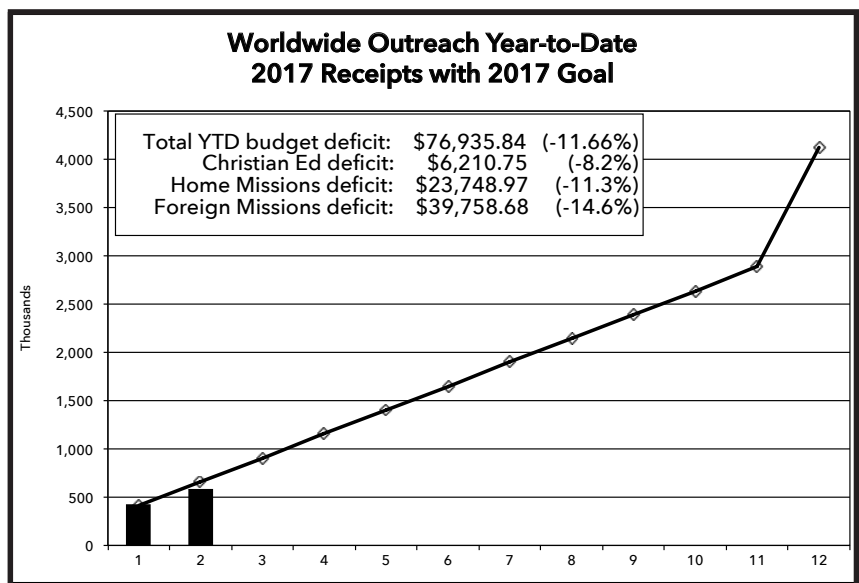
The OPC’s Directory for Worship clearly supports the view that giving to the church is an act of special worship:

The bringing of offerings in the public assembly of God’s people on the Lord’s Day is a solemn act of worship to almighty God. The people of God are to set aside to him the firstfruits of their labors; in so doing, they should present themselves with thanksgiving as a living sacrifice to God. *All should participate in this act of worship when God gives opportunity for it.* (II, B.4.a., emphasis added)

Many biblical considerations support this truth. For example, 1 Chronicles 29 shows that giving to the work of the Lord is an act of worship. There King David and the Israelites present offerings to the Lord for the construction of the temple. (See “King David’s Cheerful Gift,” by Christopher Chelpka, in the October 2016 issue of *New Horizons*.)

Because of the connection between giving and worship, and also because it reinforces the solemnity of our financial stewardship before the Lord, we would do well to retain the collection in our worship services.

The author is the pastor of Lake OPC in Mentor, Ohio.



APRIL

1. **Octavius and Marie Delfils**, Haiti. Pray that the Lord would raise up men for leadership in the church. / **John and Wenny Ro**, Chicago, Ill. (downtown). Pray for much unity and love among the core group at Gospel Life Presbyterian Church. / Pray **Ross Graham**, stated clerk of the GA, as he prepares the agenda for the meeting of the Eighty-fourth General Assembly that will begin May 31.
2. **Brett and Maryann Mahlen**, Orland Park, Ill. Pray that Brett will challenge the lost men and disciple the believing men in Stateville Prison. / **Ben and Heather Hopp**, Haiti. Pray for the programs for children in the churches on the island of La Gonâve. / **Adrian (and Rachel) Crum**, yearlong intern at Bayview OPC in Chula Vista, Calif.
3. **Ben and Melanie Westerveld**, Quebec, Canada. Pray for those who work with the teaching ministries at St-Marc Church. / Home Missions staff administrator **Sean Gregg**. / Pray for **Brian Cochran, Christopher Folkers, Joel Pearce**, and **David Winslow** as they seek permission to use copyrighted material for the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal*.
4. **Andrew and Billie Moody**, San Antonio, Tex. Praise the Lord for bringing San Antonio Reformed Church to the point of organizing as a particular church. / Pray for missionary associate **Janine Eygenraam**, Quebec, Canada, as she assists in a number of St-Marc's outreach programs. / Pray for **the OPC Timothy Conference**, which will be held April 5-8 at Westminster Seminary California in Escondido, Calif.
5. Retired missionaries **Betty Andrews, Cal and Edie Cummings, Greet Rietkerk**, and **Young and Mary Lou Son**. / **Phil Strong**, Lander, Wyo. Praise the Lord for his faithfulness to Grace Reformed Fellowship over the last five years. / **Ryan (and Rachel) Heaton**, yearlong intern at Tyler Presbyterian Church in Tyler, Tex.
6. **Ron and Carol Beabout**, Gaithersburg, Md. Pray for five new families or individuals to regularly attend Trinity Reformed Church. / **Heero and Anya Hacquebord**, L'viv, Ukraine. Pray that young Christians will know the blessings and peace of the gospel. / **Mark Stumpff**, OPC office assistant.



Brett and Maryann Mahlen

7. **Ray and Michele Call**, Montevideo, Uruguay. Pray for wisdom and vision to know which areas of ministry in the church to develop. / **Bill and Margaret Shishko**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of Connecticut and Southern New York. Pray that Bill's radio program will yield contacts for church plants. / **Kathy Bube**, Loan Fund administrator.
8. **Mike and Katy Myers**, Royston, Ga. Pray for God's provision of officers for Heritage Presbyterian Church and for continued peace. / Missionary associates **Markus and Sharon Jeromin**, Montevideo, Uruguay. Pray that they will have opportunities to present the gospel to seekers. / **Charlene Tipton**, database administrator.
9. **Mark and Jeni Richline**, Montevideo, Uruguay. Pray that those who attend church regularly will become members. / **Jay and Andrea Bennett**, Neon, Ky. Pray that the Lord would enable Neon Reformed Presbyterian Church to organize as a particular church by 2020. / **Doug Watson**, part-time staff accountant.
10. **Christopher and Ann Malamisuro**, Cincinnati, Ohio. Pray that invitation cards sent to new residents will bring visitors to Good Shepherd OPC. / Affiliated missionary **Linda Karner**, Japan. Pray that her students will be able to learn well. / **Bryan (and Heidi) Dage**, yearlong intern at Covenant OPC in Komoka, Ontario.
11. Affiliated missionaries **Craig and Ree Coulbourne**, Urayasu, Japan. Pray that God would bring fruit from the seeds sown at weekly Bible studies. / **David and Rebekah Graves**, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. Pray that God would bless Coeur d'Alene Reformed Church's leadership training class. / *Ordained Servant* editor **Greg Reynolds**.
12. **Bob and Grace Holda**, Oshkosh, Wis. Pray that God would add to Resurrection Presbyterian Church's number those whom he is calling to himself in Oshkosh. / **Eric and Dianna Tuininga**, Mbale, Uganda. Pray for Eric as he resumes his ministry in Uganda following furlough in the U.S. / *New Horizons* managing editor **Jim Scott**.
13. **Charles and Connie Jackson**, Mbale, Uganda. Pray that God would raise up godly men to lead the PCU congregations and plant new ones. / **Matt and Elin Prather**, Corona, Calif. Pray for God's Spirit to empower Corona Presbyterian Church for service and add to their number. / **Jan Gregson**, assistant to the finance director.
14. Home Missions associate general secretary **Al Tricarico**. / Missionary associates **Christopher and Chloe Verdick**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for the clinic workers as they provide medical care to the Karimojong. / Christian Education general secretary **Danny Olinger**. Pray for his safe travel as he visits presbyteries.

- 15. David and Sunshine Okken**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for the many meetings held each week where the gospel is presented. / **Jim and Eve Cassidy**, Austin, Tex. Ask the Lord to bless South Austin Presbyterian Church's outreach and advertising endeavors. / Army chaplain **David (and Jenna) DeRienzo**.
- 16. Bill and Sessie Welzien**, Key West, Fla. Pray that the Lord would add to Keys Presbyterian Church. / **David and Rashel Robbins**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray that the children who attend church will hear the gospel and come to faith. / **David Haney**, director of finance and planned giving for the Committee on Coordination.
- 17.** Missionary associate **Leah Hopp**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for her safety in travel as she visits local villages. / **Eric and Donna Hausler**, Naples, Fla. Pray for the Lord to grant wisdom as Christ the King Presbyterian Church looks for a new location. / Pray for Diaconal Ministries administrator **David Nakhla** as he visits the ministry to refugees carried out by the Greek Evangelical Church in Greece from April 19 to 28.
- 18. Larry and Kalynn Oldaker**, Huron, Ohio. Pray that Grace Fellowship's outreach plans will be blessed with visitors. / Missionary associates **Heather Palmer** and **Angela Voskuil**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for the thriving preschool where they teach. / *New Horizons* editorial assistant **Pat Clawson**.
- 19. Bob and Martha Wright**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray that many will come to Christ as a result of the ministry in Karamoja. / **Brian and Sara Chang**, Cottonwood, Ariz. Pray for new opportunities for the name of Christ and Christ Reformed Presbyterian Church to be made known. / *Ordained Servant* proofreader **Diane Olinger**.
- 20. Tim and Deborah Herndon**, West Lebanon, N.H. Give thanks for young families that plan to join Providence OPC. / Foreign Missions general secretary **Mark Bube**. Pray for wisdom and insight as he provides counsel to our missionaries. / **Miller (and Stephanie) Ansell**, yearlong intern at Faith Presbyterian Church in Garland, Tex.
- 21.** Pray for Foreign Missions associate general secretary **Douglas Clawson** as he advises and encourages candidates for missionary service. / **Brad and Cinnamon Peppo**, Springfield, Ohio. Pray for continued development in the ministry of Living Water OPC. / **Janet Birkmann**, administrative assistant for the Committee on Diaconal Ministries.



Mark and Kathy Bube

- 22. Lowell and Mae Ivey**, Virginia Beach, Va. Pray for the Lord's blessing on Reformation Presbyterian Church's evangelism and outreach activities. / Foreign Missions administrative assistant **Linda Posthuma** and secretary **Katrina Zartman**. / *New Horizons* cover designer **Chris Tobias** and proofreader **Sarah Pederson**.
- 23. Mr. and Mrs. F.**, Asia. Pray for Mr. F. as he maintains a busy schedule of teaching and ministry oversight. / **Kim and Barbara Kuhfuss**, Eau Claire, Wis. Pray that the Lord would bring three new tithing families to Providence Reformed Church. / **Marvin Padgett**, executive director of Great Commission Publications.
- 24. Josh and Kristen McKamy**, Chambersburg, Pa. Pray that Covenant OPC's regular outreach activities will resume and bear fruit. / Tentmaker missionary **T. L. L.**, Asia (on furlough). Pray for a good balance between speaking engagements and time with family. / **Joseph Johnson**, yearlong intern at Trinity OPC in Hatboro, Pa.
- 25.** Missionary associate **D. V.**, Asia. Pray for the salvation of people he has contacted. / **Chris and Megan Harts-horn**, Anaheim Hills, Calif. Pray that the people of Anaheim Hills Presbyterian Church will love the gospel and have a burden to share it with the lost. / Navy chaplain **Cornelius (and Deidre) Johnson**.
- 26.** Pray for **Chris and Nancy Walmer**, area home missions coordinator, Presbytery of Central Pennsylvania, as he does exploratory work in Lebanon, Pa. / **Mr. and Mrs. M.**, Asia. Pray that the Reformed faith will take deep root in Asia. / **Archie Allison**, chairman of the Subcommittee for Internet Ministries.
- 27.** Pray that tentmaker missionary **T. D.**, Asia, will have many opportunities to do evangelistic outreach. / **Joshua and Jessica Lyon**, Carson, Calif. Pray for the continued development in the ministry of Grace OPC. / **Ryan (and Rochelle) Cavanaugh**, yearlong intern at Prescott Presbyterian Church in Prescott, Arizona.
- 28. Paul and Sarah Murreale**, St. Louis, Mo. Pray that the Lord would add three new families to Gateway OPC this year. / Missionary associates **E. K.** and **S. Z.**, Asia. Pray that God would equip them to disciple the young women he brings into their lives. / **Bulut Yasar**, yearlong intern at New Life OPC in Montoursville, Pa.
- 29.** Pray for the labors of affiliated missionaries **Jerry and Marilyn Farnik**, Prague, Czech Republic. / **Mika and Christina Edmondson**, Grand Rapids, Mich. Pray for growing unity and fellowship among the people of New City Fellowship. / **Zachary (and Annie) Simmons**, yearlong intern at Bethel Presbyterian Church in Wheaton, Ill.
- 30.** Home Missions general secretary **John Shaw**. / Missionary associates **Kathleen Winslow**, Prague, Czech Republic, and **Sarah Jantzen**, Mbale, Uganda. Pray for these ladies and the children with whom they work. / **Daniel (and Marcy) Borvan**, yearlong intern at Merrimack Valley Presbyterian Church in North Andover, Mass.

NEWS, VIEWS, & REVIEWS

WILLIAM SHISHKO INSTALLED

Richard Gerber

The Rev. William Shishko was installed on November 19 as an evangelist for the Presbytery of Connecticut and Southern New York to serve as its regional home missionary. The service of installation was held during the stated meeting of the Presbytery held at the Orthodox Presbyterian Church of Bohemia in Bohemia, New York. In addition to the presbyters, people from the OP churches on Long Island and Queens and pastors from churches with whom the OPC has fraternal relations attended the service. The host church provided a wonderful lunch following the service.

The Rev. Jonathan Shishko, moderator of Presbytery and son of Bill and Margaret Shishko, led the service of worship and gave the prayer of installation. The Rev. Al Tricarico, associate general secretary of the Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension, preached on 2 Corinthians 12:1–10. The Rev. Richard Gerber, chair of the Presbytery's missions committee, gave the charge to the evangelist using 2 Timothy 4:1–18.

Mr. Shishko began his labors on September 1. He previously served for thirty-five years as the pastor of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Franklin Square (New York). He is the first regional home missionary to serve the Presbytery of Connecticut and Southern New York, which was formed by the General Assembly on January 1, 1998.



Participants in the installation of Bill Shishko as RHM (left to right): Dick Gerber, Jon Shishko, Bill Shishko, Al Tricarico

installed as pastor of Beal Heights Presbyterian Church in Lawton, Okla., where he had been ministering.

- **Philip D. Mayfield**, formerly a PCA minister, was installed as associate pastor of Columbia Presbyterian Church in Columbia, Md., on January 31, 2016.

MILESTONES

- **Ruth Bido Morton**, the widow of the Rev. George F. Morton, died peacefully on February 18.

VIEWS

ENGAGING THE SKEPTICS

Editor:

I read with interest Mr. Peppo's article on "Engaging the Skeptics" in the March issue. I recently debated the truth of Christianity with atheist Michael Shermer, the editor in chief of *Skeptic* magazine. The debate can be found online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7FCk4aA-vIQ>.

Paul Viggiano
Torrance, Calif.

CIRCULAR REASONING?

Editor:

In the March 2017 issue of *New Horizons*, Glen J. Clary asks (p. 13), "Why do you believe that the Bible is the Word of God?" He says the best answer is "I believe the Bible is the Word of God because the Bible says so." I *do* believe the Bible is the Word of God, but I think Clary's reasoning about it is circular. It's like saying, "The Bible is true because the Bible says so, and the Bible is true." If we are going to teach our children and proclaim to the world that the Bible is the Word of God, we need sounder reasons for believing and declaring so.

Diane Castro
Beverly, Mass.

Glen Clary replies: It's too difficult to provide an adequate answer to the criticism of circular reasoning here. Let me commend Greg Bahnsen's book *Always Ready*, in which he says, "Indeed, it is the case, as many will be quick to point out, that this presuppositional method of apologetics *assumes* the truth of Scripture in order to *argue for* the truth of Scripture. Such

UPDATE

CHURCHES

- On February 3, **Beal Heights Presbyterian Church** in Lawton, Okla., was received into the OPC from the PCA.

MINISTERS

- On February 3, **Brian E. Belh**, once an OP minister, but recently in the PCA, was

is unavoidable when ultimate truths are being debated. However, such is not damaging, for it is not a flat circle in which one reasons (i.e., “the Bible is true because the Bible is true”). Rather, the Christian apologist simply recognizes that the *ultimate* truth—that which is more pervasive, fundamental, and necessary—is such that it cannot be argued *independently* of the preconditions inherent in it. One must presuppose the truth of God’s revelation *in order to reason at all*—even when reasoning about God’s revelation. The fact that the apologist presupposes the word of God in order to carry on a discussion or debate about the veracity of that word does *not nullify* his argument, but rather *illustrates* it.”

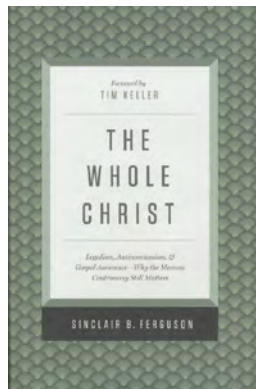
REVIEWS

***The Whole Christ: Legalism, Antinomianism, and Gospel Assurance—Why the Marrow Controversy Still Matters*, by Sinclair Ferguson. Crossway, 2016. Hardback, 256 pages, list price \$24.99. Reviewed by OP minister Arthur J. Fox.**

The Whole Christ is Sinclair Ferguson’s call for the church to get the gospel right. He makes his point by using an obscure event in Scottish church history, the Marrow Controversy of 1717. The book is pastoral in its tone as it answers four questions:

First, can the gospel be freely offered to all people? The Marrow Men, so called because of their agreement with Edward Fisher’s book, *the Marrow of Modern Divinity*, answered yes, because there is such a fullness of God’s grace in Jesus Christ that he himself is the gospel.

Second, do you have to repent before you can believe in Jesus? The presbytery involved in the Marrow Controversy demanded that potential ministers agree “that it is not sound and orthodox teaching that we forsake sin in order to our coming to Christ, and instating us in covenant with God” (p. 28). In other words, must I repent in order to come to Christ? That is legalism; it makes something I



do a condition for receiving God’s grace. That is not the gospel of God’s free grace in Christ, which declares that Christ is offered freely. Repentance is a *fruit* of God’s grace. I repent, not to be saved, but because I apprehend the mercy of God in Christ and believe that, as one Puritan strikingly put it, “Christ is dead for you” (p. 101).

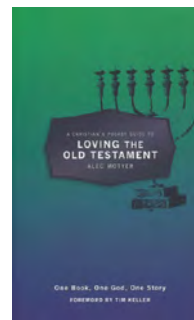
Third, is it true that the Christian does not have to keep the law (antinomianism)? The Marrow Men taught that the law is a rule of life for the Christian. Ferguson supports their view (on pages 121–22) by likening the law to an abusive first husband who showed no pity toward his wife and later died; she then married a more gracious husband. Before Christ, the law was like the first husband, having no pity on us. But in Christ we died to the law, and our new husband, Christ, “abounds more in grace than the abusive husband did in condemnation. It is this that produces what Thomas Chalmers famously described as “the expulsive power of a new affection” (p. 122). Now the law is the gracious rule of Christ for life.

Finally, is it possible to have assurance of faith or salvation, and if so, how? Ferguson tells us that assurance begins when we realize that Christ did not die to make God love us; rather, God sent Christ to die *because* he loved us. When we believe that God loves us, our lives will be marked by righteous living, not sinning and walking in love.

This is a very practical book. It may be Sinclair Ferguson’s best.

***A Christian’s Pocket Guide to Loving the Old Testament*, by Alec Motyer. Christian Focus, 2015. Paperback, 144 pages, list price \$7.99. Reviewed by OP minister William M. Hobbs.**

Christian Focus publishes a series of “pocket guides” on various subjects, like this one on the Old Testament by retired Irish Old Testament scholar and pastor Alec Motyer. Now over ninety years old, Motyer is a voice worth hearing. His 555-page commentary on Isaiah reflects the



thirty years Motyer spent teaching the text. And his *Look to the Rock* (seeing Christ in the Old Testament), *Preaching?* (lobbying for simplicity in exposition), and numerous commentaries (e.g., on Amos, Exodus,

Philippians, and Psalms) have established him as a trusted helper to pastor and layman alike. Motyer is that rare scholar who can write plainly, say something quotable in a few words, and write sympathetically to ordinary folk.

In this pocket guide, Motyer begins with this statement of purpose: “Now this Old Testament, above all else we might say about it, is designed to prepare us for the Lord Jesus Christ.” In fact, a central thesis for Motyer is that to know Jesus, we must know the Old Testament. As redemption is its story, he notes several words to watch for like *redeemer*, *covering*, and *ransom*.

Second comes a brief look at the author, God—the creator and moral governor of the universe.

Third, the New Testament warrant for Motyer’s view is summarized in four simple texts: Galatians 3:29 and 6:16, Philippians 3:3, and Colossians 2:11–12. As with the whole book, this section is succinct and much more profound than the novice might realize.

The fourth and largest section is a fourfold presentation of the unity of the Bible: one covenant, one God, one way of salvation, and one Messiah.

Fifth, Motyer tackles several prophets to give the untrained reader some clues as to how to proceed. Then there are the Psalms, constituting the “outpouring of the heart and the well-thought-out intention of the mind,” all under one heading: “Take It to the Lord.”

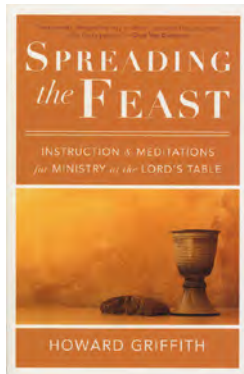
There is also a little section on prophecy. According to Motyer, prophecy and creation are the Bible’s two-part defense that Yahweh (the Lord) is God. Motyer briefly surveys Isaiah 40–48 to demonstrate the point. Then, working a series of interesting angles (e.g., obedience, sacrifices, city of God, circumstances), this

thesis is carried into the New Testament, where the Savior is the fulfillment all the things. The key help Motyer gives here is structure. He presses the reader to read and reread the text, looking for its structure in order to arrive at its meaning.

Who might benefit from this little book? My ninth-grade Bible students last year would have been much helped. This year's kids will thank me. It would make a nice study for a Sunday school class. Even the minister who has preached and taught through the Old Testament will enjoy the read and learn something, too.

***Spreading the Feast: Instruction and Meditations for Ministry at the Lord's Table*, by Howard Griffith. P&R, 2015. Paperback, 152 pages, list price \$14.99. Reviewed by OP pastor Stephen J. Oharek.**

In *Spreading the Feast*, Howard Griffith has brought his decades of pastoral experience, along with his abilities as a systematic theologian, to bear upon the subject of the Lord's Supper. This brief volume is divided into two parts: "Foundations" of the Supper, followed by a series of twenty-eight "Meditations."



"Foundations" provides a basic orientation to the theology and practice of the Lord's Supper, agreeably to the Word of God and our confessional standards. Within this discussion, Griffith defends the admission to the Table of professing believers only (against paedocommunion) and argues against using the Supper as an occasion to turn "from faith to ritual" (p. 34). He commends weekly observance of the Supper, though that point is far from essential to the book.

Griffith provides a helpful (and, I believe, correct) explanation of why all communicant members should ordinarily partake of the Supper when it is administered. He explains that Jesus' warning, that "if you ... remember that your brother has

REVIEW: OP WOMEN

[Continued from page 13]

the sort of brilliant, pious, and orthodox Presbyterian that she was, her son Gresham would probably not have been the sort of person to take the stands he did that led to the founding of the denomination. So it is fitting that this book begins with a tribute to her.

It is also appropriate to include remembrances of a number of other early women, such as the Rothwell sisters, the Shillito sisters, Marguerite Montgomery, and Anna Rath, who were crucial to funding the denomination that had to start from scratch at the depths of the depression. They are a reminder that the orthodox Presbyterian movement at first included a few truly privileged people. Most wealthy, conservative Presbyterians were not ready to give up the comforts of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. But the few who did were immensely helpful.

The story of Hattie and John DeWard, and what they had to give up to leave, is a reminder of the great sacrifices

something against you," you should first go and be reconciled (Matt. 5:23-24), does not teach communicants to refrain from partaking of the Supper. He says that "individual members do not have the right to put themselves out of Communion," because "Table fellowship is rightly more than an individual matter" (p. 59).

Flowing out coherently from the

that some of the less well-to-do had to make. My father, who was the missions general secretary in the early days, cultivated the good graces of the well-to-do ladies. He also visited the families of the home missionaries, many of whom he described as "poor as church mice."

I could have mentioned many more memories in this anecdotal review. There is no way to adequately celebrate all that these and so many other women have done to provide, through God's grace, much of the strength of the denomination. So I will just recommend this volume to anyone who is part of the extended OP family. It is a place to be reminded of, or to learn about, many of the saints who have gone before or are still around.

The author is emeritus professor of history at the University of Notre Dame. Choosing the Good Portion: Women of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, edited by Patricia E. Clawson and Diane L. Olinger, is available from the Committee for the Historian at store.opc.org (to pay by credit card) or bookorders@opc.org (to be billed) for \$15.00 plus shipping.

"Foundations" discussion is a series of "Meditations," which Griffith refers to as "the meat of the book" (p. 19). Here the author makes a particularly useful contribution to how the Supper can be administered. If Griffith's sound ecclesiology is on display in Part One of the book, his redemptive-historical reading of the Scriptures is on display in Part Two.



S.T.O.R.M. Report

Short-Term Outreach, Relief & Missions

From the Office of the Short-Term Missions Coordinator

The OPC's short-term missions newsletter, the S.T.O.R.M. Report, is a great resource for individuals and groups looking for ways to serve the OPC in the U.S. or on a foreign mission field. The Report includes opportunities for service, as well as photos and testimonials from those who have gone before. Find the S.T.O.R.M. Report at OPCSTM.org or write to OPCShortTermMissions@opc.org to be added to the mailing list.

These twenty-eight meditations move along the story line of the Bible from “Old Covenant Anticipations” to “New Covenant Fulfillment,” concluding with “The Riches of Union with Christ.”

These meditations offer guidance to enable ministers to tie their explanation of the Supper to the particular themes of the sermon text. This not only helps avoid the redundancy of reciting the same form, but also allows the visible word (sacrament) to attach rather specifically to the preached word. Just as a particular wine can be paired with a particular food to enhance the meal, so also can sacrament and sermon be paired well to create a coherent spiritual meal for God’s people.

While *Spreading the Feast* will prove especially useful to pastors, it would also be of benefit to anyone interested in finding an accessible introduction to the Supper and its breadth of redemptive-historical significance.

***The Lordship of Christ: Serving Our Savior All the Time, in All of Life, with All Our Heart*, by Vern Poythress. Crossway, 2016. Paperback, 224 pages, list price \$19.99. Reviewed by OP minister Jeffrey C. Waddington.**

One of the latest writings of Vern Poythress, a professor at Westminster Theological Seminary, is *The Lordship of Christ*. In it, he delineates in broad strokes what the intellectual development of a Christian mind-set or worldview involves.

The Lordship of Christ is beautifully and clearly written, combining depth of subject matter with enviable simplicity. The book consists of twenty chapters in four parts, along with a summary conclusion and a valuable appendix on the increasingly popular Two Kingdoms theology. Poythress is able to describe and evaluate the Two Kingdoms movement irenically, while disagreeing with it at points.

Part One addresses the call to serve Christ. Here the author lays down his thesis that the development of the life of the mind is an integral part of our personal

and corporate sanctification. Poythress provides a basic primer on what it means to be a Christian, what the biblical story line entails, why we should be obedient to Christ, how we can serve Christ in our knowledge, and how Christian thinking contrasts with worldly thinking. The influence of Abraham Kuyper, Geerhardus Vos, and Cornelius Van Til is evident throughout this material.

Part Two examines various resources we can draw upon in serving Christ in our knowledge. In this major section, the author manifests his commitment to the Reformed tradition. He reminds us of our basic spiritual resources (the ordinary means of grace), which God has said he would bless to our spiritual nourishment and growth in grace. Additionally, Poythress opens up a window on historical resources (which are *not* infallible), including the insights of Herman Bavinck and Herman Dooyeweerd. Poythress points out more recent resources as well.

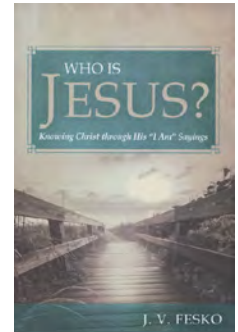
Part Three is essentially a brief introduction to, and exposition of, Kuyper’s *Lectures on Calvinism*. The author reminds us of the Kuyperian (and biblical) dictum that all of life is lived under the lordship of Jesus Christ. Poythress includes chapters on politics, science, art, the future, education, and work. He reminds us that we must seek to bring our whole lives under Christ without falling into triumphalism.

Part Four deals with traps that Christians can fall into in seeking to honor Christ in our knowledge. These traps include our motivation, norms, situations, and hopes. Readers familiar with the work of John Frame and Vern Poythress on perspectivalism will recognize this theological approach. This segment is especially helpful in reminding us of some of the practical pitfalls to avoid in developing our Christian minds.

This is an excellent book to give to new believers, as well as to those who have been on the journey for some time now. As we progress from here to eternity, it is good to be reminded that Jesus declares that every stretch of the pathway is his.

***Who Is Jesus? Knowing Christ through His “I Am” Sayings*, by J. V. Fesko. Reformation Heritage Books, 2016. Paperback, 112 pages, list price \$10.00. Reviewed by OP pastor Shane Bennett.**

Great things often come in small packages. The same could be said of John Fesko’s *Who Is Jesus?* Though it is a brief ninety-three pages, the content is highly valuable and useful for both pastors and laymen. In *Who Is Jesus?* Fesko begins and ends by focusing on the title’s question. By examining the seven “I am” statements of Jesus found in the gospel of John and developing the Old Testament context and allusions surrounding them (devoting a chapter to each saying), Fesko unfolds, not who we might imagine Jesus to be, but who Jesus himself claims to be. Neither the believer nor the unbeliever can afford to ignore Jesus’ claims, for in his “I am” statements we are confronted with a man who is either a lunatic, a liar, or God in the flesh.

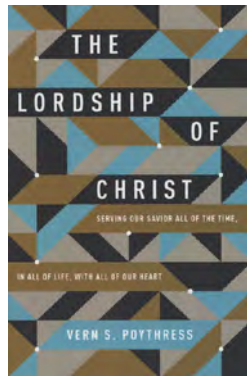


This book is useful to pastors for several reasons. First, it develops an Old Testament context that often enriches and enlivens the text of John’s gospel. Jesus did not live in a vacuum, but came to minister to people with an Old Testament context. That context makes sense of who Jesus is, and Fesko labors to unfold it.

Second, each chapter ends helpfully with application. Sometimes it is as simple as “Will you believe in Jesus?” or “Pray therefore for your shepherds’ focusing our attention on the implication of Jesus’ words for our own lives.”

Third, it has merit as an evangelistic tool. Everyone, whether a believer or an unbeliever, has some idea of who Jesus is, but not everyone has engaged Jesus’ claims that call us to worship him as the God-man. This book would be easy to convert into a series of outreach lectures.

Finally, this book is useful to the layman since it addresses the doubts that often plague Christians. Is Jesus *really* God



OPC Men's Retreat

April 28-30 • South Jersey

- For: men age 16 and older
- Speaker: Rev. John Van Meerbeke
- Camp Haluwasa, Hammonton, N.J.
- Free-time activities: fishing, skeet shooting, softball, soccer, golf (fees)
- Cost: \$132 per person
- Details and online registration: at immanuelonline.org look under "Events"

in the flesh? Is he just a moral teacher? How do I demonstrate his deity? Fesko answers these questions and strengthens our faith in our Savior, who is the great 'I am,' the bread of life, the light of the world, the true vine, the resurrection and the life—in short, God in the flesh and the Savior of men.

Fesko reminds us that we cannot accept Jesus as simply a teacher of morality. He is either a lunatic, a liar, or Lord. Both the gospel of John and this book make it clear: he is Lord, and we must worship the living God made flesh. I highly recommend this book.

***The Triune God*, by Fred Sanders. Zondervan, 2016. Paperback, 254 pages, list price \$24.99. Reviewed by Prof. Ryan M. McGraw.**

At the present time, the doctrine of the Trinity is experiencing a renaissance, yet many Christians still need to learn how to think and live in light of the Trinity. The growing literature on the Trinity often fails to bridge the gap between the scholarly world and the church. Fred Sanders's *The Triune God* falls somewhere between those two worlds. He presents a well-informed exposition of the doctrine of the Trinity that aims to promote doxology. The primary aim of this mid-level text is to rework how we should ground the Trinity in Scripture and to what end (p. 162). This makes this book outshine others of its kind in several respects.



Diaconal Summit Registration

May 15 is the deadline to register for the OPC Diaconal Summit, which will meet June 15-17, 2017, in Wheaton, Illinois. Get all the details and register now at www.opcstm.org/register.

Sanders establishes the doctrine of the Trinity in a fresh way. This does not imply that his arguments are new or unique, but that they are distinctive from many recent treatments. His primary purpose is "seeking to give dogmatic guidelines for Trinitarian exegesis, which is more a matter of viewing biblical Trinitarianism from the right angle, in the right light, and at the right distance" (p. 172). He urges readers to understand the Trinity in light of the missions and processions of the persons, as opposed to distinguishing between the economical Trinity and the immanent Trinity or proving the doctrine through a piecemeal appeal to Scripture. He argues that the "immanent" and "economical" language has the disadvantage of implying two Trinities instead of two ways in which the triune God reveals himself.

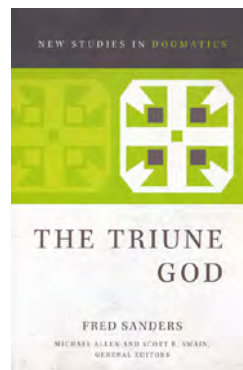
At the same time, he shies away from proving the doctrine by citing proof texts for one part of the doctrine at a time, since such arguments do not adequately reflect how the New Testament reveals the Trinity. Rather than treating fully how Scripture reveals the Trinity, the author provides sufficient illustrations of his principles to give us the necessary tools to read our Bibles properly (p. 191). This method enables readers to "develop hermeneutical approaches and exegetical skills" that enable them to read the New Testament with the same Trinitarian presuppositions as its authors (p. 219). Sanders

wants readers not only to find the Trinity in Scripture, but to do so in a way that respects the character of biblical revelation (p. 242).

Sanders prioritizes finding the Trinity in Scripture. He counters the common idea that while the doctrine of the Trinity flows from Scripture, it is a doctrinal formulation of the church due to its specialized vocabulary and complex ideas (e.g., pp. 185–87). At the same time, he does not discount the church's reflection on the doctrine. He aims to teach readers how to use Christian creeds to find the unfolding doctrine of the Trinity in the Bible instead of using the Scriptures as a means to bolster

the language of the creeds. This approach is a good model for respecting the authority of Scripture without neglecting the witness of the church to its teachings.

The Triune God is an excellent contribution to the New Studies in Dogmatics series. Sanders will challenge the average reader to think deeply, encourage scholars to reason more clearly, and exhort all to worship God more joyfully. This is a good combination in a book on the triune God.



Positions Available

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**OPEN MY EYES,
THAT I MAY BEHOLD
WONDROUS THINGS
OUT OF YOUR LAW.**

PSALM 119:18



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