

REVIEW: Ryan C. McIlhenny's *Kingdoms Apart* by James J. Cassidy

New Horizons

IN THE ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

JUL 2013



A Lively Hope for True Evangelism

by JOHN S. SHAW

ALSO: Surprising Shoe-leather Stories by Mark Sumpter

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NEW HORIZONS

IN THE ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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Members of the Presbytery of Connecticut and Southern New York are shown here at their meeting in January 2013 at Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Franklin Square, N.Y. Standing in the middle are John Mallin, stated clerk, and Daniel Osborne, moderator.



JOHN S. SHAW

A Lively Hope for True Evangelism

“**W**ith what lively hope does our gaze turn now to the future! At last true evangelism can go forward without the shackle of compromising associations. The fields are white to the harvest.” With these words, J. Gresham Machen on June 11, 1936, expressed the excitement that surrounded the formation of the denomination that would soon take the name Orthodox Presbyterian Church. These words are noteworthy for two particular reasons.

First of all, notice the optimism of these words—an optimism that in many ways stood in contrast to the circumstances in which they were uttered. Machen spoke to a small group of thirty-three ministers and seventeen elders. They formed a denomination of small congregations, few in number, most without buildings, and with meager financial resources. And they sought to form and grow a denomination in the middle of the Great Depression. Yet they approached such a daunting (some might say foolhardy) task with great optimism.

Second, notice the focus of Machen’s words—a focus on the opportunities for evangelism. Our denomination has a reputation for theological precision, intellectual vigor, and a commitment to biblical truth. Machen certainly reflects those commitments with his emphasis on “true” evangelism without compromising associations. Yet he also recognizes that a commitment to biblical truth necessarily means a zeal for evangelistic ministry undergirded by confidence in the Lord’s promise. “The fields are white to the harvest.” Therefore, we must send laborers out into the field to proclaim the truth of the gospel in the lively hope that the Lord will bless those labors by adding to his church.

That is our denominational heritage: a commitment to, and zeal for, the work of evangelism. You see the results of those commitments in the early history of our church. Though small and poor, we immediately sent missionaries to labor in foreign lands. Some of those same men, upon their return to

the United States, carried on the same kind of missions work in their homeland, and new churches sprang up. Those early missionaries and pastors endured great hardship and financial difficulty with joy because they had the opportunity to participate in the spread of the gospel. Our early history shows a church committed to the work of evangelism as we harvested both in faraway lands and in our homeland.

WHERE ARE WE TODAY?

But what about today? Are we still a church committed to the work of evangelism? Are we filled with optimism as the Lord sends us into the fields to gather the harvest?

Certainly our denomination continues to send missionaries to other nations. It also continues to plant churches throughout the United States.

But what about our local congregations? As local congregations, we participate in these larger evangelistic ministries through prayer and giving. But do we live out such evangelistic optimism in the regular ministry and life of the local church?

There seem to be so many reasons for pessimism. We live in a secular culture that expresses open and aggressive rebellion against the one true God. Christians worry as our nation embraces unbiblical views of marriage, promotes the right to destroy human life, and defends the publication of pornographic images. The church and the Bible have been marginalized and face open ridicule in our communities. Many people

in our nation see the church as a remnant of past cultures with little or no relevance in the twenty-first century.

In such a time, we sometimes lose confidence in the simple, faithful preaching of the true gospel. We face the temptation to hunker down in our local Christian communities to hide from the evils of the world around us. We find comfort in the fellowship of like-minded persons who have already embraced the gospel. And how wonderful it is if we find a community of Christians who embrace the Reformed faith! Yet we too quickly find comfort in our church community and leave behind the task of evangelism. The fields seem to be anything but white for harvest. So we rest quietly within our congregations.

What protects us from embracing the practices of this bunker mentality? Only the promises of God protect us from such a response—the same promises that Machen referred to in his hopeful statement above.

THE PROMISE OF A GREAT HARVEST

In Matthew 9, Jesus and his disciples travel between cities and villages teaching, healing, and “proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom” (v. 35). The Lord warns that wolves will persecute and attack them. Yet he sends his disciples with confidence in the promises of God. The Lord has promised a harvest, and the harvest is plentiful (Matt 9:37; Luke 10:2).

In his instructions to the apostles, Jesus leans on the imagery of harvest and abundance that fills the Old Testament. The Feast of Weeks celebrated the beginning of the wheat harvest, certainly a reason for rejoicing. This celebration often included the singing of Psalm 67. We refer to this psalm as a missionary psalm, for it describes the overflow of blessing from the people of God to all nations.

May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, that your way may be known on earth, your saving power among all nations. Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you! . . . The earth has yielded its increase; God, our God, shall bless us. God shall bless us; let all the ends of the earth fear him! (Psalm 67:1–3, 6–7)

In this psalm, the connection between the physical harvest and the spiritual harvest is clear. The Lord blesses us as the earth yields its increase, but all of these blessings overflow,

A Bible study sponsored by Gospel Life Presbyterian Church in Chicago



so that people, nations, and the entire earth might fear and praise the Lord!

Of course, if we follow the story of the Scriptures, we see the imagery of the Feast of Weeks realized on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2. On that great day, the Lord Jesus Christ pours out the Spirit on the church, and the great harvest begins. The harvest is

broad and expansive. People are gathered without distinction: sons and daughters, young and old, masters and servants, Jews and Gentiles. Three thousand souls are added to the church in a single day. The harvest is plentiful! The fields are white!

The Lord Jesus encourages his disciples with the promise of a harvest, a promise from God to his people. Though the history of the church has been filled with persecution and suffering, the promise remains. The fields continue white for the harvest, and we are called to labor in those fields with expectation.

Jesus points his church to the promise of a great harvest, and that gives cause for optimism. But he also points us to the Lord of the harvest. Jesus roots the promise in the One who gives the promise: “Therefore pray earnestly to *the Lord of the harvest* to send out laborers into *his* harvest” (Matt. 9:38). These subtle reminders provide the reason for confidence. We know that the harvest is plentiful, and that the gathering will be successful, because we know the Lord of the harvest. Isn’t that what we mean when we refer to the Lord as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? He is the faithful one. He made promises to our fathers that he has fulfilled and continues to fulfill. He always does what he promises.

In fact, the promise of a rich harvest flows from the promises of God to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Remember his word to Abram: “And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, *and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed*” (Gen. 12:2–3). This promise finds fulfillment in the great evangelistic harvest of the new covenant. Nations are gathered into the rebuilt tent of David (Amos 9:11–12; Acts 15:13–21) and become children of Abraham.

Does the world oppose God? Yes. Do we face opposition from the fallen, rebellious world in which we live? Certainly, and the Lord Jesus warned us of such things. But there is no

reason for pessimism. The Lord of the harvest continues to reign, and he promises great success in the gathering. So we go forth with his blessing, confident in his promise. The harvest is plentiful! The fields are white!

HOW WE PARTICIPATE IN THE HARVEST

So how do we get in on this harvest? How can we participate in it?

Most directly, Jesus calls us to pray: “Pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest” (Matt. 9:38). This instruction makes sense because we know the Lord of the harvest to be faithful and powerful. The history of the church shows that times of great evangelistic harvest are accompanied by times of fervent prayer. This is the pattern of history, and it is also the pattern of the Scriptures.

Faced with persecution, the apostolic church responded with times of prayer. They asked the Lord for diligence to speak the word with all boldness (Acts 4:29). They sent off missionaries after fasting and praying (Acts 13:3). Paul recognized the importance of a praying church. He concluded his instructions regarding Christian armor with a plea for prayer “that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the mystery of the gospel . . . that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak” (Eph. 6:19–20).

An evangelistic church must be a praying church, because we recognize God to be the Lord of the harvest. He gathers his church through the perfect work of Christ and the filling of the Holy Spirit (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8). Therefore, he calls us to pray with confidence that the Lord would give us boldness in the ministry of the gospel. And he promises to answer that prayer. When we lack confidence in the work of evangelism, the answer is often found in prayer. For in prayer, the Lord gives boldness to his church to speak the word.

Indirectly, in Matthew 9, the Lord also calls us to love. He doesn’t direct us by words, but rather by his example. Notice how the Lord Jesus responds to the crowds: “When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd” (Matt. 9:36). The American church in the twenty-first century struggles to be a compassionate church. The language of conservative, evangelical Christianity has been too often influenced by the politicizing of our culture and especially the “Religious Right.” We too easily embrace the language of culture wars as we fight against gay marriage or the secularization of schools. We are called to battle as the church militant, but we are also called to show love and compassion for a world filled with dying sinners, the harassed and the helpless.

How often do we respond like Jonah, sitting outside the city and waiting to see the Lord’s judgment poured out on the wicked? How often do we need the same gentle instruction



from the Lord that ends the book of Jonah: “And should not I pity Nineveh [or the United States], that great city [or nation], in which there are more than 120,000 persons [or more] who do not know their right hand from their left . . .?”

We should follow the example of the apostle Paul, who mirrored the compassion of his Savior. He had many reasons to hate his own countrymen as they followed him from city to city to persecute and threaten him. Yet the apostle could say with all sincerity, “I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh” (Rom. 9:2–3). The love of Christ, for his church and for us, should drive us to compassion for others that overflows into evangelistic ministry. Maybe when we lack zeal for evangelism, we simply lack memory of the great love of God for us. The Lord of the harvest set his love on us before the foundation of the world. The Lord Jesus demonstrated that love for us by laying down his life for us. That love serves as the great impetus for evangelistic zeal.

J. Gresham Machen encouraged this new denomination with the lively hope of a future filled with true evangelism. He understood that the only effective source of evangelistic zeal is the constraining love of Christ. He preached about that constraining love from 2 Corinthians 5:14 during the service that opened the Second General Assembly. To paraphrase: only the love of Christ, by which he died and rose again, restrains us from sin and sends us out rejoicing and witnessing.

May the Lord continue to give the congregations of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church an optimistic confidence in the Lord of the harvest, so that we might go into the harvest with love and prayer, proclaiming the true gospel of the constraining love of Christ until he returns. ◻

The author is the general secretary for the Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension.



MARK SUMPTER

Surprising Shoe-leather Stories

Some of us wear cowboy boots, some heels, and some flip-flops. We all follow our Savior, who walked and talked, who ministered: “The Lord God has given Me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him who is weary” (Isa. 50:4 NKJV). In our fellowship with the Lord Jesus, we appropriate strength and boldness to speak the Word in season.

About two years ago, when Faith OPC moved to a new location in our city, we prayed for the Lord’s direction regarding the old approach of knocking on doors, being hospitable to neighbors, and making friends with people living nearby. God, in his grace, birthed wonderful opportunities. We have charted progress with maps, names, and addresses, and have had varying results. As we have been doing door-to-door calling on Saturdays, a surprise has come our way. In the Lord’s goodness, many more of us in the congregation have been befriending our neighbors and speaking with folks about the gospel. Door-to-door evangelism has opened up more ministry!

DOOR-TO-DOOR MINISTRY

“Good morning, my name is Ted. We attend the church down the street, Faith Presbyterian. We are out getting acquainted with our neighbors. You see, we’re new to this neighborhood. May we leave information with you about our worship services?” Faith OPC has gone to over 550 homes in our area. Approximately half of these neighbors take literature about our worship, faith, and life. Half of those will take a few minutes to talk with us. The goal of these visits is to meet people, to befriend them. We try to take down names and learn something about their religious background and circumstances. The conversations vary. At times, we have prayed at the doorway—and sometimes we’ve been invited in! On occasion, we’ve been asked to come back for another visit.

While handing out Easter invitations one time, we

knocked on a door and a man with a sour look on his face answered. A team member took one look at him and immediately became nervous, getting her words all mixed up: “Hi! We’re from the church across from Faith Middle School.” She should have said, “We’re from Faith Church across from South Middle School.” After correcting herself, we all laughed and it seemed to break the ice with Ernie standing at the door. He opened up, explaining that he had recently had cancer treatments in his mouth and wasn’t eating very well. So that explained his sour look. He turned out to be a hurting man for whom we could pray. We have returned to visit him other times.

When we’re out on the streets, we meet all walks of the spiritual spectrum. Often we use a few questions to get a conversation started. We let people know openly and directly why we’ve stopped by. Three of us will not soon forget Jamie, a man in his mid-thirties. After greeting him, it went something like this:

Jamie: “Uh . . . guys, I don’t think you want to visit with me. You see, I’m a post–New Testament Christian.”

Us: “What’s a post–New Testament Christian?”

Jamie: “Well . . . Paul, the apostle, wrote for his own times, not ours. I was a pastor of a church, and I’ve come to see that Paul’s writings are just one way to see things.”

After we started to present a smidgen from the Bible, he challenged us, saying we have a view of truth that shows how small, tiny, and narrow we are. We ended up discussing a few Scriptures, and then we spoke of *his own* narrow, tightly



wound worldview. His faith and life were wound in a tiny way, a narrow way, about his own thinking and experience. He smiled when it dawned on him that he had a grid of thought that was his own narrow interpretation of life. We graciously, openly challenged him: “Jamie, does it *really* make sense to trust in your own narrow interpretation?” We expanded on things with him. This conversation lasted nearly an hour—right at the door.

We’ve spoken to theological liberals, Wiccans, New Agers, and those mixed up in the traditional cults.

As a result of going door-to-door, we’ve returned to several homes for private prayer or counseling, for full-scale prayer meetings, to drop off groceries, and to give more invitations to worship. We have sought to be patient about the fact that our doors on Sunday mornings are not being stormed with new visitors. That’s OK, in a sense. We are aiming to be faithful—to *go!* The shoe leather has opened our eyes more generally about evangelism.

One of our couples has sought to reach out with a Bible study. Another couple or two have led a study of *Christianity Explored*. Two individuals have been greatly used of the Lord to befriend the lonely. Some of these new friends have come to worship. Some folks use the *Ultimate Questions* booklet or other booklets from P&R Publishing to hand out as a gift or to use for discussion. About a year ago, the interest in evangelism spilled over into a one-day training workshop, where around ten of our church members worked on memorizing Scripture and specific conversational points. Walking the streets of Grants Pass generated interest in church-wide summer volleyball. Several friends came to these evenings to mix. Initiating and building relationships remains the bread-and-butter way of reaching out. Opportunities like these enable us to cast the net and to see how God might work in starting friendships.

As a pastor, I often struggle with juggling priorities. But a funny thing happened on the way to rearing children. Some priorities have been reset. For several years now, our children

have had an afternoon newspaper route. At first, I would substitute on a rare occasion. Then I started doing an early morning Wednesday weekly for them. The shoe leather around the streets of our neighborhood turned into phenomenal conversations with people. Our children opened the way.

Three or four months ago, Dan, a neighbor, asked me, “Mark, I know you don’t deliver papers for a living—what do you do?” Bingo. Off we went, talking about things of the Lord. Then there’s Betty, who wants input about ways to care for the homeless in our city. Then there are Jim, James, Sam and Leigh, Lynn, and Patti and George. Some mention an item for prayer. Some indicate concerns about societal things. I have to say that I have not been speaking directly of Christ to each one. But the conversations have moved beyond sidewalk courtesy. Volunteering at a school, a hospital, or at the neighborhood tutoring center will result, often, in quality conversations. Once again, it’s all about mixing with people, fostering conversations, and opening up to one another about matters of common concern that set the stage for talking about the truth. I am learning as I go.

PREACHING IN THE PARK

Jim worked through the throng of concertgoers distributing tracts in our city park one evening. He stopped by me and said, “Here, good news.” I grabbed the booklet and followed him out of the crowd. That started a relationship with Jim. He attended another church in the area. What caught my attention was Jim’s zeal. After he learned that I was a pastor, he prepared me for taking a turn to preach at a park. As I watched him, I swallowed slowly—gulp. I had spoken to crowds before, but this was intimidating. He distributed booklets and gospels of John, and inquired of people about their spiritual interests and questions. My time with Jim, watching and learning from him, meant more shoe-leather times on Saturday afternoons. With a jam-packed week, was it easy to shoe-horn in this ministry on Saturdays? No. But I kept trying to carve out time. I was scared. I stumbled along and I botched things up. But it helped me to do the work of evangelism.

There has been revived interest at Faith OPC in Grants Pass in getting out to mix with people—to listen well and to present the gospel faithfully. The shoe-leather experiences—some fruitful and others not so fruitful—have increased our desire to be the Lord’s witnesses. Door-to-door work might seem out-of-date and associated with the practices of cults, but the Lord is doing wonderful things, helping us to speak of his mighty deeds of grace and truth. Christ is our Savior and Lord. In his strength we go. By his grace we open up to people around us. For his honor we speak. We are eager to see what he will do with the opportunities. □

The author is a minister in the OPC living in Grants Pass, Oregon.

Discussing Your Faith

JEREMIAH MONTGOMERY

A PROVIDENTIAL IRONY

It took an atheist to turn me into a street preacher.

I first met Peter at a coffee roaster in downtown State College, Pennsylvania. It was a sweltering July afternoon, and sensible people were drinking their coffee in the air-conditioned indoors. Yet as I left the shop, I saw a solitary person sitting in the heat. This peculiar behavior, combined with a strange slogan on his hat, prompted a conversation. That conversation was the beginning of an acquaintance that proved catalytic to the formation of Discuss Your Faith (DYF), the open-air ministry of Resurrection OPC to the main campus of Penn State University.

But how did it happen? How did entrenched hostility to the claims of Christ foster a plan of deliberate engagement? The answer is simple....

My friend Peter showed me the alternative. The alternative to evangelizing is *not* simply doing nothing. It is far worse than that—for two reasons.

First, non-evangelism *communicates indifference*. Penn Jillette, an American comedian and illusionist, is an outspoken atheist. Yet listen to what he says (in a YouTube clip entitled “The Gift of a Bible”) about Christians who don’t evangelize: “I don’t respect people who don’t proselytize. If you believe that there is a heaven and hell, and people could be going to hell, or not getting eternal life, or whatever, and you think, well, it’s not really worth telling ’em this because it would make it socially awkward ... how much do you have to hate somebody to not proselytize? How much do you have to hate somebody to believe that everlasting life is possible and not tell them that?



Jeremiah Montgomery “discussing your faith” at Penn State

I mean, if I believe beyond a shadow of a doubt that a truck was coming at you and you didn’t believe it, and that truck was bearing down on you? There’s a certain point where I tackle you—and this is more important than that.”

Second, non-evangelism *empowers distortions*. When those who love the doctrines of grace stay home, we tacitly yield the harvest fields to those who love the doctrines of the Pharisees: the street preachers who twist a proclamation of grace into a legalistic harangue.

It was an example of the latter that Peter brought to my attention. He posted to Facebook a video of a typical PSU “evangelist.” The man ranted and screamed, until finally Peter turned the camera on himself and remarked, “Because *he’s* so full of the joy and peace of knowing Jesus.”

That was a convicting moment for me. It was easy to see the inconsistency between the street preacher’s behavior and

his claims. But then a question occurred to me: “So what are you going to do about it?”

Now that was a hard question. For one thing, the prospect of street preaching terrified me. But secondly, this brought up another question with which I had been wrestling....

One of the greatest challenges to church plants is *meeting unbelieving people in spiritually significant ways*. Making social contacts is easy enough. But the moment people find out that you are a Christian (or a Christian minister!), it’s as if a glass wall goes up.

The challenge is to *establish explicitly spiritual venues*: places where the gospel can be presented in a noninvasive, yet public, way. In such venues, those who choose to engage know *in advance* what to expect. Public worship offers one explicitly spiritual venue. Where can we create others? There are flea markets and street fairs. There are public parks.

There are also university campuses.

The question with which I had been wrestling the afternoon I saw Peter's video was this very question of venues. Four people had just left our fledgling congregation, and I was wondering: *what can we do that we're not doing?*

Then I saw Peter's video, and I was trapped.

DISCUSSING YOUR FAITH

So what do we do at DYF? What lessons can our efforts offer to other Orthodox Presbyterians?

A preliminary activity to all evangelism is *regular prayer*. We must ask the Lord to bring us contacts, conversations, and conversions.

After this, we *go*. This is the first imperative of the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19). Those who are dead in sin won't come looking for the gospel; we must go looking for them. So I go to the Penn State campus, where I am joined by a handful of students from "ResPres." We go every week, on the same day, at the same time. Our consistent presence sets us apart from the drive-by missionaries.

The next thing is that we *notice*. Before calling his first disciples, Jesus saw them in their own context. He spoke to those fishermen in terms they could understand—"fishers of men" (Mark 1:16–17). We seek to do the same. We begin with topics of existential concern for university students, and we try to translate biblical concepts and terms into non-"Christianese."

The fourth thing we do is *love*. I use the same words near the outset of every sermon: "I'm not here to scream at you. We're here because we love you and we want good things for you." At DYF we don't antagonize or bait our hearers. They bear God's image as we do, and that de-

serves respect. This basic principle of Christian conduct (Matt. 7:12) applies in evangelism as in the rest of life.

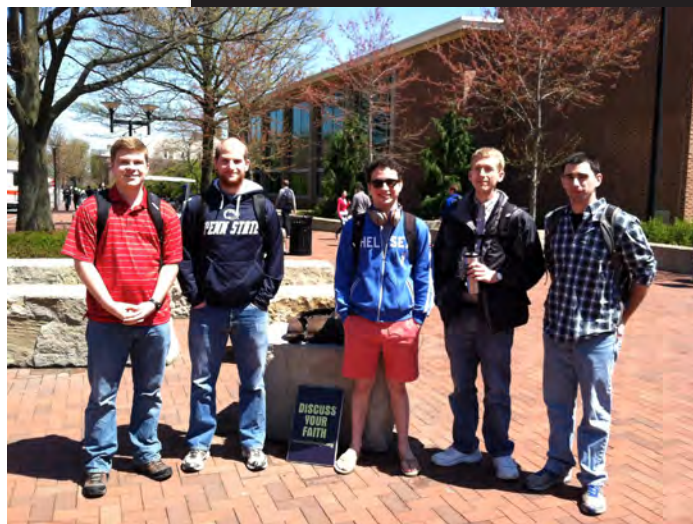
The fifth thing is that we *speak graciously* (1 Peter 3:15–16). We don't bludgeon students about their drinking habits or sex lives. Instead, we emphasize three points aimed at raising spiritual self-awareness:

1. All people, whether particularly religious or not, rely on something to give them identity, security, and success.
2. Admitting this essentially religious commitment is the only way to evaluate it honestly.
3. Whatever our functional savior, we should ask the big question: Will it kill me or save me? Can it erase my guilt and rescue me from the grave? Jesus can do all these things.

The final thing we do is *ask permission*. Asking permission is a rule to remember in personal evangelism. (Doug Pollock repeatedly makes this point in his book *God Space: Where Spiritual Conversations Happen Naturally*.) If people stick around to talk to us at DYF, we don't bully them. At every stage of conversation, we ask permission before changing direction. This respects the image bearer, heeds the golden rule, and helps ensure that the only offense presented is the cross.

God has blessed DYF with fruit. We have seen one student come to faith. Another is seeking. A third expressed appreciation for our approach—though he still rejects our Savior. Beyond these individuals, every person who walks by sees Christians risking scorn and speaking graciously. We consider this a valuable witness in and of itself.

Penn State students from Resurrection Presbyterian Church



DYF is a specific evangelistic ministry geared toward a unique community. Yet the steps outlined above are sufficiently general that they can be adapted by Orthodox Presbyterians everywhere.

A PERPETUAL CHALLENGE

Personal evangelism does not come naturally to me. I feel the visceral fear of man every time I speak. How do I deal with it?

First, I recognize that fear of man is a subtle form of self-worship. I confess that I fear people's responses because I want to stand high in their opinions. What is the solution? Remember the gospel: it is Christ alone who makes us look good before the only court that matters. (On this point, I have received great help from Tim Keller, *The Freedom of Self-Forgetfulness*.)

Secondly, I pray for love. There is a human soul behind even the most skeptical eye. By cultivating compassion, I become willing to lose my reputation for the good of others' salvation.

Finally, I speak. I just do it. You don't have to feel bold—you just have to act bold. Let your feelings follow as they will. Courage is not the absence of fear. Courage is following Jesus despite our fears.

The author is the pastor of Resurrection OPC in State College, Pa., a mission work of Westminster OPC in Hollidaysburg, Pa.

Home Missions Today

For up-to-date Home Missions news and prayer updates, e-mail HomeMissionsToday@opc.org. New editions: **July 3, 17, 31.**

Struggles in L'viv, Ukraine

HEERO HACQUEBORD

One of the greatest difficulties in planting churches in Ukraine is finding men who are potential church leaders. It seems that Stalin's purges and artificial famines (not to mention the Soviet Union in general) did the church a great disservice by killing and tyrannizing generations of men who had initiative, entrepreneurship, and enough backbone to resist oppressive governing. But L'viv and western Ukraine in general escaped the most widespread of Stalin's brutalities. It seems that, as a result, men here are not as passive and intimidated as they often are in other parts of Ukraine. However, now we are dealing with a new difficulty here in L'viv: resistance among the *wives* of the men who have great potential as future church leaders.

When I served as pastor of the Presbyterian church in Nikolaev, in southern Ukraine, we usually had women of all ages attending the service, but only a handful of men. Two of those men later became ordained leaders of the church, although people never fully accepted their authority. In the church plant in Kyiv, we had a larger percentage of men in attendance, but none of them developed into church leaders. Here in L'viv, the Lord has blessed us with five men who were among the founding members of our church last summer. These men have backbone, are well balanced and easy to get along with, and want to live for their Savior and Lord. They believe that the Reformed tradition has much to offer, and they want to be part of a Reformed movement in this part of the country. I think they all show great potential as future elders or deacons for our church in L'viv. Lord willing, our church will be



The reception of the first members of the L'viv church

the "Antioch" for many other Presbyterian churches in this part of the country. We pray, though, for these men's wives, not all of whom support our vision and the paths their husbands have chosen.

Stepan (Steven) is tall and strong. He loves to pick our (heavy) son Christian up and toss him high in the air—much to Christian's delight. The father of two, Stepan is often busy making toys, hideouts, sleds, or swings for his kids and their cousins on the big plot of land in the village that they own and share with his family. When I first met Stepan—through his friend Andriy, the leader of their small group from the village—he and his wife had been separated since shortly after their marriage. In large part because of the teaching and examples of our missionary team, his attitude toward marriage and his wife changed, and their family was reunited after ten years!

Stepan has shown his commitment

to our church by his determination to attend services regularly, even though he has to travel a ways to get to the center of L'viv on a Sunday morning. This past March, when we had a big snowfall, Stepan took a 6:30 a.m. train that brought him to L'viv two hours before our service started! He remains very thankful for the role our church has played in his family's life and showers us with gifts in the form of fruit, pickled vegetables, pig fat, birch tree juice, and other produce from their land. His family has hosted ours on a few occasions and once even had the whole congregation over for a summer picnic and barbecue. His wife, Sofia, is very friendly and does attend our Sunday church service from time to time along with their children.

At the same time, everything is not as rosy as it may seem. Sofia gets upset when involvement in our church keeps Stepan from doing work that is needed in

and around their home. She is resistant to their twelve-year-old son's attending our Sunday school, and Stepan often comes to our services alone. She insisted that her husband go to confession at their local church during "Holy Week," but Stepan responded that he would attend our Easter services. While Sofia is friendly to us, she wants her husband and children to be in the Greek Catholic Church. That is her family's centuries-long tradition, and she does not see the need for change.

Sashko, a good friend of Stepan, is in his mid-twenties. He is very bright, but also quite down-to-earth. When preparing for marriage in the Greek Catholic Church, Sashko requested that he and his bride-to-be, Solomia, have informal marriage counseling with me and Anya. We had them over to our home many times, but never talked as couples about the obvious problem of church affiliation.

Solomia is from a very conservative, patriotic Ukrainian family that is deeply committed to the Greek Catholic Church. While she sees significant problems in her church, and has come to faith through outside teaching, Solomia very much wants her family to be in this church. She often attends our services along with Sashko and is very friendly and conversational; her sister has also visited us on Sunday mornings along with her little daughter. Yet during our services, Solomia looks cross and surly. She doesn't participate in singing hymns—even those that are from the Greek Catholic tradition. She didn't want Sashko to sign his name on the documents that are required for our church's registration with the government. In small, underhanded ways, she resists her husband's being an active member of our congregation. She has never told her father that she is married to a member of a Protestant church. Sashko and Solomia would like to have children soon. That will make the question of church

affiliation even more acute and divisive.

Also from the village near L'viv is Ihor. Our informal church leadership group meets at his home on a hill overlooking the village and some wide, open fields. Reaching Ihor's little home is quite a challenge after a foot or more of snowfall! The road is bad in the summer, but almost nonnegotiable when it's muddy or snowy—as it often is! Ihor, earnest and serious, loves to take books from our church library, which he reads and rereads at home. During the colder months, he has much spare time, as he works only every third day overseeing an industrial chicken coop.

He is married to Khrystyia, who is from a conservative village in the Carpathian Mountains. When I first raised the question of church membership with Ihor, he assured me that Khrystyia and their two children will never join our church because of the great social and familial pressure to remain Greek Catholic. The family often attends our worship services. Both children enjoy Sunday school—so much so, that the four-year-old boy cries when it's time to leave! Khrystyia attends our adult Sunday school class, and she listens attentively. To tell the truth, Khrystyia's eyes are always wide open, and one can see that she is listening and taking in every word! During discussion times, she has openly criticized her own religious upbringing and some of the

cultural entrapments of her society. She has started gently challenging others in her community about their beliefs. As a matter of fact, Ihor recently requested that I talk to her about membership in our church! I encouraged him to do so himself, but will follow up soon to hear where she stands. I believe that the Lord has given Khrystyia the precious gift of true faith, a faith that makes her willing to stand out among her friends and family as a true follower of Jesus Christ!

We pray for the Lord to continue working in the hearts of these three women. We also thank him for the wife of another one of our potential church leaders. She is a church member herself and is deeply committed to our congregation. She and her husband want to have their three children baptized in our church soon! And we pray that our heavenly Father will provide a godly wife from among the single girls in our church to Andriy, the spiritual leader of the group from the village. We thank God for bringing these great men into our church, and we pray that their wives and children—and broader family members—will become part of the Spirit's movement in L'viv and western Ukraine!

OP missionary Heero E. C. Hacquebord labors with the MTW (PCA) team in L'viv, Ukraine, as a church-planting evangelist.



The congregation in L'viv

MTIOPC Meeting in Wheaton

PATRICIA E. CLAWSON

Stephen Doe has been the pastor of four Orthodox Presbyterian churches and currently serves as regional home missionary for the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic. With all his experience, you might think he wouldn't benefit from taking a course on the Form of Government from the Ministerial Training Institute of the OPC. You would be wrong! Doe learned new things and hopes to use them to help the sessions of new churches "start out right."

Doe was one of twenty-seven men who attended the final leg of the Spring 2013 term of MTIOPC in May—three days of Intensive Training with instructors at Bethel Presbyterian Church in Wheaton, Illinois. Doe was joined by seasoned pastors, new OP pastors, some who are under care of a presbytery in preparation for ministry, ruling elders, men who are licensed to preach, church planters, and ministerial interns. The Intensive Training concluded three months of reading about five hundred pages per course and writing response papers.

Doe, who was taking his fifth course, appreciates the MTIOPC program. "The genius of MTI is that we're maintaining, expanding, and building that sense that we are a church with a history and an understanding of who we are."

FORM OF GOVERNMENT

In the Form of Government course, Doe appreciated how instructor Alan Strange showed biblical principles in *Robert's Rules of Order*, such as showing esteem to one another and having good decorum.

Licentiate Mark Soud, who is an intern from Calvin OPC in Phoenix, Arizona, took the Form of Government



Alan Strange teaching Form of Government

course to help him prepare for future ordination exams and to learn how to be a better parliamentarian. Soud appreciated how Mr. Strange encouraged the men to take their calling seriously, asking them, "Are we self-consciously Presbyterian?"

James Berry, a ruling elder at Reformation OPC in Morgantown, West Virginia, took Form of Government for that reason: "We need to recognize that God has called both the minister and the ruling elder to govern his church, and we need to take this office seriously. The class helped define what my role is as an elder and that will help me in the local congregation and in the broader church."

OPC HISTORY

Although Glenn Ferrell, pastor of First OPC in San Francisco, California, had read a great deal about OP history before joining the OPC in 2005, he learned far more through the OPC History course, taught by OPC historian John Muether. "As someone coming from

outside the OPC and relatively new to the denomination, it's important for me to understand the history of the OPC. I think the history explains the current dynamic of the denomination."

Ferrell believes that the course will "inform my pastoral ministry and my preaching. It is very easy for a pastor to fall into a rut and only read in preparation for preaching, but we need the discipline of reading things that we might not read on our own." Ferrell adds: "This is such a great resource in the OPC, and more ministers need to take advantage of it, regardless of their experience and age."

The OPC History course also helped Eugene McKinnon, who is a new member of Grace OPC in Vienna, Virginia, and recently came under care of the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic. "I'm getting to know the denomination, its culture, people, and its beliefs. It's like falling in love, getting to know my new family," said McKinnon. "It helps a potential candidate learn why the OPC is what it is."

WESTMINSTER STANDARDS

Jonathan Moersch, a church planter at Trinity Presbyterian Church in Capistrano Beach, California, also is new to the OPC. He took the Westminster Standards course to refresh his knowledge of the OP standards after coming from the URCNA with its Three Forms of Unity. Moersch wanted to take a course taught by Chad Van Dixhoorn, who was often quoted at his seminary for his important work on the Westminster Assembly. Moersch hopes to pass on this teaching to his congregation, most of whom do not have a Presbyterian background.

Jeremy Boothby, an intern under care at Christ Covenant Presbyterian Church in Amarillo, Texas, didn't grow up in Reformed circles, so he took Westminster Standards to gain a better understanding of the OPC's Confession and Creeds and to prepare for his presbytery's theology exam. The class taught him "what is and isn't confessional. I think these MTI courses are helpful in continuing to exercise our minds concerning the depths of Scripture," said Boothby. "Since our methodology ought to come out of our theology, the MTI courses are also very helpful in how the church ought to be run with Christ as its head."

The course and its instructor also caught the attention of longtime pastor Matthew Judd of Memorial OPC in Rochester, New York. He appreciated the



Chad Van Dixhoorn teaching Westminster Standards

discipline of formal studies. "I think for men who are pursuing pastoral ministry, this would be an excellent class to have under their belt," said Judd. "They will have a special emphasis that they won't get in their seminary class."

ECCLESIOLOGY

Since OP church planter Brandon Wilkins started to build up Christ Covenant Presbyterian Church in Crystal Lake, Illinois, the former Reformed Baptist had lots of questions about ecclesiology. "This gave me a good opportunity to get some answers," he said. "This also provides a good blueprint for what we're hoping to establish in Crystal Lake. Since it's a class taught by a minister for ministers, there is a greater awareness of practicality and fleshing things out. It's not theoretical."

Licentiate Robert Mossotti of the Presbytery of the Southwest appreciated instructor Craig Troxel. "He brought

some specialized research and thoughts on these questions that shortened the time it would have taken me to research them myself."

Both men were thankful they took an MTIOPC class. "For ministers in the OPC, MTI is especially important because it is geared to OP ministry, whereas seminary is a more general preparation for ministry," said Mossotti. "It's like seminary for free, and the fellowship is also definitely worth the time and effort in traveling [to Intensive Training]." Wilkins agrees: "[MTI] is a great time of refreshment and ministry. It gives us a reminder of why we're in ministry and an opportunity to grow in important doctrines."

Look in October for announcements of the 2014 classes of MTIOPC on our website: opc.org/cce/MTI.html. If you want to be on the e-mail list announcing new classes, please send your request to Pat Clawson at ccesec@opc.org.

Congratulations

The Shorter Catechism has been recited by:

- Timothy Tan (Grace OPC in Vienna, Va.)

The Children's Catechism has been recited by:

- Andrew Patrick Coulbourne (Columbia Presbyterian Church in Columbia, Md.)
- Grace Gunnet (Redeemer OPC in Danville, Pa.)
- Jeanne-Marie du Plessis (Grace OPC in Vienna, Va.)

Out of the Mouth ...

Five-year-old Jennifer asked, "Mommy, we have a heavenly Father, so why don't we have a heavenly Mother?" Without hesitating, her three-year-old sister, Jodie, explained: "Because, don't you know, silly, we're not going to have to eat in heaven!"

—Karen LaFear
Huntington, W.Va.

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

The Ambassador Program

DONALD J. DUFF

The apostle Paul writes that “we are *ambassadors* for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God” (2 Cor. 5:20 NASB). An ambassador is someone who acts and speaks not only on behalf of, but also in place of, the one from whom he has received his commission. All those who proclaim the gospel act as ambassadors on behalf of Christ in calling upon men, in Christ’s name, to repent of their sins and to be reconciled to God.

The General Assembly’s Committee on Coordination (COC) is making use of the concept of ambassadors. The committee has launched the OPC Worldwide Outreach Ambassador Program. But to understand our Ambassador Program, first we have to understand how we in the OPC finance our denominational missions and educational ministries.

The General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church has an annual budget for what we call Worldwide Outreach (WWO), which funds the work of the Committee on Christian Education, the Committee on Foreign Missions, and the Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension (the “program committees”). This helps the church maximize the use of her resources in the fulfillment of her task of proclaiming the gospel.

While there are practical reasons for this combined budget, there is an important biblical concept behind it. While there are different aspects of the proclamation of the gospel to the world, they are all part of the one Great Commission of the church. We have a unified message, and as a church we are unified in proclaiming it.

The regulations concerning the Worldwide Outreach budget are found in *Instrument E* of the *Instruments of the General Assembly*. This instrument sets up the COC to oversee the operation of the combined budget. When I was the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, the auditors would come to my office each year and ask for a copy of *Instrument E*. They were aware that the OPC has a somewhat unique way of operation, which they needed to understand for their audit.

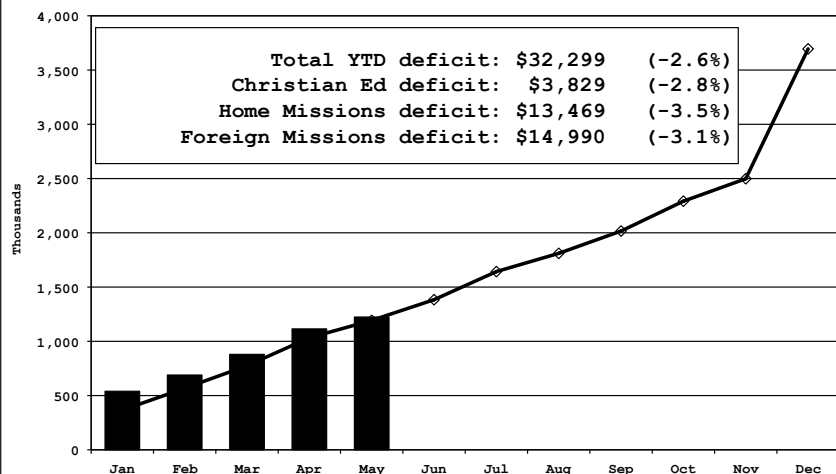
I have always wanted to give a quiz on *Instrument E* at the General Assembly. I wonder how many commissioners would do well on such a quiz. I am sure that many new ministers and congregations are not well informed as to how the OPC seeks to carry out the Great Commission on a denominational level. This is why the COC is asking an individual in each presbytery to be an ambassador for the committee. These Worldwide Outreach ambassadors will be meeting in January

of each year with the general secretaries of the WWO program committees and the director of finance and planned giving. At this meeting, the ambassadors will be updated on all aspects of the Worldwide Outreach program.

Our intention is to have these WWO ambassadors take this information back to their presbyteries to inform ministers and elders, to encourage them, and to promote the ongoing work of Worldwide Outreach. These ambassadors will also contact churches in their presbytery to solicit their participation in the financial support of the ministries of the program committees. The COC is very grateful for the men who have agreed to give of their time to be WWO ambassadors in support of the proclamation of the gospel by the OPC in her outreach to the nation and the world.

The author, a retired minister in the OPC, is a member of the Committee on Coordination.

**Worldwide Outreach Year-to-Date
2013 Receipts with 2013 Goal**



WORLDWIDE OUTREACH

July

1. **Heero and Anya Hacquebord**, L'viv, Ukraine. Pray for students and leaders at this week's English Bible camp. / **Doug and Kristi Bylsma**, Beamsville, Ontario. Pray that God would raise up an elder at Living Hope Presbyterian Church. / Pray for safe travels for short-term missions coordinator **David Nakhla** and short-term missionaries.
2. **Ken and Cressid Golden**, Davenport, Iowa. Pray for more core families at Sovereign Grace OPC. / **Ben and Melanie Westerveld**, Quebec, Canada. Pray for the people assisting in this month's English Bible camps. / Pray for **Danny Olinger**, Christian Education general secretary, as he edits *New Horizons*.
3. Missionary associate **Debra Blair**, Quebec, Canada. Pray for the kids and teens attending three English Bible camps this month. / Home Missions general secretary **John Shaw**. / Chaplains **Earl (and Susan) Vanderhoff**, **Paul (and Mary) Berghaus**, **C. Phillip (and Melanie) Hollstein III**, and **Chris (and Virginia) Wisdom**.
4. **John and Wenny Ro**, Chicago, Ill. (downtown). Pray that God would bless Gospel Life Presbyterian Church's mid-week Bible studies. / **Ethiopian Reformed Presbyterian Church**. Pray for the fellowship and commitment of new believers. / **Jeff (and Dawn) Scott**, yearlong intern at Covenant Grace Presbyterian Church in Roseburg, Ore.
5. **Cal and Edie Cummings**, Sendai, Japan. Pray that the Lord would use them to reach students with the message of salvation. / **Sacha and Martina Walicord**, Mount Vernon, Ohio. Pray that visitors to Knox Presbyterian Church will stay. / **Yevgeni Koh**, yearlong intern at Bonita OPC in Bonita, Calif.
6. **Everett and Kimberly Henes**, Hillsdale, Mich. Pray that new families will be knit into the life of Hillsdale OPC. / Missionary associates **Adam and Sarah Thompson**, Sendai, Japan. / **Caleb (and Erika) Smith**, yearlong intern at Bethel Presbyterian Church in Wheaton, Ill.
7. Affiliated missionaries **Craig and Ree Coulbourne**, Urayasu, Japan. Pray for spiritual and numerical growth at Shin Urayasu Grace Church. / **Tim and Joanne Beauchamp**, Bridgton, Maine. Pray for unity and fellowship at Pleasant Mountain Presbyterian Church. / Pray for the effective training of **summer interns** at our churches.
8. **Daniel and Jill McManigal**, Seattle, Wash. Pray that God would send a musical accompanist to Hope OPC. / **Kaz and Katie Yaegashi**, Yamagata, Japan. Pray that God would bring children from the area to Sunday school and worship. / **Andrew (and Elizabeth) Barshinger**, yearlong intern at Faith OPC in Elmer, N.J.
9. Affiliated missionary **Linda Kerner**, Japan, prays for good rapport with her English students. / **Jeremiah and Elizabeth Montgomery**, State College, Pa. Pray that the congregation of Resurrection OPC will live and share the gospel. / **David (and Amanda) Franks**, yearlong intern at Covenant OPC in Orland Park, Ill.
10. **Brandon and Laurie Wilkins**, Crystal Lake, Ill. Pray for new growth at Christ Covenant Presbyterian Church. / Foreign Missions administrative assistant **Linda Posthuma** and secretary **Janet Birkmann**. / **David Landow**, yearlong intern at Emmanuel OPC in Wilmington, Del.
11. Pray for Foreign Missions general secretary **Mark Bube** as he reports to the Executive Committee, meeting tomorrow. / **Kent and Laurie Harding**, Doniphan, Mo. Pray for the ministry of Sovereign Grace Reformed Church. / **Shane (and Rachelle) Bennett**, yearlong intern at Knox OPC in Silver Spring, Md.
12. **Robert and Christy Arendale**, Houston, Tex. Pray that returning visitors to Cornerstone OPC will join the church. / Foreign Missions associate general secretary



Ben Snodgrass (pastor of Falls Presbyterian Church in Menomonee Falls, Wis.) is shown here teaching church leaders for the Mobile Theological Mentoring Corps in Madziabango, Malawi. (The Committee on Foreign Missions's Mobile Theological Mentoring Corps is officially working in Columbia, and seeking to develop opportunities for service in Kenya, Malawi, and Austria/Switzerland.) Please pray for the members of the Associate Presbyterian Church of Malawi as they serve Christ and grow in their knowledge of God's Word.

- Douglas Clawson**, Pray for the Executive Committee, meeting today. / **Jeremy Logan**, yearlong intern at Covenant Presbyterian Church in Mansfield, Ohio.
13. Pray for new missionary associate **Mary York**, Prague, Czech Republic, as she adjusts to life and ministry on the mission field. / **Jay and Andrea Bennett**, Neon, Ky. Pray that God would bless Neon Reformed Presbyterian Church's outreach efforts. / **Thomas (and Erin) Tkach**, yearlong intern at Calvary OPC in Glenside, Pa.
 14. **Carlos and Diana Cruz**, San Juan, P.R. Pray for the new members class at Iglesia Presbiteriana Reformada. / Affiliated missionaries **Jerry and Marilyn Famik**, Prague, Czech Republic. Pray for students and leaders at this week's evangelistic English camp. / Pray for the ongoing work of the **Psalter-Hymnal Committee**.
 15. **Woody and Laurie Lauer**, Numazu, Japan (on furlough). Pray for Woody as he speaks to the Presbytery of Ohio's summer youth camp. / **Jim and Tricia Stevenson**, Tulsa, Okla. Pray that God's elect will be brought to Providence OPC. / Pray for stated clerk **George Cottenden** as he notifies churches, presbyteries, and committees of the actions of the 80th General Assembly.
 16. **Bill and Sessie Welzien**, Key West, Fla. Pray that God would bless Keys Presbyterian Church with additional families. / Pray for **Mr. and Mrs. F.**, Asia, arriving in the U.S. today to begin a yearlong furlough. / **Jeremy (and Maricruz) Boothby**, yearlong intern at Christ Covenant Presbyterian Church in Amarillo, Tex.
 17. **Mr. and Mrs. M.**, Asia. Pray for Mr. M. as he takes on additional administrative and oversight responsibilities. / **Tom and Martha Albaugh**, Pittsburgh, Pa. Pray for those who attend Redeemer OPC Mission's outreach events. / **Andrew (and Jacqueline Ann) Minatelli**, summer intern at Spencer Mills OPC in Gowen, Mich.
 18. **Philip and Jenny Dharmawirya**, Philadelphia, Pa. Pray for spiritual growth among the children of Emmanuel Chapel (Indonesian). / **Ben and Heather Hopp**, Haiti. Pray for this summer's VBS programs and the teaching teams that will be assisting. / Summer interns: **Ben Gordon**, Grace OPC in Vienna, Va.; **Silverio (and Lisa) Gonzalez**, Redeemer OPC in Santa Maria, Calif.
 19. **Eric and Dianna Tuininga**, Mbale, Uganda. Pray for wisdom for local pastors as they shepherd their flocks. / Home Missions associate general secretary **Dick Gerber**. / Summer interns: **Jordon (and Gabrielle) Rossi**, Redemption OPC in Gainesville, Fla.; **Matthew (and Melinda) Cole**, Reformation OPC in Oviedo, Fla.
 20. **Brian and Sara Chang**, Cottonwood, Ariz. Ask the Lord to strengthen and establish Verde Valley Reformed Chapel. / **Bob and Martha Wright**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for health and safety for visitors coming to Karamoja to labor this summer. / Summer interns: **Michael (and Rachel) Borg**, Community OPC in Kalamazoo, Mich.; **Richard Chung**, Grace OPC in Wasilla, Alaska.
 21. Pray for **Mark and Christine Weber**, Mbale, Uganda, as they prepare to move to Uganda and begin their labors. / **Chad and Katie Mullinix**, Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. Pray that Holy Trinity Presbyterian Church will grow in grace and the evangelism of unbelievers. / **Adrian (and Rachel) Crum**, summer intern at Branch of Hope OPC in Torrance, Calif.
 22. **Christopher and Della Chelпка**, Tucson, Ariz. Pray that God would bring local families to worship at Covenant OPC. / **David and Sunshine Okken**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray that God would guide and equip them for their ministry in Nakaale. / **Geoff (and Heather) Downey**, yearlong intern at Trinity OPC in Hatboro, Pa.
 23. Missionary associates **Erika Bulthuis, Leah Hopp, Emily Pihl**, and **Jesse Van Gorkom**, Nakaale, Uganda. / **Joseph and Carla Fowler**, Gastonia, N.C. Pray for the ministry of the Word at Reformation OPC. / Pray for the work of the OPC administrative staff: **Doug Watson, Jim Scott, Jan Gregson, Kathy Bube, Pat Clawson**, and **Char Tipton**.
 24. **Joshua and Jessica Lyon**, Carson, Calif. Pray that God would bless Grace OPC with additional families. / **Al and Laurie Tricarico**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for wisdom as the Mission interacts with people in an animistic culture. / **Justin (and Hannah) Rosser**, yearlong intern at Matthews OPC in Matthews, N.C.
 25. **James and Jenny Knox**, M.D. and R.N., Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for completion of the new clinic. / **Andrew and Billie Moody**, San Antonio, Tex. Pray that visitors to San Antonio Reformed Church will desire to join in communicant fellowship. / **Joseph Johnson**, summer intern at Reformation Fellowship OPC in Roseville, Calif.
 26. **Stephen and Catalina Payson**, Mifflinburg, Pa. Pray that the congregation of Providence OPC will grow in spiritual maturity. / Missionary associates **Christopher and Chloe Verdick** and **Christi Zekveld**, Uganda. / **Adam (and Amanda) Phillips**, summer intern at Covenant OPC in Kennewick, Wash.
 27. Pray for **Mark and Jeni Richline**, Uruguay, as they continue their study of Spanish. / Pray for a smooth transition as **Jonathan and Kristin Moersch** move closer to Trinity Presbyterian Church in Capistrano Beach, Calif. / **Barry Traver**, OPC website technical associate.
 28. **Kim and Barbara Kuhfuss**, Eau Claire, Wis. Pray for visitors to come to Covenant Presbyterian Church. / **Brian and Dorothy Wingard**, South Africa. Thank God for the open door to teach the Reformed faith. / **Joshua (and Bethanne) Schendel**, summer intern at Redeemer Presbyterian Church in Ada, Mich.
 29. **The Church in the Horn of Africa**. Pray for the leaders in the church. / Home Missions staff administrator **Sean Gregg**. / **Jeffrey (and Maryfrances) Carter**, summer intern at Providence OPC in Mantua, N.J.
 30. **Todd and Julie Wagenmaker**, St. Louis, Mo. Pray for Gateway OPC's discipleship and ministry. / Pray for our **missionary associates in Asia** in their summer ministry activities and travels. / Pray for wisdom during the search for a new executive director at **Great Commission Publications**.
 31. Pray for the day-to-day needs of retired missionaries **Betty Andrews, Greet Rietkerk, Young and Mary Lou Son**, and **Fumi Uomoto**. / **Mark and Michele Winder**, Collierville, Tenn. Pray for a new facility for Wolf River Presbyterian Church. / **David Haney**, director of finance and planned giving for the Committee on Coordination.

Serving Tables Far from Home

JAMIE DEAN

Nearly five years ago, I made my first trip to Africa as a journalist. I traveled far into the bush of South Sudan to report on a Christian group helping refugees resettle in their homeland, decades after a civil war had forced them into exile.

My hosts were not affiliated with the OPC, but one afternoon I heard two of the men discussing the dire need for more wells in an area with very little water. They were perplexed about logistics, but one had an idea for where to get advice: “We should call Bob Wright.”

I had to ask: “Do you mean Bob Wright from the OPC?” The man replied: “Yeah, everybody knows Bob.”

While everyone in East Africa may not know missionary deacon Bob Wright, his work in Uganda is well known in many quarters. Wright primarily serves in the remote region of Karamoja, where OP missionary evangelists are working to preach the gospel and establish an indigenous church.

But Wright has also used his knowledge of mechanics, well digging, solar electricity, and farming to help other Christian groups and local officials as needs arise. In Karamoja, he’s dug wells in waterless areas and started a farming project that allows local residents to earn income. He serves with fellow missionary deacon Jim Knox, a medical doctor who heads a clinic in this impoverished region that has scant medical care.

Evangelist David Okken says the work of both men is a great service: “It is wonderful to be able to proclaim the love of Christ, knowing that the Mission has been able to show that love in such tangible ways.”

Okken says Wright’s work is also critical to maintaining a missionary compound in a primitive region, and allows him to focus on his work as an evangelist: “I can’t imagine life on the field without him.”

Over the past decade, as the OPC has expanded its work in Uganda and opened a new field in Haiti, a logistical reality has become clear: sometimes third-world missions need first-rate deacons.

The need for such help led to Wright and Knox becoming our first two missionary deacons, and it’s opened the door for more workers. The Committee on Foreign Missions has announced that it plans to send a new missionary deacon to Uganda this year. Mark Weber, a deacon at Pilgrim OPC in Raleigh, N.C., has committed himself to join the OP Uganda Mission in Mbale, along with his wife, Christine, and their four sons (ages 11 to 3).

Weber’s appointment marks a new development in OP foreign missions. For the first time, the Committee on Diaconal Ministries (CDM) will provide the financial support to send a missionary deacon and his family to the field.

In the past, the Committee on Foreign Missions has provided financial support to missionary deacons. Now, while Weber will work under their oversight, the denominational diaconal committee will provide his financial package.

Bob Wright (left) drilling a well with nephew Justin Rosenbaum and key employee Tomas



CDM president Lendall Smith says the diaconal committee hopes the funds will help take some of the burdens off the evangelistic work in Uganda: “We want to enhance the ministry of the Word, so the gospel will spread and the church will grow.”

Foreign Missions general secretary Mark Bube says that’s the biblical principle that drives diaconal ministry in the U.S. and abroad. In Acts 6, the apostles instructed the church to appoint deacons so that they could focus on the ministry of the Word and prayer.

That ministry includes teaching biblical principles of labor and Christian stewardship, but the evangelists working

in Karamoja also address the deeper problems of spiritual poverty. (Those problems also find expression in widespread polygamy and animism.) The ministers emphasize that man's deepest need is for reconciliation with God through Christ.

To that end, they rely on missionary deacons to help manage the many requests for aid that arise. In a report from the field in Karamoja, missionary evangelist Al Tricarico gave examples of the kinds of requests he had personally received: large loans, cash and labor for a new medical clinic, and enough grain to feed the local villages in case of a drought.

signal, Wright reflected on the day: "I love being in a really tight spot and figuring out how to get out of it. It was fun."

Patience and the ability to solve problems are important qualities for deacons considering service on the mission field. Wright works with locals to solve common problems like stealing and lying, and teaches his workers about honesty and a Christian work ethic. Being in the community on a daily basis provides lots of opportunities to teach by example. He says, "Every interaction you have is an opportunity to bear out the truth of the gospel in the way we interact with each other."

Dr. Knox giving a baby a shot



Dr. Knox finds similar opportunities in the clinic. In a March prayer letter, he wrote about a handful of situations he had encountered in the last few days. One woman literally crawled into the clinic with tuberculosis of the spine. Another woman had a large, painful mass

under her tongue. A mother brought in a three-month-old baby with a fatal chromosomal abnormality called Trisomy 18.

"And yet, in the midst of all these difficulties and sad cases, the Lord has been blessing us so much," Knox wrote. "We have had some really wonderful experiences, seeing how the Lord cares for us on a day-to-day basis."

Despite the struggles, Bube says he's amazed at the changes he's seen in the region since the Mission began working there nearly thirteen years ago. "Some people have grown wonderfully in grace," he says. "We wish there were more, but we're seeing some come along."

The Committee on Foreign Missions hopes soon to send a missionary deacon to Haiti as well, where mission-

ary evangelist Ben Hopp is laboring on his own. (The CDM says it will also fund this position.) Hopp says teaching church leaders and potential deacons about financial accountability and stewardship is a challenge.

For example, when local church leaders headed an effort to build three houses for widows (with funds from the CDM), the project took five years and ran three times over budget. Thankfully, a handful of widows now live in each home, but the experience shows there's much training still to be done.

As the only evangelist on the field, Hopp has limited capacity for such training. "Because of time constraints, I really only have the ability to deal with the need, instead of taking the time to deal with some of the underlying issues," he says. "The reality of poverty in Haiti means this aspect of the ministry is very pressing and takes a lot of time and energy. A trained deacon would be of great service to the church in Haiti and the OPC Haiti Mission."

Bube says that, while the opportunities for more missionary deacons likely will grow slowly, he would like to see more OP deacons consider such service. The official job description for the Mbale candidate called for a man with a "warm heart and tough hide." Bube says the position also calls for men with wisdom, patience, and a love for people as those made in the image of God.

Back in Karamoja, Wright says he also hopes more men will aspire to the position. He dreams about a training program for missionary deacons, where men could come to Uganda and train for foreign service. "They could come here and learn how to drive in the mud, and take a transmission out of a car, and fix a water system," he says.

Whatever unfolds, Wright hopes the efforts will continue to expand. "I'd love to see us looking to the future," he says. "I think there are a lot of possibilities."

The author is a member of Matthews OPC in Matthews, N.C., and news editor of World magazine.

Asking missionary deacons to help evaluate needs removes a burden from the evangelists, and it keeps local residents from connecting ministers with financial aid—a common problem in Africa.

I recently caught up with Wright after he had just finished a twelve-hour workday in Karamoja. The day included organizing his local work crew, delivering solar panels to a Korean farming project, and traveling to Mbale to pick up supplies, including propane, diesel fuel, a load of steel, and a supply of groceries. The trip home included two torrential rainstorms that found Wright using his equipment to pull other vehicles out of the muddy roads.

From the roof of his home in Karamoja, where he gets a better cell phone

Participants in Camden Bucey's ordination service: Dennis Disselkoe, Craig Troxel, Bucey, Neil Tolsma, Doug Clawson, Jim Cassidy



CAMDEN BUCEY ORDAINED

Camden M. Bucey was ordained as a minister and installed as the pastor of Hope Presbyterian Church in Grayslake, Illinois, on April 26, 2013, by the Presbytery of the Midwest. Camden graduated from Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia with an M.Div. in 2011 and is currently a Ph.D. candidate in historical and theological studies. He recently completed an internship at Bethel Presbyterian Church in Wheaton, Illinois.

The Rev. Douglas B. Clawson, associate general secretary for the Committee on Foreign Missions, preached a sermon from Ezekiel 44 entitled “Christ’s Abiding Presence.” The Rev. Cornelius Tolsma, retired OP minister, gave the charge to the congregation. The Rev. Dr. A. Craig Troxel, pastor of Bethel Church in Wheaton, gave the charge to Camden. Also participating in the service were the Rev. Dr. Dennis L. Disselkoe and the Rev. James J. Cassidy.

In addition to serving as pastor of Hope OPC, Camden will continue his role as president of Reformed Forum, an organization that produces Reformed theological resources.

Camden and his wife, Erica, have a son, Derek.

UPDATE

Ministers

- On May 4, the Presbytery of Philadelphia permitted **Charles D. Abbate** to demit the ministry.
- On May 4, the Presbytery of Philadelphia erased **Ross H. Ritter** from the roll of ministerial members, as he had become a minister in the PCA.

REVIEWS

Kingdoms Apart: Engaging the Two Kingdoms Perspective, edited by **Ryan C. McIlhenny**. Published by

P&R, 2012. Paperback, 352 pages, list price \$24.99. Reviewed by OP pastor James J. Cassidy.

In the midst of the



current debate about two-kingdom theology (2KT), this book comes as a welcomed counterpoint. If we were to set up a spectrum of the views in the Reformed world on the relation between Christ and culture, 2KT would be on one end and “neo-Calvinism” on the other. This book seeks to defend that other end.

Briefly, the book is a compilation of articles written by various pastors and theologians who critique 2KT and commend neo-Calvinism. The editor, Ryan McIlhenny, does a fine job of outlining the basic tenets of neo-Calvinism. The spirit of the book is that we should understand creation to be “judged and redeemed” rather than “Two Kingdoms in tension or conflict” (p. xi). This introduction is followed by a section on 2KT in the history of theology, along with other studies that are theological and exegetical in nature. All told, the reader is left with a richer understanding of neo-Calvinism, despite the fact that the articles seem to disagree at points (e.g., was Kuyper a 1K or 2K proponent?).

While reading this book, I have often found myself both cheering and jeering, often within the space of the same paragraph. On the one hand, the book points up some key weaknesses in 2KT. I do believe that 2KT—at least in some of the writings of its proponents—allows for the unbeliever to think rightly without the aid of special revelation and thus autonomously. On the other hand, the book did not convince me of the neo-Calvinist thesis that it is a moral imperative for Christians to renew nature (p. xxiv). If Van Til is correct that “the regeneration of all things must now be a gift before it can become a task,” I am unsure how it is part and parcel of the church’s given task to redeem culture. That it is a biblical mandate is a thesis that I believe still remains unproved. And if it is not proved from Scripture, it runs the risk of binding the conscience of the believer with the traditions of men, rather than the commandments of God.

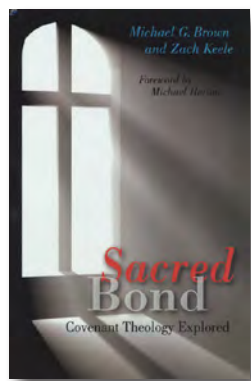
It is quite telling to me that, while Van Til does make several cameo appear-

ances in the volume, Vos is apparently absent. Furthermore, Kline barely makes it in at all, with only a single reference. In my opinion, these three men, when read properly, provide us with both the epistemological and the biblical-theological resources needed to navigate the difficult issues of Christ and culture, church and state, and special and general revelation.

The book, my reservations notwithstanding, is one I would heartily recommend for anyone who is interested in the current discussions about 2KT. This volume sets forth a robust case against 2KT and for neo-Calvinism.

* * *

***Sacred Bond: Covenant Theology Explored*, by Michael G. Brown and Zach Keele. Published by Reformed Fellowship, 2012. Paperback, 168 pages, list price \$12.00. Reviewed by OP pastor L. Charles Jackson.**



This short book explains the covenant theology of the Scriptures. The authors draw on a series of handy illustrations, which spark the reader's

imagination. They make use of helpful charts that reinforce what they have taught.

The authors use a wide variety of sources, but they do so without slowing down the book's pace as an accessible, introductory book. It is full of good information, but not encumbered with overly technical language. The first few chapters are especially helpful to someone who is interested in learning about covenant theology or who has questions about the subject.

Each chapter concludes with questions for further reflection, which makes the study useful in a classroom setting for church or small groups. Overall, the book is helpful as a discussion guide, but this

reviewer has a few reservations about giving it to someone who has no knowledge of covenant theology.

One such reservation relates to the confused chapter on what the authors call the "common grace covenant." I say "confused" because they refer to it sometimes as the covenant with Noah and at other times as the common grace covenant. Also, although they present a chart on p. 58 that includes the covenant with Noah as part of the covenant of grace, on p. 74 they refer to the covenant with Noah as a "non-redemptive covenant." This is a tricky area, and even Geerhardus Vos expresses the tension inherent to this period of redemption (*Biblical Theology*, p. 45).

Furthermore, the chapter on the covenant with Noah was less than half as long as the other chapters, and far less reflective. It feels as if there is a desire to divide God's rule over creation into categories that reflect some of the recent developments of what is called two kingdoms theology. This leaves the reader wondering if the covenant with Noah is redemptive (as in the Westminster Confession of Faith, 7.5–6).

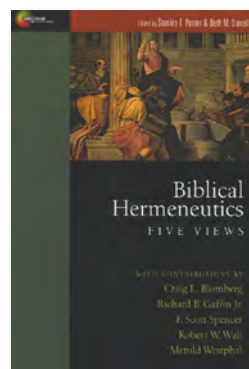
Also troubling were the authors' arguments for something of a "republication" understanding of the covenant with Moses. The reader is left wondering whether all the biblical covenants are administrations of the covenant of grace and thus fundamentally gracious (as in WCF 7.5) or whether they are not all gracious (as the authors seem to indicate at times). This criticism does not question the authors' orthodoxy on this point—just their lack of clarity. They are at variance with the WCF at points, but, as they point out, there have been many Reformed thinkers whose ideas are reflected in their study.

As an attempt to bring consensus among seventeenth-century Reformed theologians, the WCF provides a confessional framework for understanding the gracious, redemptive, and perpetual character of all the covenants included in the covenant of grace—thus, essential continuity and grace. This, however, does not eliminate the complexity of reconciling issues related to eschatology, typology,

and other important questions surrounding each epoch of redemptive history. To this extent, Brown and Keele do a great job of continuing a conversation on this important topic, and for that reason I recommend getting a copy of their book.

* * *

Biblical Hermeneutics: Five Views, with contributions by Craig L. Blomberg, Richard B. Gaffin, Jr., F. Scott Spencer, Robert W. Wall, and Merold Westphal, edited by Stanley E. Porter and Beth M. Stovell. Published by IVP Academic, 2012. Paperback, 224 pages, list price \$20.00. Reviewed by OP professor William D. Dennison.



Has it not been said that evangelical theology in the post-Enlightenment era, with its emphasis on cultural relevance and the authenticity of human

experience, is only one step away from a critical-liberal view of Christianity? To what extent has evangelical hermeneutics adopted modern critical methods? Well, if there is any question about how much critical thinking has infiltrated evangelical scholarship, one needs to look no further than the essays that appear in this volume—the lone exception being the stellar presentations by Richard B. Gaffin, Jr.

This book provides "a forum for discussion . . . from several of the major advocates of these diverse models. Each contributor provides a position essay describing the traits that characterize his perspective and a response essay describing his position in comparison to the other approaches" (pp. 11–12). The format is beneficial and engaging, especially the responses. Also, the editors required each author to apply his particular hermeneutical position by interpreting Matthew 2:7–15, which quotes Hosea 11:1.

This enables the reader to investigate and evaluate each author's approach to the same text.

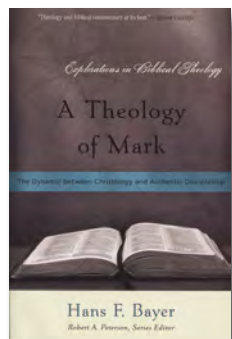
Five positions are represented in the volume. Craig Blomberg maintains that "the historical-critical/grammatical method seeks the *original* meaning of biblical authors as they wrote texts to specific audiences" (p. 145). Hence, he asserts that his method is the "necessary foundation" for all methods (p. 133). F. Scott Spencer's literary/postmodern view is a "literary-centered" interpretation of a hermeneutical triad: the biblical *text* given to real *readers* (original as well as throughout history) who respond to the *authors* who produce the text (p. 49). Merold Westphal admits that his philosophical/theological view "is not a method, a strategy, a procedure, much less a set of rules that tells us how to go about interpreting the Bible" (p. 84). Rather, his concern is "identifying" the presuppositions that underlie hermeneutical methods. Robert W. Wall's canonical view follows Brevard Childs, who understood that the canonical status of Scripture directs us to "the received, collected and interpreted material of the church and thus establishes the theological context in which the tradition continues to function authoritatively for today" (p. 112).

The redemptive-historical approach of Richard B. Gaffin, Jr., accents the historical interrelationship between the deed and word of God's redemption and revelation as recorded in the biblical canon centered in Christ. Both his presentation and his response stand out. His response to the other positions may be one of the most helpful and penetrating articulations of the authority of Scripture that we have witnessed in decades. By revealing that the other viewpoints are not based upon the absolute authority of the Word of God and the internal witness of the Holy Spirit, Gaffin exposes their frailty. He shows how they have not overcome the Enlightenment's view of the autonomy of human reason. Reminding us of J. Gresham Machen's defense of biblical orthodoxy against modernism, Gaffin defends the authority of the Word of God

in the context of evangelical assimilation into modernism. Every candidate and credentials committee in the OPC should make Gaffin's essay and response required reading for each ecclesiastical candidate.

* * *

***A Theology of Mark: The Dynamic between Christology and Authentic Discipleship*, by Hans F. Bayer. Published by P&R, 2012. Paperback, 240 pages, list price \$17.99. Reviewed by OP pastor Mark A. Collingridge.**



Biblical commentaries need more theological reflection. Interpreters should listen to the structures, themes, and theology of the Scriptures. Bayer's book

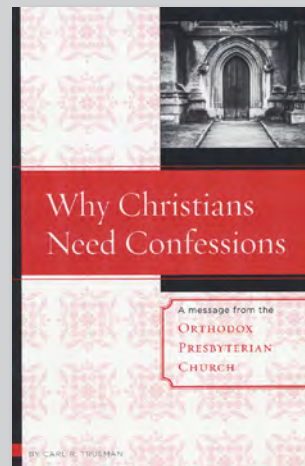
does just that and does it well.

Bayer weaves together two key ideas in the gospel of Mark: Jesus-perception and self-perception. "Who do people say that I am?" and "Who do you say that I am?" (Mark 8:27, 29) are the central questions, not simply for the gospel of Mark, but for all life and reality (p. 64). But to know Jesus, to perceive his true person and work, is to be immediately confronted with our own self-perception. In fact, this is true discipleship. Authentic discipleship isn't primarily about following moral codes and disciplines, but rather about exposure to Christ and his transforming power (pp. 24, 31, 51, etc.).

Mark sets before us the historical Jesus (a fact that cannot be taken for granted in this day and age), who is none other than God in the flesh, the glorious Son of Man. And yet Jesus is also the humble Servant of the Lord, who comes to offer himself as a sacrificial atonement for his people. Christ's resurrection legitimates the call of discipleship because this humble servant has been exalted to God's right hand and rules over all things.

Bayer shows us how the twelve

New Booklet Now Available



Why Christians Need Confessions, an 11-page booklet by Carl R. Trueman, is now available from the Committee on Christian Education. The author teaches at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia and serves as pastor of Cornerstone Presbyterian Church in Ambler, Pa.

This booklet is a reprint of his article in the February 2013 issue of *New Horizons* magazine, with an added bibliography.

To purchase this booklet, go to our website publications page, store.opc.org (to order using PayPal), or e-mail Pat Clawson at CCEsec@opc.org (to be invoiced). The price is \$0.75, or \$0.50 per copy for 10 or more. For U.S. addresses, there is a flat \$4.00 shipping charge for orders under \$35.00, so order several items together for free shipping.

disciples deal with this double crisis of God-perception and self-perception. They have their own ideas about God, the Messiah, and his kingdom—ideas forged by particular (Jewish) understandings of Scripture, the nation of Israel, and the Gentiles. They consequently have perceptions about themselves in relation to the Lord, his coming kingdom, and others.

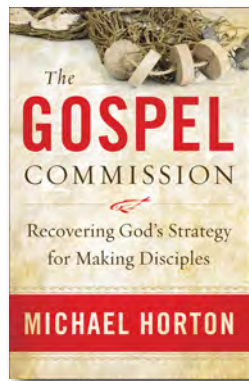
Bayer's discussion of blindness as a picture of the disciples in the gospel of Mark is excellent—especially the two-stage healing in Mark 8.

Bayer also discusses how knowing Jesus is the path to authentic discipleship because, in the end, discipleship is Christ-centered. A disciple is one who trusts and rests in Christ, receives his kingdom, and follows him. Bayer has an extended discussion of the characteristics of true discipleship and Christlikeness: unconditional surrender, trust, prayer, guarding one's heart, humility, forgiving others, standing against temptation, and willingness to confess Christ. The very things seen in Christ are then reproduced in his disciples as they are restored in the image of God in Christ and made into a new humanity under Christ.

This is a good book, with many insights into Marcan theology. It is not perfect (the explanation of the kingdom of God leaves much to be desired), but it doesn't claim to be. It's a theology of Mark, not *the* theology of Mark.

* * *

***The Gospel Commission: Recovering God's Strategy for Making Disciples*, by Michael Horton. Published by Baker Books, 2011. Hardback, 320 pages, list price \$19.99 (paperback scheduled for September 2012). Reviewed by OP pastor Brett A. McNeill.**



Newcomers are often drawn to a Reformed church when they reject Arminianism and embrace the “Five Points of Calvinism” (and desire preaching that goes beyond simple felt needs, and have a new appreciation for straight talk about sin and grace). In other words, people are usually attracted to Reformed churches by the Reformed doctrine of salvation.

Many who make the sojourn from American evangelicalism to Reformed Christianity think that that is where the differences end, and are surprised to discover that there is also a significant difference in our understanding of the church.

And so, as a young church planter, the questions I have repeatedly received from many who have made or are considering making this change are mostly about the doctrine of the church: “Why don't you have more programs?” “Why do I need to be a member of any church?” “Why aren't you more evangelistic?” “Why isn't there more of an emphasis on discipleship?” “Why aren't you more concerned with family values?”

While it is not intentional, these questions are asked in such a way as to prejudice the answer. They are filled with assumptions that must be corrected before going any further. Put another way, they assume that because Reformed churches don't “do” discipleship, evangelism, worship, and Christian education the way their former churches did, they aren't doing it at all. They assume that if the church does not organize a “March for Life” on the Capitol steps, then it is, in effect, promoting abortion.

Not only is it fair to challenge those assumptions, but it needs to be asked if the newer ways of doing evangelism (crusades, concerts, and special events), discipleship (lay-led small groups), Christian education (lay-led youth programs), and discipline (accountability partners) are helpful or could actually be harmful to the very goals they seek to accomplish. It needs to be asked if the church is called to organize political action committees focused on the transformation of social institutions.

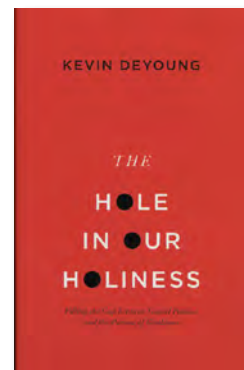
These are the very issues that Michael Horton seeks to address in the third volume of his series on challenges to Reformed theology. In *Christless Christianity*, he addressed the message of the gospel, and in *The Gospel Driven Life* he looked at the Christian life. Now, in *The Gospel Commission*, he turns his attention to the institu-

tion of the church and seeks to correct the centuries-long shift that has been taking place away from the God-ordained methods of evangelism and discipleship. Arguing for a recovery of the “Lost Tools of Ministry,” he focuses on the means of grace (Word and sacrament) as God's methods, not only for converting sinners, but also for building them up in godliness. What is foolishness to the world is manna for citizens of heaven.

Horton persuasively argues that when the means of grace are recovered and made central in the ministry of the church, evangelism and discipleship will be accomplished as God intended them to be. I recommend this book highly to anyone who asks the simple question, “What is God's program for evangelism and discipleship?”

* * *

***The Hole in Our Holiness: Filling the Gap between Gospel Passion and the Pursuit of Godliness*, by Kevin DeYoung. Published by Crossway, 2012. Hardback, 160 pages, list price \$17.99. Reviewed by OP pastor Charles R. Biggs.**



The Bible teaches us to strive for “the holiness without which no one will see the Lord” (Heb. 12:14). God's glory and our holiness are the goals of our

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salvation (Eph. 1:4–6). J. C. Ryle wrote in the nineteenth century: “We must be holy, because this is one grand end and purpose for which Christ came into the world. . . . Jesus is a complete Saviour.”

Pastor Kevin DeYoung, in this clear and pastorally concerned book, says that the problem in many congregations today is that “there is a gap between our love for the gospel and our love for godliness” (p. 21). We love to hear the gospel (as we should!), but we are not as earnest about pursuing holiness.

DeYoung faithfully guides the reader past the erroneous ideas about holiness. He addresses the grave dangers of legalism and antinomianism in the Christian life (pp. 33–47).

We are saved by grace alone through faith, but we are saved for, or unto, good works (Eph. 2:8–10; p. 25). Redemption is salvation from both the penalty and the power of sin. We are forgiven and set free to serve God obediently (pp. 63ff.). As our Lord Jesus said, “If you love me, keep my commandments.”

As a help for growing in holiness, DeYoung makes the important distinction between the indicatives and the imperatives in Scripture. The indicatives tell us who we are in Jesus Christ, and the imperatives are those commands that we obey in light of who we are in him (Col. 3:1–4).

In Christ, believers can seek “extraordinary holiness through ordinary means” through prayer, Bible reading, and hearing the Word of God preached, as well as in fellowship with other believers and regular attendance at the Lord’s Supper. These are the means that Christ has provided for believers to grow in holiness and be like him (pp. 133ff.).

DeYoung concludes by reminding us that we should seek to live a life of daily repentance. We always need God’s grace to grow, and when we fall short, we should seek the grace and mercy of Jesus, asking him to help us in our weakness (pp. 137ff.).

I commend the careful balance and pastoral tone of the writer and the proper focus on the triune God in the salvation

of his people. This book will be outstanding for Bible study groups and has a helpful study guide at the end. I would recommend this book highly for all Christians, and especially those who are new Christians or new to the Reformed faith, as a balanced and healthy guide to growing spiritually in Jesus.

DeYoung concludes: “God wants you to be holy. Through faith he already counts you holy in Christ. Now he intends to make you holy in Christ. . . . God saved you to sanctify you. . . . By his grace it can be yours” (p. 146).

* * *

***Grace Transforming*, by Phil Ryken. Published by Crossway, 2012. Paperback, 128 pages, list price \$12.99. Reviewed by OP pastor Joe Troutman.**

The concept of grace is alien to fallen human beings—even believers—so regular, ongoing instruction in, and reminders



of, God’s grace are essential for God’s people.

Philip Graham Ryken’s recent book, *Grace Transforming*, is a compilation of chapel messages he has given at

Wheaton College, where he serves as president. In it, he does a good job of telling the reader about God’s grace.

He begins by stating our desperate need for grace because of the depth of our depravity. Following his treatment of man’s sinful condition, Ryken uses Scripture to trace God’s grace from the past (God “saved us . . . not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began”—2 Tim. 1:9)

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to the present (“God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work”—2 Cor. 9:8) and into the future (“so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus”—Eph. 2:7).

Ryken does this to emphasize that grace is not simply a onetime blessing that God applies to a believer when he or she is regenerated by the Holy Spirit. God’s grace is as much a necessity for living life as a Christian as it is for becoming a Christian. He writes, “Grace is our present need as well as our past experience. The gospel is not just the way *into* the Christian life; it is also the way *on in* the Christian life” (p. 14).

In this way, Ryken shows that God’s grace is just as important for a believer’s sanctification as it is for a believer’s justification. “By the truth of his Word, by the power of answered prayer, by the nourishment of the sacraments, through the work of his Spirit—in short, by his sanctifying grace—he will enable you to live a godly and righteous life” (p. 59). Put simply, no part of our salvation takes place apart from the grace of God in Christ Jesus.

Grace Transforming is a brief, simple book, but it is not simplistic. Its simplicity serves to cut through the incessant chatter of works-righteousness that surrounds our Christian walk. Ryken reminds us that our sin is far worse than we care to acknowledge, but also that God’s grace is far more comprehensive than our minds can conceive. This pastor heartily recommends it for personal or group study.

Endorsed by **J. I. Packer**



Brilliantly illustrated, this rewrite of Bunyan's classic on the Christian life should **anchor gospel truth in many children's hearts**, especially if read aloud to them and talked over with them."



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