

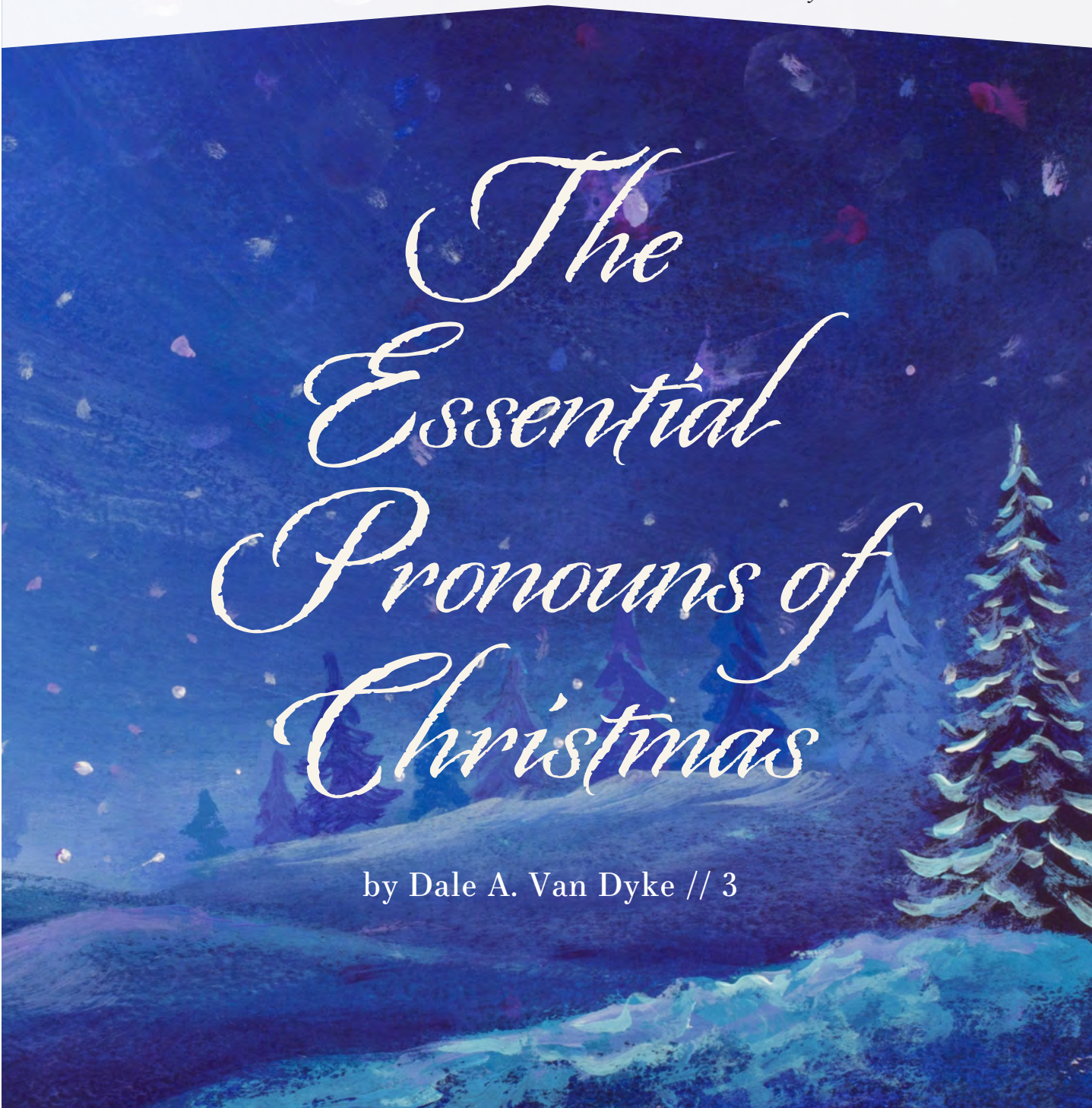
# NEW HORIZONS

in the ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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DECEMBER 2019

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## New Horizons

in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church

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Four OP congregations lifted the promise of "that Word above all earthly powers" to celebrate Reformation Day October 27 in Leesburg, VA. This marked the eighth year these churches have enjoyed together a German-themed meal, children's program, and worship. Pastors who preached on the strength of that Word included (left to right) Francis VanDelden from New Hope OPC (Frederick, MD), Charles Biggs from Ketocin Covenant (Purcellville, VA), Peter Lee, professor of Old Testament at Reformed Theological Seminary, and George "Chip" Hammond from Bethel Presbyterian (Leesburg, VA).





# THE ESSENTIAL PRONOUNS OF CHRISTMAS



DALE A. VAN DYKE // As you undoubtedly know, pronouns are big news today. The humble pronoun has found itself dragged to the front lines of a raging contest regarding ultimate questions of identity, authority, and meaning. Few of us could have imagined the current cultural clamor over such simple words as “he” and “she.”

But here we are—and what a joy, then, to open the Scriptures and find those same simple words bursting with the glory of gospel truth!

Matthew 1:21 reads, “*She* will bear a son, and *you* shall call his name Jesus, for *he* will save his people from *their* sins” (emphasis added). Here we have, in one verse, four key pronouns that establish the saving purposes of God in Christ for this rebellious world. They represent all the essential participants in the story—a woman, a man, a Savior, and the sinners he came to save.

## She: “She Will Bear a Son”

The first gospel pronoun refers to Mary, the young peasant girl from Nazareth, betrothed to a man named Joseph.

Scripture doesn’t point to any noteworthy characteristic about Mary. What stands out is how very common she seems: living an anonymous life in a nondescript little village in the back hills of Galilee. There is nothing remarkable here, except for one thing.

The angel reveals the defining fea-

ture of Mary’s life: “You have found favor with God” (Luke 1:30). It’s the one distinction that makes all the difference. Out of all women, through all the ages of time, God chose this specific teenager to be the mother of the Son of God. Imagine the astounded look on her face as the angel of God told her the news:

The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. (Luke 1:35)

Mary, the unknown and unremarkable, was called by God to carry in her own body the Messiah. It was completely implausible and yet mysteriously believable. Mary’s song, recorded in Luke’s gospel, expresses her incredulous joy:

My soul magnifies the Lord,  
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,  
for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant.  
For behold, from now on all genera-

tions will call me blessed;  
for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name. (Luke 1:46–49)

In the mystic muddle of a pagan world, Mary sang with piercing clarity the glory of a mighty God who does great things for the humble. While the Roman Catholic Church is surely wrong to venerate her, let us be eager to delight in and with her—to embrace her joy and celebrate her indispensable part in the gospel story.

## You: “You Shall Call His Name Jesus”

The second pronoun we find in verse 21 is *you*.

It is clearly referring to Joseph, the man betrothed to Mary. It is clear that he loved her, and he was undoubtedly undone by the news of her conception. His bride-to-be was with child. It was a devastating development, particularly in an honor-based society. Joseph was an honorable man, and Mary had brought shame upon him. Her pregnancy was irrefutable evidence that she

had been unfaithful and immoral—and while the stigma of that is barely felt today, in those days it was a public disgrace, a moral debacle. Everyone would know what she had done, and no one would blame him if he put her to public shame, naming her in the synagogue as an adulterous woman. But, being a kind man, he “resolved to divorce her quietly” (Matt. 1:19). This was clearly not a hasty decision, but an inescapable conclusion based on the indisputable facts of Mary’s condition.

Ah, but the whole of the story had not been told!

But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.” (Matt. 1:20)

In this cynical world, such an announcement calls for serious faith. Joseph, and everyone he knew, understood that babies aren’t born of virgins. But an angel of God had told him the miracle of Spirit-wrought conception, and Joseph believed. Surely a miracle in itself!

Even though the watching world would never understand, and even though his parents and family and friends would scoff, Joseph believed and, in humble faith, took up the role he was called to play in this great drama of redemption.

The angel didn’t simply give Joseph information; he gave him a calling. When Jesus was circumcised on the eighth day, the priest would look to Joseph and say, “What is his name?” And Joseph was called to name the child Jesus. In those days, the task of naming belonged uniquely to the father, and that was Joseph’s role to play. He would provide a nurturing home for the Christ-child. What father wouldn’t be humbly overwhelmed and hugely inspired by such a magnificent calling?

#### **He: “For He Will Save His People”**

The third pronoun of the gospel is

*“This baby boy is the most perfectly named baby boy in the history of the world. Never has a child been born to address such a peril as the peril of a justly condemned race.”*

*he*—and it will never have a greater referent than this.

I recently read an interesting article that asked this question: Why wasn’t Jesus named Immanuel? That’s what the prophets had foretold, as Matthew points out in 1:22–23:

All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us).

But the angel commanded Joseph to give the child the name Jesus. With the command, he gave him the reason: “for he will save his people from their sins.” His name reveals the essence of his mission.

The name “Jesus” is taken from the Hebrew word that means “to deliver, to rescue.” This baby boy is the most perfectly named baby in all the history of the world. Never has a child been born to address such a peril as the peril of a justly condemned race. Never has a person so gloriously fulfilled his or her name. Jesus was God made man in order to save man; he was God entering

his own creation to redeem it, to defeat the power of the Devil, to remove the darkness of the curse, and to make all things new.

He “*will* save his people.” There is certainty in Gabriel’s voice. This Jesus was not born to attempt a rescue but to accomplish a redemption! He came to actually, truly, irrefutably, and immutably *save* a people from the peril of divine, eternal damnation. In a few short years, Gabriel’s prophetic promise would be answered and sealed with Christ’s own victorious verdict, “It is finished” (John 19:30). In that atoning moment and dying declaration, the salvation of all of his sinning people was sealed.

This brings us to the last pronoun of Christmas: *their*.

#### **Their: “From Their Sins”**

The angel’s words tell us three essential things: First, Jesus has a people, given to him by the Father before the world began. Second, they are all sinful and continually sinning people. *Their* is a possessive pronoun. It shows ownership. In the angel’s promise, it links the people and the perversion. The sins that have offended God are our sins. The crimes that demand retribution in blood are our crimes. We committed the offenses. We were justly under the judgment of holy wrath. Finally, Jesus came to save us from our sin. We are the direct object—the recipients of the salvation.

This is the gospel story. Jesus, born of a virgin, came to save his sinful people. We have a calling in this Christmas story.

Mary was called to bear a son;  
Joseph was called to name him;  
Jesus was called to save his own;  
Sinners are called to claim him.

In the darkness of this present evil age the gospel still shines with all its glorious light: Jesus came for sinners. The gospel pronouns stand! □

*The author is pastor of Harvest OPC in Wyoming, Michigan.*

# TWENTY-TWO YEARS OF YOUTH MINISTRY



**MIKE DEMPSEY // “Okay, boys, grab your jackets; it’s time to go!” Church was starting in thirty minutes, and this morning was the annual Christmas play. My job as a Los Angeles firefighter required that I work three Sundays in a row followed by six off. The three Sundays that I worked were difficult for my wife, Diane.**

She felt very much alone dropping the kids off at Sunday school and then walking by herself into our non-denominational church’s large auditorium filled with strangers. So, instead, she and our three children would attend Faith Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Long Beach, California, during my three working Sundays. There, in the church of her youth, she felt more at home with friends and family around her.

But because they were in Long Beach three Sundays straight, our boys had missed a Christmas play rehearsal.

## **A Warm Welcome**

As we approached the school where church was held, our boys’ excitement was palpable. They could hardly wait to be in the play. We went straight to the Sunday school room and were met by the teacher.

“I’m sorry,” she said. “Because your boys missed a practice, they will not be allowed to be in the play this year.” The look on our boys’ faces caused my

stomach to turn over. I tried to squash my anger and disappointment. As we went home, I did my best to explain to the boys what had just happened.

Later that day, Faith OPC was also having their annual Christmas program. It was family tradition to celebrate the birth of our Lord with several of our friends and their kids who were a part of the program. We looked forward to watching them. The two play directors—and Sunday school teachers for as far back as anyone could remember—were Jan Gekler and Ruth Fleming. As we walked through the back door, Ruth caught my eye. “Oh good!” she exclaimed. “Mrs. Gekler has a few extra hats and scarves. Would your boys like to be carolers in the play?”

Here was an expression of love that changed my heart and a kindness that I have never forgotten. Although our sons had not been to any of the rehearsals, these faithful servants found a place for my boys and a place in my heart. My wife and I sat in the audience with our young daughter and watched

the boys join in the retelling of Jesus’s birth. As the carols were sung and the sweet treats were passed out, I wondered why I was even trying to find another place to fellowship and worship. Here at Faith OPC, we already had sweet communion with fellow believers, and the hearts of our young ones were being prayed for and guided by God’s Word. What more did I need?

## **Youth Ministry Through the Years**

Thirty-eight years have passed since that December evening. I have thanked Ruth and Jan many times for their part in our return to Faith OPC.

Our return also led to a fulfillment of the call that I had always felt to minister to young people. Twenty-two years ago, I was asked by the session at Faith OPC to lead a ministry aimed at our growing high school population. They stressed the importance of continuing a ministry that expressed the love of Christ. I’m still in that role now.

Since 1997, our ministry has changed many times, dictated by the



needs of our particular group at the time.

Our first group of kids had never had a youth group of their own and were very excited to participate in any and all activities. We had a Bible study on Sunday evenings where we sang a cappella and then studied the Bible to-

zles that she had prepared. But before they could have the bag, the kids had to guess its contents by the Bible verse on the outside. My wife wrote Psalm 24:4 (“He who has clean hands”) for hand sanitizer or Leviticus 11:4 (“There are some that only chew the cud”) for bubble gum.



*Opening presents at 2018's Christmas dinner in the Dempsey home*

gether, followed by a time of informal fellowship.

That first group formed a friendship with smaller OP churches in central California, which led to several

By this point, we had about forty high school kids in the group as word spread to sister churches and friends. When these kids grew older and started college, we realized that a college min-



*Dempsey (far right) in 2017 addressing a joint group of youth from Faith OPC in Long Beach, CA, and Trinity Presbyterian (OPC) in Capistrano Beach, CA*

visits to pass out flyers in their local neighborhoods. The car rides there and back were long, so my wife came up with the idea to, at designated times, open a “grab bag” full of treats and puz-

istry was needed. So, in 1997, we added a study in our home that included a Wednesday evening sit-down dinner on china plates. My wife is an excellent cook, and, after living on dorm food,

the draw from real food is strong. And so “Bible Bistro” was born. We saw this ministry grow as well, due to the college students’ real need for sound teaching and socially safe fellowship.

We decided that we should be always open in order to provide for the varying schedules of the college students. On the Wednesdays that we were out of town, we cooked ahead and gave house keys to our faithful young people who then served dinner, lead a study, and cleaned up. This was an important lesson for us to be ready to entertain strangers at all times—even when we’re not home. We have had people come back after years away, knowing this fellowship was there to be enjoyed and blessed.

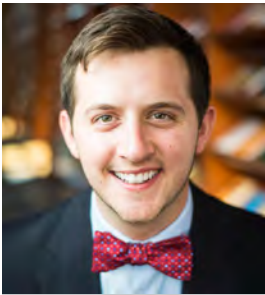
Every December, we provide a “formal” nine-course dinner for our high school and college students. It is a great way to unite our two ministries. Our house and yard are transformed into a dining establishment and staffed by volunteers from Faith OPC. Each guest is assigned a seat by place card. At the third and sixth courses, the diners change dining rooms and dinner partners according to the back of the place card. After dessert, all of our young people go out into the neighborhood and carol to our neighbors as a gift and witness.

Through the years, our young people have also cooked and delivered meals to our seniors, provided dinner and entertainment for our congregation, and traveled to other OP churches to provide a day of games and fellowship with their youth. They have done disaster relief; purchased, delivered, and served food at a local rescue mission; passed out Bibles at the local swap meet; and many other ministries.

God’s Word clearly states that they will know we are his disciples if we love one another. It was love that brought us back to the OPC, and it is the love of God in action that we are trying to teach our younger generation. □

*The author is a ruling elder of Faith OPC in Long Beach, California.*

# THE PROBLEM WITH PEOPLE-PLEASING



JONATHAN L. CRUSE // In an episode of his hit podcast, *Revisionist History*, journalist Malcolm Gladwell provocatively claims that we could all improve our lives if we were more disagreeable. His theory, drawing from psychological research, is that success in life is inversely proportional to one's level of agreeableness: the less

agreeable you are, the more successful you will be. By “disagreeable,” Gladwell doesn’t mean being obnoxious but rather “not being dependent on or particularly interested in the approval of others.” He demonstrates how this quality can be extremely valuable. For example, mathematicians claim that the losing team in hockey would have a far greater chance of a comeback victory if coaches would simply pull the goalie earlier and more often. But coaches don’t, because they are afraid that their fans will think that they are crazy and quit buying tickets. They are too *agreeable*.

I think Christians could learn a lot from this secular observation of agreeableness—not in order to be more “successful,” but in order to grow and mature in our faith. How many setbacks do we face in our Christian living that stem from being too agreeable, from craving approval, from equating our purpose or identity with what others think of us?

This is not a new problem. Jesus warned his disciples to “beware of practicing your righteousness before other

people in order to be seen by them” (Matt. 6:1). Similarly, in Colossians, we are commanded to accomplish our work and service in this world “not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord” (3:22). Perhaps most striking is the opening of Galatians, where Paul says that people-pleasing and Christianity are in direct opposition to one another (1:10). Here are a few reasons why people-pleasing is so dangerous.

## People-Pleasing Distorts Love

Most forms of idolatry happen when we take something good and elevate it to the status of God. People-pleasing is no exception. It’s an idolatry in which we have perverted the God-honoring command to love others. The Bible certainly wants us to please our neighbors. We are to love them as ourselves, care for them, be kind, compassionate, and considerate to them. If we gave no attention to the feelings or needs of others, we would be committing a grave sin. But people-pleasing connotes something different. We have

gone from being attentive to other people’s needs to needing other people’s attention. As Ed Welch says, “The problem is when we want to be loved more than we want to love” (*What Do You Think of Me?* 25).

## People-Pleasing Silences Truth

If I am overly concerned with what others think about me, I will not say or do anything that will upset them—even if that means compromising God’s commands. I will not push my friend on some sin in his or her life since it might make things awkward between us. I will not decry wrongdoing or injustice in the public square since it might mean being ostracized. “These are the things that you shall do,” the prophet Zechariah instructs us. “Speak the truth to one another; render in your gates judgments that are true” (8:16). This is an impossible command to keep when my worth or identity is found in what others think of me.

## People-Pleasing Kills Evangelism

If I am worried about potentially

embarrassing myself in front of others, or perhaps making someone feel awkward, I will never share the gospel. Why steer an otherwise pleasant conversation about the weekend or the weather into something of a more eternal (and uncomfortable) nature? Isn't it easier to just let people enjoy their coffee, or perhaps their view out the window seat, than venture into the unsafe territory of religion?

When we don't have the proper amount of sanctified disagreeableness, we will never step out of our comfort zone, much less ask other people to step out of theirs. But the gospel is uncomfortable. It calls people out of the comfort of themselves by revealing the hideousness of their sin, yet it also offers free forgiveness and everlasting life. If we can't do the uncomfortable business of pointing out sin, we can never do the comforting business of pointing to Christ.

### People-Pleasing Doesn't Work

People-pleasing might seem to be our comfort zone, but, as most of us know from experience, it is no easy task. Trying to win the approval of your spouse, coworkers, boss, family, friends, neighbors—and the list goes on—is like trying to balance a hundred spinning plates. Maybe two hundred during the hectic and unforgiving Christmas season!

Even if we are able to keep all the important people happy—for a few moments, at least—we quickly realize that it's an exhausting task. We don't feel satisfied or fulfilled after all that work. Rather, we feel spent and empty. We are too worn to even enjoy the fruit of our labor. That's because there actually is no fruit. People-pleasing is all labor, no rest. It's an industry of 24/7/365 shifts with no pay, no benefits, and nothing to show for it. We can never rest in our pursuit to please others, because people are constantly in flux. What might have made someone happy today could have them irritated tomorrow, and we are so overly agreeable that we will be up all night worry-

ing about it. We're always on our toes, ready to do whatever it takes to make people think highly of us, always trying to keep the plates spinning. It is slavery.

### The Freedom of God-Pleasing

This is where we learn that God hates people-pleasing, not only because it robs him of his glory, not only because it stifles the truth and paralyzes outreach, but also because it harms those who do it. God wants us to be free, fulfilled, and fully satisfied, but he knows that can only happen by glorifying him. Therefore, we are told that "whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward" (Col. 3:23–24). That's an important point Paul is making: God is the one who rewards, not our fellow man (see also Matt. 6:1). When we please God, there *is* a reward, there *is* satisfaction and fulfillment, there *is* fruit from our labor, and that fruit is preeminently his divine approval!

A sign of approval from our parents, a word of affirmation from our spouse, or even a promotion at work can certainly be of real spiritual encouragement to us. These moments can mean something, but they can never mean everything. We're in tragic error when we find our identity and purpose in something as fleeting as a congratulatory remark or a pat on the back. Maybe the feeling of achievement will last for a few sweet seconds, maybe even for years, but it won't last forever. Only those who work unto the Lord receive *the* inheritance—one that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading (1 Pet. 1:4). Only God can pronounce that eternal benediction: "Well done, good and faithful servant...Enter into the joy of your master" (Matt. 25:21).

Pleasing the God of the universe likely sounds more intimidating than pleasing people. But here's the good news of the gospel: we don't please God by *doing* things, we please God by *resting in that which is already done* in Christ Jesus. The only way we can hear

those sweet words "well done" is if we are found in Jesus Christ. For what is God's declaration about him? "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:17). When we put our faith in Jesus Christ, we are brought into such a vital union with our Lord that we are seen by God as well-pleasing sons, too! We are "fellow heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8:17).

What a freeing thing it is to be found in Christ! To be in the well-pleasing and perfect Son means we already know our evaluation. God has brought forward the final judgment and declared us to be pleasing in his sight. We don't need to be constantly striving to win his approval. We don't need to be worried about what he might think about us. We already know the answer. So why try to be a people-pleaser when instead you can find your identity in the one who has, once and for all, pleased the ultimate Judge?

When you have that kind of perspective on things, you will find that you might just become a bit more disagreeable. Not obnoxious, you'll remember, but not enslaved to others' opinions, either. You have the opinion that actually counts, after all—God's. This frees you to do what is *right*, not what is necessarily comfortable. It frees you to work with purpose, not for vain praise. You will be freed to do what you know is best for your neighbors, loving them in word and deed. You'll be able to speak the truth of God in whatever setting you find yourself, because you are not worried about what other people will think. You know what God thinks, and that's all that matters.

And being now fully satisfied in him, being fully content in his gratuitous reward and approval, and knowing that we have been entrusted with his Word and will, in thankful obedience, "we make it our aim to please him" (2 Cor. 5:9). □

*The author is pastor of Community Presbyterian (OPC) in Kalamazoo, Michigan, and author of The Christian's True Identity (2019).*



# YOU ARE NOT WHAT YOU EAT



**KEN B. MONTGOMERY // “You are what you eat.” This saying was coined by German philosopher Ludwig Feuerbach who claimed that humans are material beings and no more. Today, our obsession with food—its source, ingredients, preparation, and presentation—exposes a hunger for meaningfulness even in the material.**

According to an article in *New York Magazine*, “food is now viewed as a legitimate option for a hobby, a topic of endless discussion, a playground for one-upmanship, and a measuring stick of cool” (March 23, 2012). As one food critic quips, “the unexamined meal is not worth eating.”

Can Christians be foodies? Certainly, Christians may enjoy food of all sorts as God’s gift (see Gen. 9:3; 1 Tim. 4:4). Such is the commendation of the sage preacher: “There is nothing better for a person than that he should eat and drink and find enjoyment in his toil. This also, I saw, is from the hand of God” (Eccles. 2:24). Yet at the same time, believers are reminded that “the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 14:17).

Foodie-ism becomes dangerous when it assigns a transformative value to food that food inherently lacks. Do you look to what’s on the table to change and renew your inner nature in some way? Is what you consume your all-consuming focus? Are you serving your taste buds

and seeking to satisfy your stomach at all costs? If so, being a foodie quickly begins to look like being a glutton. Peter writes, “Whatever overcomes a person, to that he is enslaved” (2 Pet. 2:19).

## Clean Food, Clean Heart?

As we read the gospel accounts, we find rather uncanny resemblances between foodie-ism and Pharisaism. The Pharisees were consistently critical of Jesus and his disciples regarding food and related matters—suspiciously observing what the Lord and his followers ate, how they ate it, and with whom they ate. The shared supposition of foodies and Pharisees is that filling ourselves with “clean” food will translate into making us “clean” people. If we take in what is good and pure, then we will produce what is good and pure. It’s that easy and simple.

Our Lord Jesus addresses this tacit ideology in Mark 7. He states, “There is nothing outside a person that by going into him can defile him, but the things that come out of a person are what defile him” (vs. 16). The reason? “Since it [food] enters not his heart but his stomach, and

is expelled” (vs. 19). There is a play on words here: what you eat doesn’t go to your heart (Greek: *kardia*) but into your stomach (Greek: *koilia*). Food (whether “clean” or “unclean”) does not go to the center and seat of your being, but to your digestive system. Most English translations seek to be more civilized than what Jesus actually said, which is that what you eat ends up in your stomach, and is eventually expelled “into the loo,” as the British would put it.

Jesus then locates the source of impurity not in what is external to us (including meats and drinks), but in the fountainhead of our hearts: “From within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder...all these evil things come from within, and they defile a person” (Mark 7:21, 23). What defiles and corrupts us is not in certain victuals but in our vital regions! Our Lord then zeroes in on what is truly full of toxins and poison: our inner nature, conceived and born in sin (see Psalm 51:5).

The Russian author Alexander Solzhenitsyn insightfully wrote, “The

*[Continued on page 20]*

# THE HAITI MINUTE MEN

// BENJAMIN K. HOPP



*The Haiti Minute Men, Don and Jim, under the hood of the Kawasaki Mule*

**H**ow do you get a four-wheel utility vehicle through five thousand miles of driving on extremely rough and rocky roads? And how do you fix the problems this kind of punishment brings when you don't have a parts dealer within a one-thousand-mile radius? How do you ensure the vehicle will not only start but also be able to traverse the hills and mountains every month to preach at the churches of La Gonâve?

Answer: the Haiti Minute Men.

## Two Realities

The idea for the Haiti Minute Men first began to take shape about five years ago. Two realities began to converge. The first was that we live in a poor country—in fact, the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. We also live out in a remote area of that country. The Kaliko Mission Home is an hour from the airport in Port-au-Prince, a little farther from the center city. Out here, there is no water system, no electrical grid, and no reliable mechanic shop. We are on our own. We needed to find a way to care for our infrastructure and upgrade as necessary. As missionaries, we come to the field equipped with theological education and experience in ministry, but not always with the electrical, plumbing, and mechanical skills needed to keep things running. We saw that having qualified men to help the mission as needs came up would allow the missionaries to focus more of their time on preaching and teaching.

The second reality was

that the mission was not in a position to hire a full-time deacon who could take care of the physical aspects of ministry alongside the diaconal ministry of the churches. We began to consider other ways to take care of our maintenance and construction needs. We thought, why not find some skilled men who could work independently and be available on short notice to travel to Haiti? Over time, they could build up an intimate knowledge of the mission's physical resources and be able both to fix broken items and to recommend ways to develop the infrastructure.

## The Power Is On

Back in 2015, we were happily connected to a local resort that supplied us with electricity each night. This allowed us to charge a battery bank to power fans, lights, and computers during the day. But in July of that year, the lights went out. The resort, unannounced to us, decided not to supply power outside their facility any longer. Through the hottest part of the year, we had to figure out how to power our compound.

In God's providence, the Lord had already prepared a small OP congregation in Massachusetts to generously give funds for a diesel generator. But who would install it? This is when Don Detroye and Jim Smies entered the picture. Don and Jim, both from OP churches in Wisconsin, worked with us to ensure the selection of a generator that would produce enough kilowatts for our energy needs—and then they began planning the installation with us. The complexity of the installation meant that they had to do lots of research and



*Installing rest soffits to prepare for the Kaliko roof project*

interact with us here in Haiti to see what parts were available and what they would have to bring from the United States. A giant crane truck delivered the generator and slid it into the renovated outbuilding. Then Don and Jim arrived. Once everything was wired and hooked up, after four months of very hot nights, the generator ran for the first time! God used these men to provide us with the electricity we needed to work and live (and sleep) well.

After the generator installation was complete, a plan began to be formulated to make these men, and possibly others in the future, available on an ongoing basis to help the mission. We modeled our plan roughly after the Minute Men of the American Revolution, a group of self-trained soldiers who were organized into independent units and dubbed “Minute Men” because they were available at a minute’s notice. Don and Jim agreed to become our Minute Men as the Committee on Foreign Missions drew up a partnership with the Committee on Diaconal Ministries to fund their trips on an as-needed basis.

When we were away on our last furlough in 2016–17, the inverter, which converts power from our storage battery bank into power the house can use, failed. Menorce, our yard worker who was watching over our home while we were gone, contacted us and indicated that there was no power for fans and security lights. Actually, there was no power at all!

Who did we call? The Haiti Minute Men. One particular gift God has given us in Don and Jim is the ability to diagnose problems from a distance. They correctly diagnosed that the inverter had died and needed to be replaced. Even though we were away from Haiti, they came on their own, met up with Menorce, and did the necessary repairs. Menorce had power again, and everything was in order for our return from furlough.

### A Breadth of Practical Knowledge

Don and Jim are childhood friends from the Cedar Grove and Oostburg areas of Wisconsin. Their families lived on the same road down by the shores of Lake Michigan. They knew each other as boys and have kept up their friendship ever since. They have the requisite knowledge and experience to tackle almost any task at the Haiti mission. Their jobs allow them the flexibility to travel to Haiti at a moment’s notice. When they talk together as they work, it’s almost as if they could finish each other’s sentences.

So, what are their ongoing tasks? For one, they help resolve flow and pressure issues in our water system and maintain the pumps. Since Haiti is so lacking in infrastructure, there is no local water system, and the mission compound must have its own. We store water in a 22,000-gallon cistern beneath the house, and then pump the water to a storage tank on the roof, which then provides water to the house.

Don and Jim use their experience to regularly replace parts for and maintain our diesel generator, work that we can’t always do on our own. When we installed solar panels

to decrease our reliance on the generator, adding to our already complicated electrical system, the Minute Men handled it with ease.

Third, as we maintain our two vehicles—the truck the Hopps use on the mainland as well as the Kawasaki Mule



Jim, Menorce, and Don

on La Gonâve—Don and Jim are only an e-mail away. If we encounter a problem that we can’t resolve on our own, they walk us through how to diagnose and resolve it. What a blessing it is to have these men with such a breadth of knowledge between them!

There is one final way the mission has benefitted from the Haiti Minute Men: planning ahead for larger projects that require specific expertise and often materials that can only be purchased in the United States. One example is the replacement of the shingle roof at the Kaliko Mission Home. Don and Jim have been coordinating skilled labor, materials, and tools for this project over the past year and a half. Because of the unrest in Haiti, the team has already been rescheduled once. But, Lord willing, the project will come to fruition in December. We are so thankful to the Lord for Don and Jim and for their service to his church in Haiti. Give thanks with us for the important role the Haiti Minute Men play in the life of the OPC mission in Haiti!

*The author is an OP missionary in Haiti.*

## What’s New

### // Appointments

Tentmaking missionary **Miss Tina M. DeJong** (Westminster OPC, Hamill, SD), formerly laboring in Asia, has been approved for a three-year term of service in Nakaale, Karamoja, Uganda, beginning in July 2020. She will be working with the Uganda Mission and assisting with the education of the missionary children.



## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

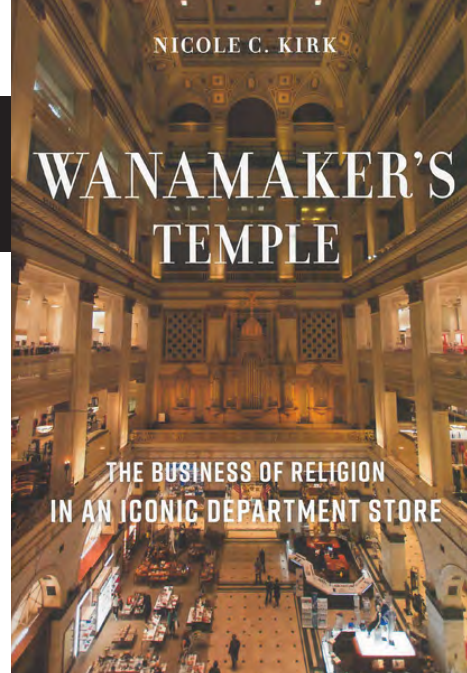
# REVIEW: *WANAMAKER'S TEMPLE* by NICOLE C. KIRK

// D. G. HART

Readers of this magazine of a certain vintage who grew up in the Philadelphia area may remember arranging to meet a family member or friend at the eagle in the Grand Court of Wanamaker's Center City department store. Those same people may also remember going to Wanamaker's during the days between Thanksgiving and Christmas when the store displayed a Christmas pageant of lights accompanied by carols played on the massive pipe organ. If so, they will certainly want to read Nicole C. Kirk's new book on the man for whom the store was named, John Wanamaker.

Born in 1838 in Gray's Ferry, then a rural village outside Philadelphia's incorporated boundaries, Wanamaker became one of the many rags-to-riches stories synonymous with American success. Though he grew up in relative poverty, Wanamaker opened a men's store only a few years before the Civil War. With his industry and frugality, this eventually turned into Philadelphia's first department store, originally called Wanamaker & Brown, before his partner died. The business moved from humble store fronts, to the train depot that Dwight L. Moody used for his 1875 Philadelphia revival, to the building that became a central point for shoppers and tourists at Thirteenth and Market, a block from the old Reading Terminal on one side and City Hall on the other. Wanamaker owned another successful department store in New York City.

These accomplishments positioned him in 1899 to become President Benjamin Harrison's postmaster general, a position that created controversy when Wanamaker followed



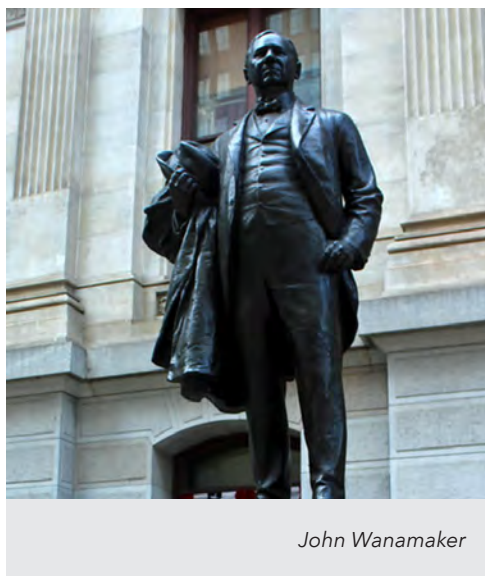
the rules of the "spoils system" and fired thirty thousand postal workers to create openings for Republican loyalists.

Despite his ham-handedness as a public official, Wanamaker's business acumen placed him among the nation's greatest entrepreneurs. In 1953, Joseph Kennedy, John F. Kennedy's father, announced the Philadelphian's induction into Chicago's Merchandise Mart Hall of Fame, with a statue to prove it.

For anyone interested in American Presbyterianism, Kirk's remarkably instructive biography shows the flaccid condition to which Protestantism in the United States had descended by 1900. (It also makes anyone with the slightest doctrinal rigor wonder why it took so long for conservatives in the Presbyterian Church to stand up to liberalism.)

Wanamaker's spiritual roots were in the revivalistic Protestantism that grew out of the Second Great Awakening (associated with Charles Finney) and that animated the businessmen's revivals of 1858 and Moody's itinerancy a few decades later. This version of Protestantism also supported the Young Men's Christian Association as a way to provide safe and healthy havens for those working in American cities. Wanamaker's first job was with the YMCA. He was also at the forefront of American Sunday schools (then still a relatively novel institution).

His support for these Protestant endeavors led him in 1862 to found a Presbyterian congregation, Bethany Collegiate Church (at Twenty-Second and Bainbridge Streets). The church actually emerged from a Sunday school operation that at its height had six thousand students. As conservative as revivalism and Sunday schools may



John Wanamaker

sound today, Bethany called a series of Presbyterian pastors who were prominent in the social gospel movement.

Wanamaker himself was a progressive Republican who constantly used religion for moral and social improvement. In a revealing passage that concludes an extraordinary chapter on the art Wanamaker collected and displayed in his department store—at a time when these institutions were more than simply a place to sell merchandise—Kirk writes that for Wanamaker, art and commerce went hand in hand. The same was true for Christianity and business.

“Wanamaker wanted to awaken his customers’ souls and invite them to reach a higher morality,” Kirk writes. “To acquire Christian taste was to appreciate beauty, which Wanamaker believed would lift the spirit closer to God.” Accompanying an elevated taste were “the values of trustworthiness, simplicity, control, discipline, and balance” (190).

These virtues did not simply lift “the spirit closer to God” but also transformed practically every aspect of human existence—from ethical convictions and household interiors to artistic expression and politics. Many Protestants believed that Western civilization advanced the cause of Christ. Kirk adds, “Neither the division between commercial and religious nor a separation between ‘profane’ and ‘sacred’ existed for Wanamaker.” His department store was the “material expression” of “matters of the spirit” (203).

No matter that skeptical Americans might have regarded such material Christianity as a crass use of religion for profit, or that orthodox Presbyterians may have argued this was a different religion from Christianity altogether, Wanamaker remained a Protestant in good standing. His children drifted upward to Anglo-Catholic parishes in Philadelphia, but Wanamaker remained a member at Bethany Church. By the time of his death in 1922, he embodied the strands of American Protestantism that had contributed to revivalism, moral uplift, progressive politics, the social gospel, Victorian aesthetics, and Protestant modernism. His life shows that you did not need to study at the University of Chicago with Shailer Mathews or Shirley Jackson Case (two prominent modernists) to believe that you were doing the work of the Lord in adapting Christianity to modern times.

Kirk’s biography only indirectly exposes the bloated character of American Protestantism. Hers is a terrific explanation of the many strands of a successful American Protestant entrepreneur. It also prompts great appreciation for the herculean efforts of Presbyterian conservatives like J. Gresham Machen who sought to preserve a Reformed witness in a church that saw little difference between itself and the world.

*The author is a professor at Hillsdale College and elder at Hillsdale Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Hillsdale, Michigan.*

*Wanamaker’s Temple: The Business of Religion in an Iconic Department Store*, by Nicole C. Kirk. New York University Press, 2018. Hardcover, 288 pages, \$28.95 (Amazon).

## OUR MEMBERSHIP VOWS

### Making a Public Profession

*Glen J. Clary*

To be welcomed into all the privileges of full communion in the church, we must publicly profess our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ before God and his people. In the OPC, that profession of faith occurs when we publicly affirm the five membership vows that we have examined in this series.

If you have not yet made a public profession of faith in Christ but desire to do so, let me encourage you to talk to your pastor or an elder about becoming a communicant member. The session of the church will want to examine you in order to ascertain that you possess the doctrinal knowledge requisite for saving faith in Christ, rely on the merits of Christ alone for salvation, and are determined by the grace of God to live a Christian life. As you pursue communicant membership in Christ’s church, remember that he promised, “Everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven” (Matt. 10:32). Taking the membership vows is a very special moment in a person’s life; we publicly acknowledge Jesus Christ to be our Lord and Savior. Confessing Christ, however, is not something that we do only once but something that we do throughout our Christian life. The Christian life is a life of Spirit-produced faith. And that faith, which is a confessing faith, is also a living faith that produces obedience to the triune God (Rom. 1:5; James 2:14–26).

As you pursue communicant membership, rest assured that he who has begun a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:6). “May the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it” (1 Thess. 5:23–24). Amen.

## Out of the Mouth . . .

Our Sunday school teacher was talking to the children about “hearing” from God, and told a story in which a boy asks his mom if he can go swimming. His mom says no, because it is too dangerous without an adult. The child goes to God in prayer, and the verse that comes to the boy’s mind is Ephesians 6:1. The teacher then asked, “Does anyone know what Ephesians 6:1 says?” A student responded, “Yeah. Bring a grown-up.”

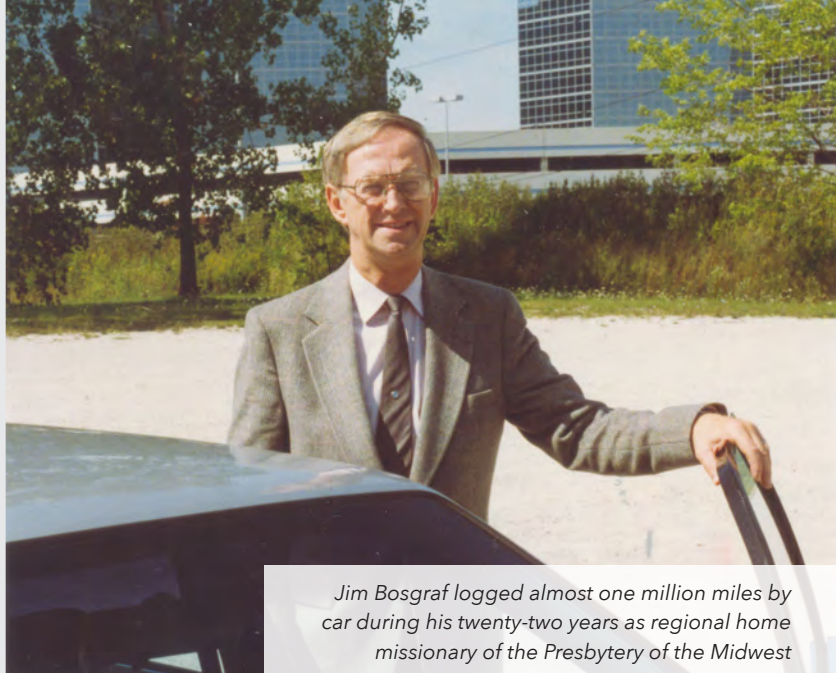
—Hannah Vander Wilt  
Kennewick, WA

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



# JIM BOSGRAF'S FIFTY YEARS OF SERVICE

// KEITH LEMAHIEU AND GREGORY S. DEJONG



*Jim Bosgraf logged almost one million miles by car during his twenty-two years as regional home missionary of the Presbytery of the Midwest*

Unflagging optimism” is how one ruling elder described the ministry of Rev. Jim Bosgraf.

For over fifty years, Jim Bosgraf has served the OPC with warmth, humor, a love for the church and its people, and a confidence in the sovereignty of God that has imbued him with an irresistible enthusiasm. As he concludes this phase of his ministry and moves to the Southeast to be near family, he will be much missed.

## Reformed and Evangelistic

Jim was born on the south side of Chicago and moved to Wheaton, Illinois, with his parents when he was a freshman in high school. Shortly after moving, his parents began worshipping at Bethel Presbyterian (OPC) in Wheaton, but Jim, not convinced that Reformed churches were zealous enough in reaching out with the gospel, was permitted to attend a broadly evangelical church. After carefully studying the Bible, Jim came to see that the Reformed system of doctrine *was* biblical and was encouraged by his pastor to join a church where the Reformed faith was taught. He joined Bethel in Wheaton while a junior at Wheaton College.

After graduating from college, he attended Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary. Jim was ordained to the gospel ministry by the Presbytery of Wisconsin in March 1967 and called by Bethel to serve at Grace OP Chapel in Hanover Park, Illinois, a nearby church plant.



*Jim served three churches as pastor before accepting the call in 1992 to be a regional home missionary*

## Pastoring and Planting

Grace Chapel had begun in 1963 but was struggling to gain traction four years later when Jim and his wife, Judy, arrived. The area of Hanover Park was a new, rapidly expanding Chicago suburb. Thousands of entry-level housing units were being built, which created an exceptionally transient population. At one point, Grace Chapel lost thirteen families in eighteen months, causing the presbytery to consider closing the work. Just six months later, Jim recalls, God had replaced all those families.

Jim and Judy threw themselves into the ministry. To make ends meet, Jim drove a school bus, and Judy worked nights as a nurse. Judy played a major role throughout Jim's ministry. She had the unique gift of being able to make friends with anyone. Together, their ministry was characterized by loving people from all walks of life warmly and unconditionally.

Grace Chapel became a particular church of the OPC in 1967 and elected John Baldwin as their first ruling elder. “At first, none of us who were part of Grace Chapel had much understanding of the Reformed faith,” Baldwin explained, “But Jim patiently nurtured us in it, and he accepted us for who we were.” Baldwin's daughter recalls riding Jim's bus to grammar school and how all of the children loved him as their bus driver. This and other community contacts helped Grace to develop a robust summer children's program that saw as many as 180 children in attendance.

In 1973, Jim accepted a



call to Park Hill OPC in the inner city of Denver, Colorado. This was a racially, ethnically, and economically diverse congregation. Seeking to reach out to their inner-city community, they hosted SAVE (Students at Volunteer Evangelism) teams from around the country to run Vacation Bible Schools and conduct door-to-door evangelism. Jim also became actively involved in seeking to plant new churches outside the Denver area.

In 1979, Bethel OPC in Oostburg, Wisconsin, called Jim to serve as their pastor. Jim and Judy reluctantly left Denver and their friends at Park Hill OPC and moved from the mountains to the prairies. True to form, they quickly made new friends and adopted many local customs, including trading in their downhill skis for a boat to use on nearby Lake Michigan. Bethel in Oostburg was a large and mission-minded congregation, which afforded Jim the opportunity to pursue his church-planting passion in what was by now known as the Presbytery of the Midwest. As his leadership in the area of church planting grew, the presbytery called Jim to be its first regional home missionary in 1992.

### Regional Home Missionary

While those who know Jim from his RHM years are quick to recall the amazing number of successful church plants God has raised up through his efforts, Jim notes that the early years seemed to be anything but successful. “When I started,



*Jim shouldered the RHM duties for two presbyteries—Midwest and Michigan and Ontario—for several years*

we targeted five areas for new churches,” Jim remembers, “and in the first couple of years, the Lord took all five of those

### Home Missions Today

For up-to-date news and prayer requests, receive our newsletter by e-mailing [HomeMissionsToday@opc.org](mailto:HomeMissionsToday@opc.org). New editions: December 11 & 25.

away.” Ever confident that God was at work, Jim persevered, following up many inquiries and traveling widely throughout the presbytery. Members of the home missions committee who oversaw his work were known to joke that if Jim came across two people discussing Reformed theology on a street corner, he was sure to report that here was another “fabulous opportunity” to plant a church.

With the Presbytery of the Midwest in the 1990s encompassing Michigan as well as the province of Ontario, Jim was on the road constantly, eventually logging nearly one million miles. With his support, Ontario saw six new works become part of the OPC. When Michigan and Ontario formed a distinct presbytery in 1999, Jim continued shouldering RHM duties for both presbyteries for several years.

Following her retirement from a nursing career, Judy was able to travel with Jim frequently. Her infectious laughter and personal warmth brought much-needed encouragement to many struggling congregations and to church planters’ wives. “Judy could be friends with anyone,” Jim notes, “and she could tell you things you didn’t want to hear, and then laugh with you immediately. She had a wonderful gift for getting close to people and was a great encouragement to my ministry.” Following a battle with cancer, the Lord took Judy home to glory in September 2018.

When Jim accepted the call to serve as regional home missionary, he did so intending to serve for three years before returning to pastoral ministry. Twenty-seven years later, he is quick to credit the contributions of others and the encouragement he has received from many in the denomination. When asked recently to comment on some of the most successful church plants he was part of, Jim replied with a laugh, “the ones I had the least to do with.”

Jim’s boundless enthusiasm, love for the OPC, and dedication to his Savior will be greatly missed among his collaborators, no doubt just as they were in Hanover Park, Denver, and Oostburg in years past. God used Jim and Judy Bosgraf to enlarge the borders of his kingdom and, in so doing, to leave an indelible mark on thousands of lives.



*Jim and Judy, partners in ministry*

*Keith LeMabieu is vice president of operations at Mid-America Reformed Seminary. Gregory De Jong is vice president of the Committee on Ministerial Care of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.*

# HOLD YOUR MONEY LOOSELY

// MARK C. JENKINS

What is our money worth? What is it worth to the spread of the gospel? Certainly, God doesn't need us and so doesn't need our money. But he has wonderfully chosen to use us *and our money* to accomplish his eternal and saving purposes. Think of it! God in his grace makes our money play a part in his plan of rescuing and remaking the world.

What is our money worth? When our money is used for the spread of the gospel, it's worth more than we can calculate.

But it's also not worth much at all. The value of our money in the context of missions is important to consider, but equally important perhaps is this other angle—what little value our earthly “treasure” has. This is important because *giving* involves *letting something go*. When we see how little our money is worth, we have far less trouble letting it go.

## The Church in Smyrna

The *un-value* of our money is made clear when we adopt the perspective of the church in Smyrna and Christ's encouragement to them in Revelation 2:8–10: “I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich) and the slander of those who say that they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. ... Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.” This church was experiencing persecution for the sake of Christ that had led to poverty. They were being slandered and were suffering.

Into this situation, Christ speaks two important lessons that help us to see how little our money is worth.

First, Christ tells this poverty-stricken church that they are, in fact, rich. “I know your tribulation and your poverty—but you

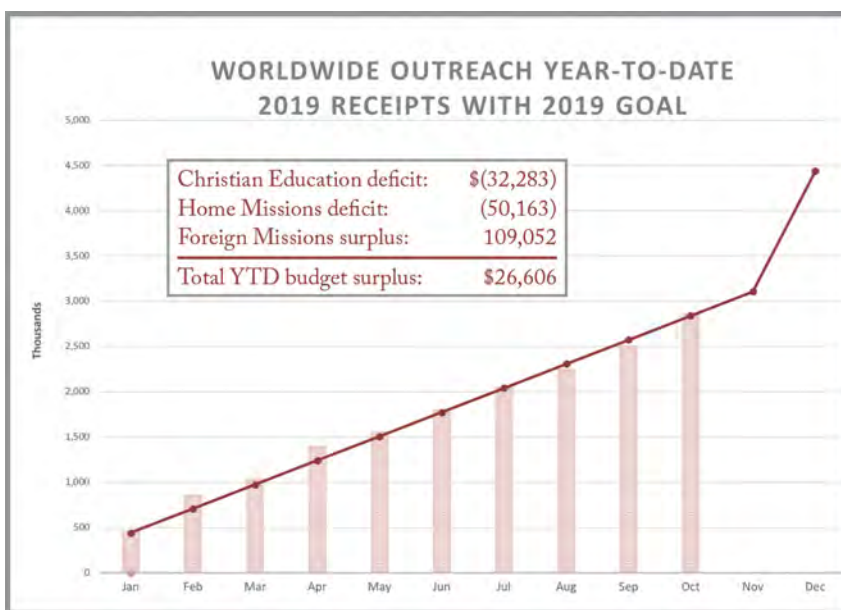
are rich.” The point is clear. True wealth is not found in earthly treasure. Money does not equal true wealth, and poverty does not equal a lack of true wealth.

Now, we should be careful at this point. Nothing Christ says here suggests that losing money is meaningless or pain-free if only we adopt the right perspective. Poverty is hard. “I know your tribulation and your poverty,” he says. He is expressing the empathy of a Savior who understands their pain and loss because he has experienced loss himself. And yet, his encouragement stands: Losing our money—even if we lose all of it—is not the loss of our heavenly wealth, our lasting wealth, our true wealth. Our money is simply not worth that much! We should, and can, hold it loosely. That's the key. Even the money we decide not to give should be held loosely.

The second lesson Christ gives backs this up. He says, “Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.” The first lesson is that true wealth is not found in earthly treasure. The second lesson is that true life comes to those who die. Not just money, but everything in this world must be held loosely. This world is not where the action is. We are looking for a different city. Those who die are those who receive the crown of life.

When we embrace what Christ says to the church in Smyrna, and to us, we can see how little our money is worth and let it go. Let it go by suffering its confiscation for Christ's sake. Let it go in generosity toward our neighbors. Let it go so the message that brings true wealth and leads to the crown of life can be advanced.

*The author is pastor of Providence Presbyterian in Madison, Wisconsin.*



# DECEMBER



The Canavans

**1** **ANDREW & REBEKAH CANAVAN**, Corona, CA. Pray for effective outreach and discipleship during the busy holiday season. / Pray for **JIM BOSGRAF**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of the Midwest.

**2** **BEN & MELANIE WESTERVELD** and missionary associate **ALETHEA FLORES**, Quebec, Canada. Pray for a new building as the rented church property may be sold. / Christian Education general secretary **DANNY OLINGER**.

**3** Pray for **DR. FLIP & ANNELOES BAARDMAN**, Nakaale, Uganda, and missionary associates **DR. JIM & JENNY KNOX**, Mbale, Uganda, as they serve many suffering patients. / Database coordinator **CHARLENE TIPTON**.

**4** Pray for the December meeting of the **COMMITTEE ON HOME MISSIONS AND CHURCH EXTENSION** in Willow Grove, PA. / **BILL WELZIEN**, Key West, FL. Ask the Lord to add to Keys Presbyterian Church.

**5** Tentmaking missionary **TINA DEJONG**, Nakaale, Uganda, and **CHARLES & CONNIE JACKSON**, Mbale, Uganda (on furlough). / Controller **MELISA MCGINNIS** and Loan Fund manager **MARK STUMPF**.

**6** Pray for **RETIRED MISSIONARIES** Cal & Edie Cummings, Brian & Dorothy Wingard, Greet Rietkerk, and Young & Mary Lou Son. / **JUEON KIM**, church-planting intern at Christ the King, Naples, FL.

**7** **MARK & JENI RICHLINE**, Montevideo, Uruguay. Pray for Mark and the congregation as he trains an elder candidate. / Pray for a smooth transition as stated clerk **ROSS GRAHAM** retires and **HANK BELFIED** assumes those duties in January.

**8** **BRADNEY & EILEEN LOPEZ**, Arroyo, PR. Pray for a new meeting place for Iglesia Presbiteriana Sola Escritura. / Pray for MTIOPC coordinator **PAT CLAWSON** as she plans for the 2020 courses.

**9** Missionary associates **STEVE & CARRIE HILL**, Montevideo, Uruguay. Pray for our missionary associates who are far from home during the holidays. / Yearlong intern **BRYCE (KELCIE) SOUVE** at Reformation OPC in Morgantown, WV.

**10** Yearlong intern **JIMMY (KORINA) APODACA** at Providence OPC in Temecula, CA. / Associate missionaries **OCTAVIUS & MARIE DELFILS**, Haiti. Pray for the church in Haiti during these times of widespread uncertainty.



The Iveys

**11** **LOWELL & MAE IVEY**, Virginia Beach, VA. Pray for wisdom and unity as Reformation Presbyterian Church takes steps toward organization. / Pray for the committee on **CHAPLAINS AND MILITARY PERSONNEL**.

**12** **BEN & HEATHER HOPP**, Haiti. Pray for the training of Port-au-Prince church officer nominees for possible ordination in 2020. / **ABBY HARTING**, office secretary for Christian Education.

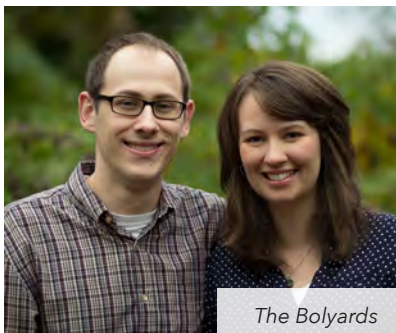
**13** Affiliated missionaries **DR. MARK & LAURA AMBROSE**, Cambodia. / **JAY & ANDREA BENNETT**, Neon, KY. Pray for the calling of more officers at Neon Reformed Presbyterian Church.

**14** **JEREMIAH (NATALIA) DICKINSON**, church-planting intern at Harvest Church in East Haddam, CT. / Pray for CCE's subcommittee on **INTERNET MINISTRIES** as they plan updates to OPC.org.

**15** **MR. AND MRS. F.**, Asia. Pray for a licentiate preparing for ordination as a minister of the gospel. / Home Missions general secretary **JOHN SHAW**.



# DECEMBER



The Bolyards

**16** **ETHAN & CATHERINE Bolyard**, Wilmington, NC. Ask the Lord to bless the efforts of Heritage OPC to purchase a church building. / Pray for the December meeting of the **FOREIGN MISSIONS** executive committee.

**17** Pray for **MARK (PEGGY) SUMPTER**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of the Southwest. / Yearlong intern **KEN (MANDY) KRUCKKOW** at Oakland Hills Community Church in Farmington Hills, MI.

**18** Associate **M. S.**, Asia. Pray that her unique gifts and energy will be well-invested to assist the local body. / Pray for **MR. AND MRS. M. M.**, Asia (on furlough), as they plan for the future.

**19** **BOB & GRACE HOLDA**, Oshkosh, WI. Pray for Resurrection Presbyterian's growth in deeper fellowship, corporate prayer, and Christian education for 2020. / Home Missions administrative assistant **KATIE STUMPF**.

**20** **DAVID NAKHLA**, disaster response coordinator. Thank the Lord for all those who have registered as volunteers. / Pray for OP sessions as they seek to identify young men in their churches for the **TIMOTHY CONFERENCE**.

**21** Pray for associate **P. F.**, Asia, as he considers extending his term of service. / Pray for **SARAH PEDERSON**, proofreader, and **CHRISTOPHER TOBIAS**, cover designer, for *New Horizons*.

**22** **RYAN & ROCHELLE CAVANAUGH**, Merrillville, IN. Pray for unity and redemptive, transparent relationships at Mission Church. / Yearlong intern **PEDER (ANNA) KLING** at Prescott Presbyterian in Prescott, AZ.

**23** Pray for associate missionaries **JAMES & ESTHER FOLKERTS**, Nakaale, Uganda, as they navigate a new culture. / Pray for **CHRIS (NANCY) WALMER**, area home missions coordinator for the Presbytery of Central PA.

**24** **DAVID & RASHEL ROBBINS** and **MARK & CARLA VAN ESSENDELFT**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for the team in Nakaale as they make plans for 2020. / Yearlong intern **JEREMY (AMY) ALLEN** at Covenant of Grace in Oxnard, CA.

**25** Missionary associate **ANGELA VOSKUIL**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray that many children will hear about Jesus through the Karamoja Education Outreach. / Home Missions associate general secretary **AL TRICARICO**.

**26** **JEREMY & GWEN BAKER**, Yuma, AZ. Ask the Lord to bring more year-round residents to Yuma OPC. / Pray for **DAVE (ELIZABETH) HOLMLUND**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of Philadelphia.



The Verdick family

**27** Associate missionaries **CHRISTOPHER & CHLOE VERDICK** and **LEAH HOPP**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for opportunities to build relationships during the holidays. / Pray for GCP executive director **MARVIN PADGETT**.

**28** **CARL & STACEY MILLER**, New Braunfels, TX. Pray for the growth and unity of New Braunfels OPC. / Praise the Lord for the work of director **JOEL PEARCE** and others on the digital edition of the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal*.

**29** Missionary associates **JOANNA GROVE** and **JOSHUA MARCOUX**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray that the youth would diligently pursue God. / Pray for **ANDREW MOODY** and **LINDA FOH**, technical assistants for OPC.org.

**30** Pray for **HEERO & ANYA HACQUEBORD**, L'viv, Ukraine, as their family witnesses to neighbors and friends. / Yearlong intern **DAVID (ASHLEIGH) SCHEXNAYDER** at Calvin Presbyterian in Phoenix, AZ.

**31** Affiliated missionaries **JERRY & MARILYN FARNIK**, Prague, Czech Republic. / **CHRIS & GRACE ANN CASHEN**, Clarkston, GA. Pray for more people from all nations to join their Bible studies in Amharic and English.

# NEWS, VIEWS, & REVIEWS

## FIRST OPC PORTLAND CELEBRATES 75TH ANNIVERSARY

*Tom Bradshaw*

The OPC was barely seven years old and Franklin Roosevelt was still president when a young OP minister named Lawrence Eyres was called to plant a congregation in a fast-growing suburban area of Portland, Oregon, as young families flocked there during World War II. His tireless efforts led to the formation of First OPC on July 28, 1944.

The congregation grew steadily from its initial eleven communicant members, as families formed fast friendships that would knit them together for decades to come. In the fifties and sixties, First OPC's Sunday school and other ministries bulged with "baby boom" children and families. It planted five mission works and hosted general assembly in 1965 and in 1970. Blessed with a large facility but being more geographically dispersed in recent decades, the congregation has consistently enjoyed a solid Reformed ministry of the Word.

Five faithful pastors ministered to the congregation: Lawrence Eyres (1944–1950), Carl Ahlfeldt (1950–1960), Al Edwards (1960–1975), Don Poundstone (1976–1994), and Jack Smith (1995–2019). Long-tenured elders and deacons have also blessed the congregation, with sixteen elders and deacons serving at least twenty years.

The recent celebration of its seventy-fifth anniversary with members and friends marked an opportunity to reflect upon God's multi-generational faithfulness, with the excitement of looking to the future with new pastor Andrew Farr and reaching a neighborhood in desperate need of the gospel of Jesus Christ.



*Larry and Gail Mininger*

## MININGER RETIRES AFTER 48 YEARS AT LAKE SHERWOOD

The congregation of Lake Sherwood OPC in Orlando, Florida, recently hosted a dinner after morning worship to commemorate the retirement of Rev. Dr. Larry G. Mininger, who has faithfully ministered as their pastor for forty-eight years. Elder John Hearn gave a tribute, recalling Mininger's educational and ministry highlights. Church members, visitors, and Mininger family members offered speeches honoring his and his wife's many years of ministry. A basket of greeting cards and a commemorative cake were presented, and a book of memories and appreciation is being produced for the Miningers. Pastor Geoff Downey closed the program as the congregation sang one of the Miningers' favorite hymns, "Jesus, What a Friend for Sinners."



*The congregation of First OPC in Portland, OR, celebrated its seventy-fifth anniversary*

## UPDATE

### MINISTERS

- On October 4, **Nathan P. Strom** was ordained and installed as associate pastor of Bethel OPC in Oostburg, WI.
- On October 6, **Andrew J. D. Myers** was ordained and installed as associate pastor of Trinity Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Hatboro, Pennsylvania.
- **Matthew S. Prather** was deposed from the office of minister by the Presbytery of Southern California on October 18. Prather was formerly an evangelist of the presbytery serving the Corona Presbyterian mission work in Corona, CA.
- On October 25, the Presbytery of the South installed **John V. Fesko** as Teacher of the Word, laboring as a professor of systematic and historical theology at Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson, MS. Mr. Fesko transferred from the Presbytery of Southern California, where he had served as a professor at Westminster Seminary California.
- On November 1, **Michael F. Grasso** was ordained and installed as pastor of New Covenant OPC, South San Francisco, CA.
- **Joshua M. Jackson** was installed as evangelist of Covenant Presbyterian Church in Cedar Falls, IA, on November 1.



Jackson, previously a PCA minister, is serving as a US Army chaplain.

## MILESTONES

- **Timothy W. Flora**, 55, died on October 12. Flora was a pastor of Living Hope OPC in Clarksville, MD, and previously a long-time associate pastor at Columbia Presbyterian in Columbia, MD.
- **Larry W. Johnson**, 66, died on October 15. Johnson served as a pastor of several URC congregations and was a Teacher of the Word at Cedar Presbyterian (OPC) in Hudsonville, MI.



On October 5–6, Faith OPC in Lincoln, NE, hosted a conference with speaker Richard Pratt, bringing area Reformed churches together. From l. to r., Roy Miller (Faith OPC), Stu Kerns (Zion PCA), Dan Coke (Restoration City), Matt Odem (Redeemer PCA), Lee Johnson (St. John's RCUS), Richard Pratt (Third Mill ministries), and Ben Loos (Grace Chapel PCA).

[“You Are Not What You Eat,” continued from page 9]

line separating good and evil passes not through states, nor between classes, nor between political parties either, but right through every human heart, and through all human hearts” (*The Gulag Archipelago*, part 4, chapter 1).

## Seeking True Food

As we minister the gospel in the context of the rise of foodie-ism, where celebrity chefs are the “gurus of this age” and many are devoting an overly obsessive attention to what is eaten, what can we take from the Lord’s teaching in this text?

First, there is now liberty to eat all manner of foods, because included in this instruction is Mark’s inspired observation that Jesus “declared all foods clean” (7:19). Christians should beware of assigning spiritual significance to one kind of food over another and avoid embracing any silly suggestions that the Bible prescribes a particular diet for individual believers. We need not be too persnickety about what we choose to eat, or in how we assess the dietary choices of our fellow Christians (see also Rom. 14).

Secondly, if guilt is not to be found in foods that are consumed, neither is cleansing from guilt to be sought in such either. All food has an expiration date, and our Lord commands us, “Do not work for the food that perishes,

but for the food that endures to eternal life” (John 6:27). What is that enduring food but the Word of God? It is through this Word that we experience the true inner catharsis, definitive purification: “Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you” (John 15:3). The author of Hebrews exhorts the church: “It is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, which have not benefited those devoted to them” (Heb. 13:9). Here is milk to drink and meat to eat that does the church body good.

Thirdly, as the church gathers regularly to celebrate the Lord’s Supper, we rejoice in partaking of a meal given to signify and seal our union with our Savior and with one another as brothers and sisters in God’s redeemed family. In other words, here is one antidote against the elitism and one-upmanship of foodie-ism and Pharisaism, for at this table all have the same status as saints in Christ, and there is no distinction (1 Cor. 12:13). In eating this bread and drinking this cup, all communicants together are engaged in gospel proclamation (1 Cor. 11:26), thereby nullifying all bragging-rights in ourselves and “pouring contempt on all (our) pride.” □

*The author is pastor of Christ Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Marietta, Georgia.*

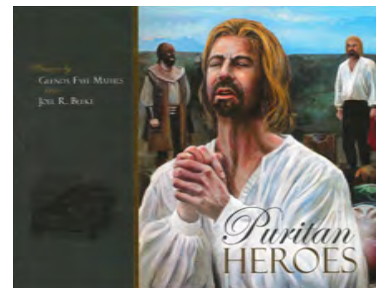
## REVIEWS

***Puritan Heroes*, by Glenda Faye Mathes and Joel R. Beeke. Reformation Heritage, 2018. Hardcover, 190 pages, \$18.00. Reviewed by OP pastor James A. La Belle.**

Like its predecessor, *Reformation Heroes* (Kleyn and Beeke, 2007), *Puritan Heroes* is a keeper. This volume of church history introduces its readers to the Puritan forebears whose writings and sermons shaped the Reformed theology and worship we continue to enjoy today. It raises some of the theological convictions the Puritans held, and it references some of the books they published, but its intention is to introduce us to

the Puritans themselves. The question it seeks to answer is, “Who were the Puritans?” In reply, it introduces us to twenty-one of the most well-known and beloved Puritans, mostly in England but also in New England. And it does so in a lively and engaging way that makes it an exceptional and accessible treatment for all ages.

Each Puritan is introduced with a historical account taken from his life in







At Nathan Strom's October 4 ordination and installation at Bethel OPC in Oostburg, WI: (front) James Onnink, Brian Wingard, James Hoekstra, Charles Williams, Kim Kuhfuss, Nathan Strom, David Cornette, Shane Lems, Randy Kreisel, Ivan DeMaster, Robert Boss; (back) Brett Mahlen, Micah Shin, Brian DeJong, Kurt Swanson, Alan Martinson, Dave Veldhorst, Eric Johnson

order to show us that the Puritans were real people with family struggles and personal challenges just like ours. Theological convictions held by the Puritans are discussed within the real-life context and trials that gave rise to them. When one of their published works is referenced, we're also told something of its background and the benefit it brought to Christ's church. In other words, Mathes and Beeke never lose sight of the goal of inviting us to get to know the Puritans themselves. Likely, we've already learned from their writings; but the authors believe there's also much to learn from their lives as *heroes*, people who do "the right thing in ordinary circumstances." Mathes and Beeke want us to appreciate the humanity of the Puritans (weaknesses as well as strengths) and to see that their lives hold timely lessons for us today, when doing the right thing is difficult, costly, and, for some, deadly.

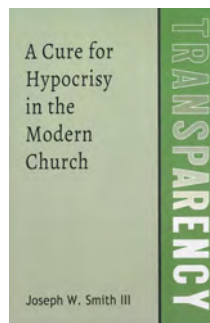
The manner in which this goal is accomplished is really quite beautiful. The book is top-notch quality in paper, binding, graphics, and text. It's a perfect conversation-starter for the coffee table but works just as well for an evening read-aloud with your children. The inside covers are printed with a pictorial timeline of the lives of the Puritans in tandem with the important historical events that distinguished them. Additionally, three appendices augment the volume nicely. The first gives a helpful glossary of terms relative to the Puritan era, the second gives a more detailed timeline, and the third

provides study questions for each chapter. My favorite part of the book, however, is the concluding chapter, which gives ten lessons we can learn from the lives of the Puritans.

The reader will be richly rewarded, not simply historically, but practically, which is the goal of all worthwhile study.

***Transparency: A Cure for Hypocrisy in the Modern Church*, by Joseph W. Smith III. CreateSpace, 2018. Paperback, 324 pages, \$14.99 (Amazon). Reviewed by OP pastor Timothy G. Herndon.**

The modern church, just as the social milieu in which we live, is often beset with the desire to appear strong, put together, and generally successful in our spiritual lives even though the reality is far different. To maintain this façade, Christians adopt a "don't ask—don't tell" approach to life in the church. The result is that true fellowship in the church is stifled, and the life we are called to share together in the body of Christ seems remote. In *Transparency: A Cure for Hypocrisy in the Modern Church*, Joe Smith addresses this challenge.



Smith began to see the common

thread of the lack of transparency in the life of the church in reflecting on his own experiences in small groups, where there ought to have been a measure of spiritual intimacy, as well as his service as a church officer (he is an elder at New Life OPC in Williamsport, Pennsylvania).

Smith describes transparency as that openness in our lives with one another in the church family—or "body," as the apostle Paul says in 1 Corinthians 12— in which "we simply must take off the mask, drop the act, and let others see what's really going on in our lives" (3). This transparency is rooted in the gospel; it speaks to who God is and who we are as his redeemed in Christ.

Drawing from Scripture and referencing a wide array of Christian and secular authors, Smith organizes his work in three major sections: barriers to transparency, reasons to cultivate transparency, and, finally, how to become transparent. He devotes half of the book to the final section, how to grow in gospel openness in the church. Each of the chapters, as well as an introduction and concluding section, contain a set of questions, helpfully assisting the reader to interact with the chapter's subject matter. An experienced journalist and author, Smith's writing is clear and easily accessible. He weaves into his writing from the very beginning the hope of the gospel. What could easily have felt simply like another call to be better and try harder instead is framed as an aspect of our sanctification in the life of the church, all of God's grace: "Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known" (1 Cor. 13:12).

***Mere Calvinism*, by Jim Scott Orrick. P&R, 2019. Paperback, 224 pages, \$11.50. Reviewed by OP minister Cornelius Tolsma.**

*Mere Calvinism* is an exposition of what is commonly called the Five Points of Calvinism. Do we need another book on them? Maybe not, but this one is a nice addition. Do you have trouble figuring out what the Points are all about? Read this book. Do you want to hand a book to someone who has trouble accepting the Points? Share this book. Do you plan to

teach the Points? Use this book. Do you think Bible-believing people are wrong for accepting any or all the Points? Study this book. Both teens and adults will find it helpful.

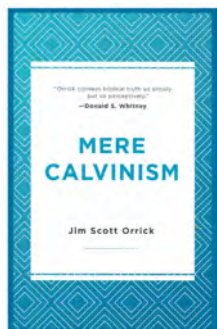
In Orrick's summary of *Mere Calvinism*, he writes that he will "plainly describe the doctrine under consideration, examine the Bible

to see whether the doctrine is taught there, answer the most common objections to it, and show how the doctrine ought to influence the way we think and live" (24). And that is just what he does.

He does it with clear and accurate exposition of each doctrine covered by the Five Points. Orrick's writing is easy to read, and his arguments are persuasive. He hammers his considerations home with repeated biblical references. These references are not left to simple verse-proofing but are bonded under the fact of God's sovereignty—he is gracious and merciful to whom he wishes. Paragraph after paragraph is punctuated by simple but pointed illustrations that are a big help. You will also find him making reference to the Westminster Standards and the work of the Puritans, whom he obviously loves.

Orrick presents the material in helpful order. Each chapter begins with a detailed outline of what the particular Point teaches. He moves on to deal with certain objections that have been raised over the years. He takes these objections seriously and is direct and persuasive in answering them. For example, he shows how the Reformed doctrine of total depravity does not negate the sincere offer of the gospel but encourages it.

The chapters close with "questions for contemplation and reflection." This is helpful not only for group discussion but also for personal deliberation. Orrick ties up his study by demonstrating the serious loss to Christians if the Five Points were not true. The book does not include a history of the Points.



*Mere Calvinism* may not be the most felicitous title if it makes you think that Calvinism can be reduced to the Five Points. To counter this, Orrick includes a brief explanation of the richness of the biblical faith called Calvinism. He shows how Calvinism goes beyond Five Points, while at the same time he understands the laudatory implications of these particular doctrines.

Reading *Mere Calvinism*, one becomes aware of the fact that the author is not simply out to win a debate. He recognizes that the things of the Lord are precious and must be handled with humble submission to his will and Word. We "rejoice with trembling" (Ps. 2).

***What Is the Priesthood of Believers?* by A. Craig Troxel. P&R, 2019. Paperback, 27 pages, \$4.00. Reviewed by professor T. David Gordon.**

The editors of P&R's Basics of the Faith series, of which this booklet is a part, are to be commended for recognizing that we are a post-literate or less-literate generation. By the mid-twentieth century, television had reduced the attentiveness necessary to literacy. By the early twenty-first century, the digital devices have reduced attention even more so. Gone are the days of English Puritans writing books that covered any topic exhaustively. Today, we more frequently encounter slogan theology, where we affirm doctrines by their labels (e.g., "justification by faith") while retaining little substantive understanding of what those labels denote. Each of the works in this series hovers around the twenty-five-page mark, and the authors go well beyond the slogan stage, while still writing with precision and conciseness.

In this volume, Troxel rightly grounds the doctrine of universal priesthood in the priesthood of Christ, which was and is itself informed by the antecedent priestly activity of the Levites (and of Melchizedek).

The Levites did three things: they entered God's presence with thanks and praise (from which presence our entire

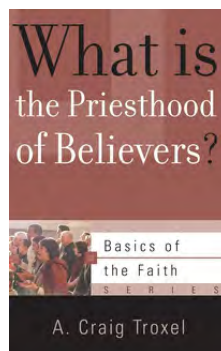
race had been banished in Genesis 3); they offered the sacrifices that God had instituted; and they offered intercession and praise for the eleven tribes who could not offer their own praise or sacrifices.

Christ offered himself as the sacrifice that would atone for sin on the cross; he entered beyond the curtain to the holiest place by his ascension, and he ever lives to intercede for us, pleading the efficacy of his work on the cross. No one else offers any sacrifice after his, which was sufficient for all time to atone for the vilest of sins. But now the entirety of God's people enter "his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise" (Psalm 100:4), and the entirety of God's people intercede in prayer for one another. Priesthood did not disappear in the church era; it became universal and non-sacrificing.

Troxel's discussion of these realities (supported by apt quotations from dogmatic history) is remarkable for being both thorough yet concise; nothing important is either missing or belabored. Troxel also includes a gracious (and needed) warning about the dangers of anticlericalism (which will always be present in egalitarian cultures); there may be no sacrificers in the Christian ministry, but there are pastors, ruling

elders, and deacons. We still have offices, just not the office of sacrificer.

As a crabby academic, I might wish that our culture's literacy were better than it is. But we are what we are, and P&R's able authors such as Craig Troxel are addressing the situation with commendable economy, while retaining the critical substance. If you haven't exposed yourself to this series, do so soon.



## Correction

In the November issue of *New Horizons*, the "In Memoriam: David J. O'Leary" should have included his son in the list of surviving family members.



**Pornography: Fighting for Purity**, by Deepak Reju. P&R, 2018. Paperback, 96 pages, \$7.50. Reviewed by OPC minister William Shishko.

When it comes to the subject of battling with remaining, indwelling sin, I don't believe there is any substitute for the classic treatment by John Owen in volume 6 of his *Collected Writings*, "On the Mortification of Sin in Believers" (or, for those who find Owen too imposing, Kris Lundgaard's simplified contemporary adaptation, *The War Within: Straight Talk About the Power and Defeat of Sin*). But those who are looking for a condensed, bite-sized-chapter treatment of this all-important subject should read



*Pornography: Fighting for Purity* by Deepak Reju.

This eminently helpful little volume is part of the 31-Day Devotionals for Life series, of which Reju (pastor of biblical counseling and family ministries at Capitol Hill Baptist Church in Washington,

DC) is the series editor. Other topics in the series include addiction, marital restoration, doubt, and grief.

While at first I questioned the value of such a short treatment of such a complex subject, I came to realize that the very format of a daily devotional is helpful for men (and women) who struggle with pornography on a daily basis. Through this handy written companion, counselor Reju becomes your daily accountability partner to help you with the all-too-common and all-too-little-admitted challenge of battling the temptation to watch pornography in our sexually saturated culture.

The two-page chapters in the book (including reflection questions and action points) address topics such as "The War for Your Soul," "Walking by the Spirit," "Digging into Your Heart," and (of particular interest to me) "Good Accountability" and "Bad Accountability."

The author is clearly a gifted biblical counselor and writer. His words are blunt, honest, and full of searching questions that prevent the reader from becoming disengaged with what he is reading. At the same time, the counsel is gospel suffused and full of hope. Reju rightly emphasizes the Chris-

tian believer's identity in union with Christ, and his crisp calls to repentance are clearly calls to *evangelical* repentance.

My only comment would be that the book applies to far more in the Christian's life than struggles with pornography. It is a primer on sanctification, with application to any and all areas of struggle with sin. But *Sanctification: Fighting for Purity* doesn't market as well as *Pornography: Fighting for Purity*! Highly recommended.

***The Spiritual Life*, by Campegius Vitringa, translated and edited by Charles K. Telfer. Reformation Heritage, 2018. Paperback, 260 pages, \$15.00. Reviewed by OP pastor Carl A. P. Durham.**

Seventeenth-century theologian John Owen taught that Christ as the head of all the saints, communicates spiritual life to all that are his. As we read in Galatians, "I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me" (2:20).

Campegius Vitringa, born in Friesland almost fifty years after Owen, and whose work, *The Spiritual Life*, has been recently translated by Professor Charles K. Telfer, would heartily agree. The book was written, in Telfer's words, "to motivate people for the Christian life and to stir them up to pursue a Christian lifestyle very effectively and with biblical support," that is, living for Christ with an "active piety" (xii).

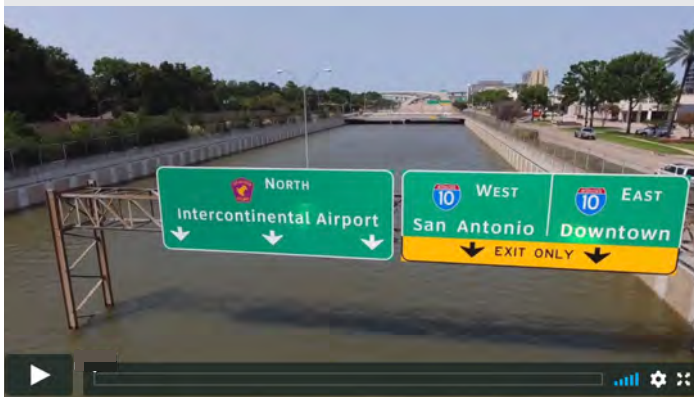
Vitringa succeeds in his task of wedding biblical knowledge to piety. I particularly came to value chapter 12 on the means of grace and his teaching on prayer. Vitringa does not fail to accord public prayer in corporate worship its primacy of place; however, it is his definition of prayer in one's closet (Matthew 6:6), "when a person closes the door and directs himself to God in friendly intercourse and familiar exchange" (117), that reminded me of the



## Battle Creek, Michigan

The OPC desires to plant a church in Battle Creek, Michigan. If you have insights or possible contacts in this area, please send them to the presbytery's appointed organizer, OP pastor Markus Jeromin, at [jeromin.1@opc.org](mailto:jeromin.1@opc.org), or call him at 269-808-4287.

60 churches have screened the film.  
85 people have registered to serve.  
Will you be next?



Watch: [Vimeo.com/OPCDisasterResponse/TheHoustonStory](https://vimeo.com/OPCDisasterResponse/TheHoustonStory)

Register: [OPCDisasterResponse.org/Volunteer-Registry](https://OPCDisasterResponse.org/Volunteer-Registry)



great liberty and blessing there is in such private fellowship with the Lord.

Such an exchange, Vitringa says, must be intimate and frank, as we pour out our hearts before his face (Ps. 62:8; Ps. 42:4; Isa. 26:16). I especially love his focus on such private prayer as expressing domestic simplicity with God as our Father:

The godly soul, alone with God and regarding Him as a caring father, comes humbly before His throne and takes no great care with what words to speak or the arrangement of what to say (as one must do in public prayers) other than that which easily comes to mind. He simply prays, humbly and with confidence, using whatever words his own affections suggest as he is standing before God. (118)

Besides this healthy corrective for mystic experientialism or officious artifice in prayer, we must pray without giving up. Citing Jacob's refusing to let go of the Angel of the Lord until the blessing came, Vitringa encourages us to do this, citing prayer as the means for us to "conquer the unconquerable One" (119).

How we need bold encouragement to lay hold on God in the secret place with such a conquering faith! Even as John Calvin wrote in his commentary on Hosea 12:4:



Now, when we are said to wrestle with God, and the issue of the contest be such, that God leaves the victory to us, we are not then improperly called conquerors, yea, even of God himself.

***Jesus Is King.* Kanye West. GOOD Def Jam, 2019. Digital download, \$10.00. Reviewed by OP member Jacob Van-Drunen.**

Many Christians are scratching their heads over what to make of Kanye West's recent conversion experience and the subsequent release of his Christian hip-hop album, *Jesus Is King*. As a testimony to the cultural significance of West's conversion, consider the appearances that he made on various late-night talk shows around the time the album was released. When was the last time mainstream talk show hosts discussed Christianity in anything resembling a positive light? Now they are—for their guest's sake at least, even if they don't understand the gospel themselves. We should be taking Kanye West seriously, too.

West has been openly struggling with God and the message of Christianity for a while now. In the last track on his June 2018 album, *Ye*, he wrestles with a shift in his view of women after the birth of his two daughters. *Kids See Ghosts*, his collaborative album with Kid Cudi released only one week later, has spiritual themes throughout. In January 2019, West began Sunday Service, a primarily gospel music production that has

performed every Sunday since its inauguration. But according to Adam Tyson—the pastor who made waves by preaching a biblical, salvation-oriented sermon at a Sunday Service in September—it wasn't until the spring of 2019 that West had his experience of what Tyson calls radical salvation. Released after many delays on October 25, *Jesus Is King* is West's expression of the gospel that saved him.

Musically, the album is a clear continuation of West's style, but lyrically it presents a break and even reversal of many of the themes found in his older work. In "Closed on Sunday," though couched in a rather awkward analogy of Chick-fil-A's business model, we hear a respect for the Fourth Commandment that puts most American Christians to shame. Part of being a Christian, to West,

is taking time out of one's week—away from the world and its media—for fellowship and worship. In "Hands On," he indicts those within the church who are skeptical of his conversion, asking them to pray for him instead of judging him. Finally, though quite removed from my

own cultural context, it is hard to miss his overarching vision of the power that the gospel has to change hearts (especially young hearts) and heal communities that continue to struggle with violence both from gangs and the state.

Time will tell whether or not this is just another celebrity fad. But for now, we should rejoice that the gospel is being proclaimed in new ways to new people.

