

NEW HORIZONS

in the ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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MARCH 2017

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New Horizons

in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church

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Articles previously published may be slightly edited.

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

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

Send inquiries, letters to the editor, and other correspondence to the editor at olinger.1@opc.org.

Send address changes to CCEsec@opc.org. Allow six weeks for address changes.

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

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

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

Periodicals postage is paid at Willow Grove, Pa., and at additional mailing offices. **Postmaster:** Send address changes to *New Horizons in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church*, 607 N. Easton Road, Bldg. E, Willow Grove, PA 19090-2539.

The 2017 Ambassadors' Conference of presbytery representatives was hosted on January 27 by Calvin OPC in Phoenix, Arizona, to hear reports on the work of Worldwide Outreach. Shown here are (from the left) David Haney, Steve McDaniel, Mark Sumpter, Ben Snodgrass, Larry Oldaker, Steve Igo, Archie Allison, Michael and Lynne Babcock (back table), Brad Hertzog, Bill Hobbs, David Nakhla, John Mallin, and Don Poundstone. These ambassadors then bring news and encouragement back to their presbyteries and churches.



ENGAGING THE SKEPTICS



BRADLEY M. PEPPPO // “Hi. My name is Brad. I’m about to be ordained as a Presbyterian minister, and I really enjoy talking with young, thinking unbelievers. Do you think it would be OK if I started attending your meetings?”

This was my introduction to the student Freethought group at

our local state university. I had approached two members of the group at their table in the student commons. One of them smiled and said, “We’re open to people of all viewpoints, and you’d be welcome to join us.” I thanked them, wondering what I had gotten myself into.

My plan to remain a quiet wallflower that first evening disintegrated in about five minutes. Among the dozen students in the room, I was an obvious misfit, especially after introductions were made and I explained my purpose for being there. My presence naturally directed the discussion toward the rationality of theism and the Christian faith. And being the only Christian there, I did a great deal more of the talking than I had intended. The conversation was intense and rowdy at times, but remained surprisingly friendly.

After the meeting was over, one member sincerely thanked me for coming. “This is so much better,” he said, “than sitting

around like we usually do and arguing against what imaginary Christians would say.” He encouraged me to return.

And so I did return, most weeks, for the rest of that year. Each week, one of the members would give a presentation on a different topic: anything from gender theory to alternative medicine to evolutionary biology. During these meetings, I would typically listen quietly—unless they asked me for my perspective as a Christian, which they did from time to time.



OP pastors Brad Peppo (right) and Matthew Patton (left) discussing the historical Jesus with podcast producer

Most weeks following the meeting, however, a good portion of the group would go out to a restaurant. They invited me to join them. In an environment where my co-opting of their organized meeting wasn’t a concern, I felt more freedom to be more assertive in challenging their views. They responded in kind. This more relaxed atmosphere also provided an opportunity to get to know the students on a much more personal level. I began to learn more about their backgrounds, their views on all sorts of issues, and even about some of their deep personal struggles. These after-gatherings turned out to be the most productive parts of our interaction.

When word got out that there was a Christian minister in the area interested in engaging with skeptics, members of other groups began to contact me. A meeting with a local atheist activist turned into a regular monthly gathering of Christians and skeptics, usually around a campfire at my

house. Sometimes I would begin with a presentation of the gospel and then address questions and objections. At other times, a specific issue was selected in advance, which we came prepared to discuss. These meetings too proved to be occasions for productive interaction.

An attendee at one of my campfires was involved in a local skeptic podcast. He invited me to appear as a guest on the program, in which we discussed the transcendental argument for the existence of God and, on a later episode, whether Christianity was good for the world. The producers of the podcast were also members of another local Freethought group, which eventually invited me to their meetings as well. Contact with different members of these groups has continued, if somewhat sporadically, over the last few years. Most recently, I had an opportunity to be interviewed for an extensive audio documentary on the historical Jesus, which is scheduled to air on our local NPR station.

So, what have I learned from my involvement with the skeptic community? There have certainly been surprises. From the very beginning, I have been impressed by how genuinely appreciative these folks are to have Christians approach them for discussion. Unlike the majority of the rest of population, which does not want to be pried away from their cable television for any reason, these folks are eager to talk

about the claims of Christ. I've not yet engaged with a group by whom I've not been warmly welcomed, and I've always been struck by how the conversations, however zealous or emphatic, have always remained civil and productive.

Another surprise for me has been the diversity within the skeptic community; its members do not easily fit into any one box. They come from many different backgrounds: some were raised in homes with no religious upbringing at all, several have left cults, and a number have abandoned orthodox Christianity. They represent a surprising variety of ideologies: anarchists, socialists, and even an occasional conservative Republican. They can also be unexpectedly diverse in the consistency of their skepticism. Not all are thoroughgoing materialists, a small number have significant doubts about Darwinism, and many will readily acknowledge the force of the presuppositional argument and even concede the ultimate groundlessness of skepticism itself. They're far from a homogenous group.

Christians who hear about my experiences naturally want to know: have



Brad Peppo (right) in studio for a Miami Valley Skeptics broadcast

you seen any conversions yet out of this group? No, I haven't. Do I still think this is worth doing? Absolutely. While God, to my knowledge, has not yet granted any of these folks faith and repentance, there is no telling what he may do for them in the future.

And in the meantime, I have seen good reason to encourage Reformed Christians to engage in this way. For some skeptics, my interaction with them has been their first encounter with any attempt at a rational defense of the faith. Others have discovered, through our discussions, that the god to whom they've been objecting is not the God of the Bible and that their arguments against the god of open theism are much less effective against the one true God who foreordains whatsoever comes to pass. Several have admitted rather candidly the newly perceived inadequacies



The congregation of Living Water OPC in Springfield, Ohio (Pastor Brad Peppo at front left)

of their unbelieving worldviews. And oftentimes the mere willingness of a Christian to engage with them in a rational and friendly manner has made them more disposed to consider the Christian claims. I'm convinced that this is worth doing.

I would encourage anyone interested in pursuing this work to begin by engaging skeptics on their own turf. Our mission work has tried a couple of different strategies for gathering audiences of skeptics for discussion, including a Socratic club at the local community college and door-to-door invitations to a Bible study, but so far the only thing that has produced any response is going to them where they are already organized. Look online for local Freethought groups or Secular Student Alliances in your area and contact them. If your experience is anything like ours has been, you might be surprised by the positive reception.

As soon as possible, however, look for opportunities to get to know these folks in other contexts, especially within your homes. Smaller gatherings tend to cut down on the pressure for posturing (on both sides). And do really try to get to know them. Interest in their personal stories is always appreciated. Strive for honesty and sympathy in these conversations as well. Often their questions and struggles are not that dissimilar to our own.

Be aware that their diversity defies a one-size-fits-all approach. In my first engagement, I went in all ready to discuss Richard Rorty, only to find that the cultural references within the discussion came almost exclusively from episodes of Star Trek. (Is Jean-Luc Picard also among the prophets?) I was also surprised to find that there were relatively few fans of Richard Dawkins among them. Each group will have its own unique composition, which will have to be learned as you go along. A good way to do this is to ask them for reading (or viewing) recommendations.

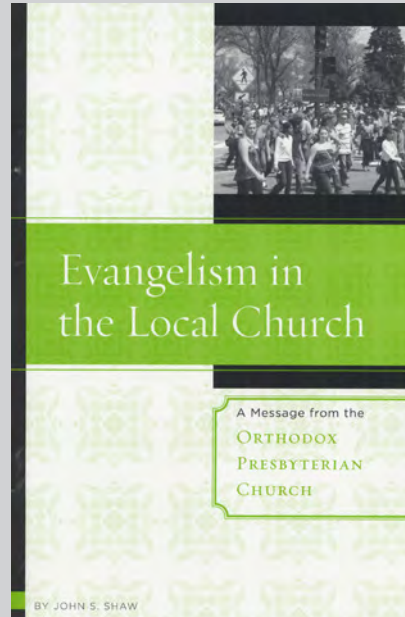
Finally, I would encourage you to engage these folks even if you don't feel particularly well equipped for the job. I

know that there are hundreds of apologists sharper than me out there in the world, and I'm confident that there are several more eloquent advocates in my own community, but I also know that when I've visited these groups, none of those people are there, engaging in the personal interaction that seems so

important. I suspect that such is the case in lots of places. There is no shortage of opportunities for those who are willing to go forth in weakness, with reliance upon the strength of Christ. □

The author is the organizing pastor of Living Water OPC in Springfield, Ohio.

Evangelism in the Local Church



John Shaw, the general secretary of the Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension, has written the engaging booklet *Evangelism in the Local Church*. In it, he describes the central role of the local church in the ministry of evangelism. He explains how local congregations can participate in the spread of the gospel through their church life and their pastoral ministry.

Churches, he says, must be committed to corporate worship, to the ordinary ministries of Word and sacrament and of prayer, to fellowship, hospitality, and mercy, and to articulating their testimony in individual interactions.

The pastoral ministry includes doing the work of an evangelist. An effective gospel ministry requires confidence in the promises of God, courage in the face of opposition and difficulty, conviction of the glory of God and the truth of the gospel, clear communication, and compassion for the lost and dying.

For an exposition of these important themes, and a list of additional resources, this 15-page booklet is highly recommended.

Order copies for \$1.00 each (\$0.75 for ten or more) at CCEsec@opc.org or 215-935-1023 (to be billed) or at store.opc.org (by credit card). Shipping \$4.00; free on orders over \$35.00.

MISSIONARY TRANSPLANT: OBSERVATIONS AND LESSONS



ALBERT J. TRICARICO, JR. // About two years ago, Laurie and I made the difficult decision to leave the Karamoja region of Uganda and take up life and work here in the U.S. We believe in the work of our Uganda Mission—one we served for eleven years. Yet, we believed the time had come to serve the kingdom differently and

to be closer to our expanding family.

Karamoja is a beautiful place, and we loved living there. We do not so much miss the triple-digit temperatures, muddy roads, snakes, and termites. But we do miss our mission team and being part of a unique gospel work.

And we miss the people. Our Karimojong friends are special, and we learned much from them. They are hospitable, joyful, and resilient in the face of unspeakable hardship. They are committed to friends in ways that are not known so much to us. They are able to enjoy their shared life in the midst of the darkness. I have seen these things, appreciated them, and told the people so. I have come to believe that looking for ways to praise and thank people, and then actually thanking and praising them, is a vital part of ministry—to believers as well as those who do not embrace the gospel.

Lessons came to me that might not have come, had I not lived in Africa. I can't quite say that I have learned them, but I received them and will go on learning them, I believe, for the rest

of my life.

As a result of spending time in Uganda, the world looks bigger to me than it once did and smaller at the same time. It seems bigger as I reflect on people—folk I knew existed, but never saw until I became their neighbor. And as I multiply my experience of living in a different culture by the number of cultures I will never see in my lifetime, it makes me marvel at the vastness of humanity and at God's creative beauty.

But the world also became smaller in a way. No matter where you go, how many people you meet, or what experiences come, there are two great realities that connect us all—sin and the gospel. We are all in trouble with God, and we are all loved by God and invited to believe in his Son for our everlasting blessing. Those two realities explain so much that we see in our world.

If I were to summarize the lessons of living in Karamoja in a single word, I would choose *patience*. I learned patience with people, patience with gospel work, patience with myself, and patience with culture—a culture where so many

things are different from what I know as one who was raised in the West.

Everything seems different. People in East Africa think differently about so many ordinary things—money, time, marriage, friendship, and more. And it takes a little skill—and a lot of patience—to navigate around the differences.

We moved back to the U.S. in December 2015, so that I could take up a new call as associate general secretary for the Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension. I am grateful for the opportunity to serve the great cause of world discipleship here in North America—a place that is similar in need, but different in character from where I lived as a missionary.

Different Cultural Challenges

It is possible that I feel the changes that have taken place in our culture with more intensity than many of you who are reading this article. While I tried to keep up with the doings here, my calling for more than a decade was to serve on a different continent. It is not easy to

grasp cultural movement while living elsewhere—at least not for me. I followed the scene and dipped into Western life during furloughs, but it wasn't until I relocated, listened to newscasts, interacted with neighbors, and scanned social media with greater ease, that the changes really hit me.

We now live in a place where the Christian faith is seen by many as implausible and absurd. I observe that those who hold to basic Christian ideas, such as God's design for marriage, are often dismissed from conversations. I have felt this personally. I am sure that you have as well. I believe we do well to engage with patience, respect, and a listening ear, whether or not we receive the same.

In Karamoja, the challenges have a different look, though they emerge from the same misstep—a failure to submit to God's ways as revealed in the Bible. The cultural realities that made ministry difficult there were many—polygamy and animism, to name two. As missionaries, we tried to address those issues patiently, while always putting the Lord Jesus before our friends as the one who delivers sinners and welcomes them into the family of his father.

Ministry was difficult in Africa, but we never felt excluded because of our beliefs, at least not openly. We always had a place in the conversation. We felt accepted and respected. We wanted to return the same and take the opportunities we were given to winsomely speak of Jesus.

Different Work

While the goal of church planting in North America is the same as it is in Africa, the work itself has a different look. From the beginning of our work



Al Tricarico with Karimojong young people

up to the present time, the church in Karamoja has been overseen by missionaries, not local leadership. Missionary church planters are from a different place, are most comfortable speaking their own language, and have the difficult task of spotting and training candidates for church office in a place where polygamy is the norm. Pray for the Lord's generous provision of indigenous leaders in Karamoja.

In North America, we send an ordained man at the beginning. He understands the culture, speaks the right language, and makes finding and training church leaders a priority very early on. Home missions here involves local budgeting, demographic analyses, attendance records, and detailed reporting. These categories are not so much in view for our missionaries in Uganda—yet.

There are other differences, of course, but the main thrust of the work is the same. Wherever we serve, the goal is to work toward the formation of congregations (and presbyteries) of God's people—testimonies of the grace of Christ, serving needy people in a fallen world.

My new call is to serve our Committee on Home Missions and support the work of our general secretary, John Shaw. My tasks continue to develop as I settle in and learn my calling. A short

list of things I am doing would include assessing fields, training church planters, interviewing candidates, visiting home missionary families, reporting to presbyteries and congregations, and visiting seminaries. There are, of course, related duties, such as writing, brainstorming, and attending meetings. One of the great privileges I have is to pray for our church planters. I invite you to join me.

Pray as well with the lessons expressed in this article. Pray that we would all:

- Engage our culture in the most helpful ways,
- Respect and thank people for their contributions to our lives,
- Patiently bring the gospel to bear upon our neighbors,
- Appreciate the vast number of people who live on this planet and pray for their salvation, and
- Humbly remember the great realities that equalize: we are all sinners and deserve the wrath and curse of God; we are all invited to trust in Christ for pardon, peace, and everlasting joy.

I am thrilled about what the Lord is doing in OPC home missions. I have been so pleased to see new works begin and other works organized in my first year of serving under this call. Presently the Committee supports twenty-six works and has approved funding for nine more that may be launched sometime in 2017.

Thank you for supporting your Committee and praying for the increase of the kingdom of Christ through the work of OPC home missions. □

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

THE REFORMATION OF PASTORAL MINISTRY



WILLIAM SHISHKO // Under the banner of *sola Scriptura*, the Protestant Reformation brought about much-needed reform in doctrine, worship, and preaching. These have been studied and developed extensively since that time. Less attention has been given to the equally important changes in pastoral ministry that

developed from this recovery of biblical Christianity.

One Reformer whose contributions have often been overlooked was Martin Bucer (1491–1551). While Calvin resided in Strasbourg from 1538 to 1541, he sat under Bucer’s preaching and pastoral ministry and learned from him. This would become Calvin’s preparation for his return to Geneva, where he would labor until his death in 1564.

Under Bucer, Calvin’s view of pastoral ministry, both by ministers and by elders, developed and took organizational form in the “consistory” of ministers and elders who would gather weekly in Geneva for the oversight and administration of ministry.

Bucer published the Reformation’s first primer for pastoral care, entitled *On the True Care of Souls*, in 1538. In this work, Bucer presents a clearly Christ-centered view of the church and its ministry. He argues that the church exists in union with Christ—her Head, Savior, and Lord. Christ rules his church as her King, using various ordained ministers and—as Bucer then understood it—lay elders for exercising spiritual

discipline and caring for the soul of each member of the flock of God. Bucer then gives a detailed explanation of how lost sheep are to be sought, stray sheep are to be restored, hurt and wounded sheep are to be healed, weak sheep are to be strengthened, and healthy and strong sheep are to be guarded and fed. In what might be seen as a Reformation form of biblical counseling, Bucer gives specific direction for “the cure of souls,” including how to assess the repentance of those who fall and how to graciously secure the hearty obedience of Christ’s sheep. One can see in this the clear outlines of what Calvin would later flesh out in Geneva.

In 1548, Bucer was exiled from Strasbourg after a series of conflicts with the city magistrate. He retreated to England and was there appointed Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge in 1550. This opportunity arose from his influence on the 1549 revision of the Anglican *Book of Common Prayer*. While at Cambridge, Bucer lectured on Ephesians and from it developed the themes of his major work, *De Regno Christi* (On the Kingdom of Christ).

This volume, published in 1550, became pivotal in the British outworking of the principles of the Protestant Reformation as they affected church life.

The term “the kingdom of God” can often be nebulous for Christians today. Not so for Bucer:

The Kingdom of our Savior Jesus Christ is that administration and care of the eternal life of God’s elect, by which this very Lord and King of Heaven by his doctrine and discipline, administered by suitable ministers chosen for this very purpose, gathers to himself his elect, those dispersed throughout the world who are his but whom he nonetheless wills to be subject to the powers of the world. He incorporates them into himself and his Church and so governs them in it that purged more fully day by day from sins, they live well and happily both here and in the time to come.... He also shapes and perfects them, using for this purpose the ministry of his word and sacraments through fitting ministers, in public, *at home*, and in *private*, and also by the vigilant

administration of *his discipline*... (Melancthon and Bucer, ed. Wilhelm Pauck, p. 225; emphasis added)

Note that all church discipline was to be an expression of Christ the King's own discipline, not a capricious exercise of human authority. Note, too, that the ministry of the church was not only to be public, but also "at home" and "in private." This comes from what Bucer, Calvin, and the other Reformers understood as the apostolic charter for pastoral ministry, Acts 20:17–35. Here the apostle Paul emphasizes that his ministry of testifying of repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ was not only carried out publicly, but also exercised "from house to house" (v. 20). This was the model for "the elders of the church" (v. 17) who had been summoned to Miletus from their charge in Ephesus, where they had been called as "overseers, to care for [i.e., to shepherd] the church of God" (v. 28). By the time he wrote *De Regno Christi*, Bucer had come to see that elders, too, were to be ordained to that office (pp. 230–31). While Bucer did not think it was necessary for all these elders "to be trained in letters and languages, or even in the ability of public teaching" (p. 231), they were to assist the ministers in the pastoral ministry to the flock:

Such persons are evidently able with their fellow ministers of the doctrine and sacraments of Christ to exercise discipline, to admonish brethren of their duty both privately and in their own homes.... Saint Ambrose testifies that there was this kind of elder both in the synagogue and in the early Church, and that this office was abolished not without a violation of doctrine and disadvantage to the churches. (p. 231)

Indeed, being well aware of the magnitude and varied elements of pastoral ministry, the care of souls, and the discipline of the church, Bucer warned that it was impossible for ministers (especially given their primary work of prayer and the ministry of the word) to do this work alone:

But what single individual would be able to fulfill for many such offices of the good shepherd? It has therefore pleased the Holy Spirit from the beginning of the Church to join to the ministers of the word and the sacraments, namely, the presiding elders and bishops, other men also from the body of the Church, serious men endowed with a gift for governing, to assist them in exercising a concern for individuals and in keeping and strengthening the discipline of Christ (I Cor. 12:28). (p. 232)

In the century that followed the publication of *De Regno Christi*, Bucer's views met with various forms of resistance. The civil magistrates' support of Reformation measures was uneven. Moreover, there was no agreement regarding the form of church government that should be the alternative to episcopacy. And there was an inability to achieve a program of national discipline for the established church.

In response, the "Separatist" movement developed. The "Puritans," who wanted a more thorough reformation of the established church, put an almost total emphasis on preaching and the production of written materials. By and large, pastoral ministry receded into the background until the mid-seventeenth century.

Far less known than the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms is the Directory for the Publick Worship of God, also drawn up by the Westminster Assembly of Divines. Curiously, the following mandate is found in the section "Concerning Visitation of the Sick": "It is the duty of the minister not only to teach the people committed to his charge in publick, but privately; and particularly to admonish, reprove, and comfort them, upon all seasonable occasions, so far as his time, strength, and personal safety will permit."

While this commission is not here given to the elders (although this may be inferred from the work assigned to elders in the chapter on "Other Church Governors" in the Assembly's Form of Church Government), it is clearly

required of elders in the Continental Reformed tradition. For example, in the Book of Church Order, Article 23, we read: "The office of the Elders ... is to take heed that the Ministers, together with their fellow-Elders and the Deacons faithfully discharge their office ... for the edification of the Churches, to visit the families of the Congregation, in order particularly to comfort and instruct the members, and also to exhort others in respect to the Christian Religion." This charge is quite similar to what is found in our own Form of Government, 10.3.

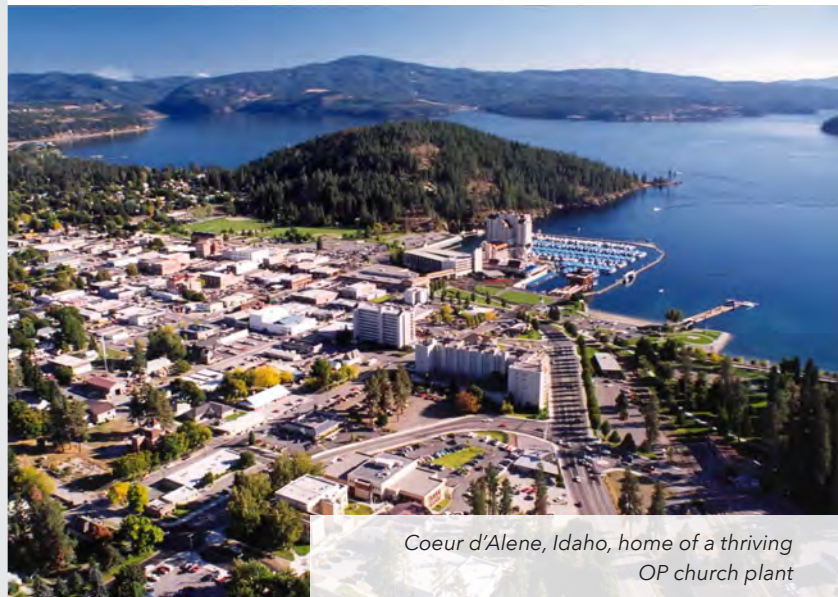
It was this section of the Directory that spurred Richard Baxter (1615–1691) to promote systematic home visitation. That practice in turn became the basis for Baxter's treatment of pastoral ministry in his work *The Reformed Pastor* (1656). Baxter was strongly influenced by Bucer's works and pleaded with his fellow ministers to "read him diligently." Thus the link was forged between Bucer and Baxter, the two foremost exponents of the Protestant Reformation's transformation of pastoral ministry according to the Word of God and for the effective care of souls.

The faithful practice of home visitation by both ministers and elders, coupled with the faithful preaching of the word, is perhaps the hallmark of the reformation of pastoral ministry. Where such ministry has become part of a church's life (and where that ministry is treated not as a formality but as a vibrant expression of Christ's own ministry to homes, families, and individuals), Reformed churches grow and thrive. Without it, our churches may become preaching posts, but they will be nothing like the faithfully governed, disciplined, and shepherded flocks of God envisioned by Bucer, Calvin, Baxter, and others. May God grant our pastors and elders a recovery of ministry that is not only "public," but also "from house to house" (Acts 20:20). □

The author is the regional home missionary for the Presbytery of Connecticut and Southern New England.

A NEW CHURCH IN THE LAKE CITY

// JOHN S. SHAW



Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, home of a thriving OP church plant

Many people know Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, as a beautiful resort city. Located on the north shore of Lake Coeur d'Alene, which is twenty-five miles long, the town is also appropriately called the Lake City. There is no shortage of captivating views in and around this city, and the area provides many opportunities for hiking, boating, golfing, and skiing. Barbara Walters described it as “a little slice of heaven” and included Coeur d'Alene on a list of the most fascinating places to visit.

While the Lake City provides many opportunities for recreation and rest, it also is in great need of biblical and Reformed churches. Along with neighboring Spokane, Washington, the region is home to almost 700,000 people. The Presbyterian Church in America supports a church plant in Spokane, but that group meets forty-five to sixty minutes from Coeur d'Alene. The need for biblical and Reformed churches in that area led to the formation of Coeur d'Alene Reformed Church, a new church plant of the OPC.

Ryan Vander Feer and Brad Salie are brothers-in-law

who moved their families from Southern California to Idaho. They were members of Branch of Hope OPC in Torrance, California, and looked for a similar church near their new homes in the northern panhandle of Idaho. Unfortunately, no such church existed. About four years ago, five or six families that were interested in establishing a new Reformed church got together. In August 2013, the group contacted the local presbytery of the OPC to express interest in forming a church plant in Coeur d'Alene.

The Presbytery of the Northwest provided support, encouragement, and prayer. Pastors Mark Collingridge (Kennebec, Washington) and Paul Johnson (Colville, Washington) travelled regularly to Coeur d'Alene to lead Bible studies and services, and many other members of the presbytery also travelled there. In a relatively short period of time, that group of five or six families grew to sixty people, and now eighty to ninety people gather every Lord's Day for worship.

With steady growth and significant distance to the nearest OP congregation, it became clear that this new work needed a pastor. Last fall, the presbytery installed the Rev. David Graves as an evangelist to serve as the organizing pastor in Coeur d'Alene.

David grew up in an Army family, living in Germany and many other places before his family settled in Columbus, Ohio, during his high school years. He was raised in a United Methodist family, but during high school he was captured by God. Through several events—the gift of a Bible from an aunt



The Coeur d'Alene congregation

and uncle, the commitment to read through that Bible entirely (out of feelings of guilt and the duty to honor the gift), and a message at summer youth camp—the Lord saved David. God then used many other instruments, such as the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, First Baptist Church of Gahanna (Ohio), Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, and eventually Grace OPC in Columbus, Ohio, to bring David to pastoral ministry in the OPC.

After several years of service in Franklin, Pennsylvania, David left for Coeur d'Alene with his wife, Rebekah, and their five children (Annie, 10; Zachariah, 8; Josiah, 7; Samuel, 4; John, 2) in October. The Lord has blessed their family during this transition from Pennsylvania to Idaho. David hit the ground running, enjoying the opportunity to preach and serve the church plant and to meet new friends and neighbors. The children love the adventures of a new place with many things to see and do. The Graves family and the people of Coeur d'Alene Reformed Church already share a deep bond of fellowship. They pursue the opportunity, together, to introduce people to their Savior and share the gospel of Jesus Christ.

What defines the character of this new work in Coeur d'Alene? First and foremost, the people are defined by the gospel of Jesus Christ. They recognize the beauty of their own salvation—that though Christ owed them nothing, he became a man, lived a perfect life, died a perfect death, and was raised from the dead on the third day in order to save them. By faith in Christ, they stand in a right relationship with the one true God and call him Father.

What a glorious message! And this message calls for a response. As a church defined by the gospel, Coeur d'Alene Reformed Church is called to at least two things. First, they are called to worship their saving God, who is worthy to receive their praise. Second, they are called to witness to those who do not yet know the joy of God's salvation.

They live out these commitments in their gatherings for worship. On Sunday mornings, there are typically eighty to ninety people worshipping together at Lake City Senior Center in Coeur d'Alene. Approximately half of those in attendance are covenant children. The children are everywhere, and they are excited to be at their church. The service is both serious and joyful. The people love to sing, and they also love to hear the Word of God opened by their minister.

Their commitment to worship is also accompanied by a commitment to witness. The members of the church regularly



Worship at Coeur d'Alene

invite family, friends, and neighbors to join them for worship. Visitors are in attendance every week, and they receive a warm welcome from a friendly congregation. This congregation takes seriously the description of the Lord as the one who seeks worshippers who worship in Spirit and in truth. They long to be an instrument in the Lord's gathering of worshippers in Coeur d'Alene.

How can you pray for Coeur d'Alene Reformed Church?

- Give thanks for the many people whom the Lord has already gathered, and for the many visitors who have been introduced to this new work.
- Give thanks for the blessing of many covenant children within the church.
- Give thanks for the example of a warm, welcoming congregation.
- Gives thanks for the facilities of Lake City Senior Center, but pray for another location, as they seem to be quickly filling the space.
- Pray for the Lord to continue to add to their numbers—that their commitment to witness would bear fruit in a growing number of worshippers.
- Pray for the Graves family to continue to enjoy new friends, even as they live far away from their relatives.
- Pray for the Lord to raise up elders and deacons to serve alongside Rev. Graves through the officer training soon to begin.

God appears to be building a gospel oasis in the midst of Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. What a beautiful picture and a beautiful place for such an oasis. Surrounded by examples of physical and earthly rest—resorts, golf courses, lakes, and sunsets—the Lord is building a church that proclaims the glories of Christ, the only one who is able to give spiritual and heavenly rest. Earthly rest is necessary and good, but heavenly rest is better. We can pray that even as people enjoy, in the words of Barbara Walters, “a little slice of heaven” in Coeur d'Alene, they might find through Coeur d'Alene Reformed Church the eternal rest for souls and true heavenly citizenship that is only available through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Home Missions Today

For up-to-date Home Missions news and prayer updates, e-mail HomeMissionsToday@opc.org.
New editions: March 8, 22.

A TEACHER IS A DISCIPLE FIRST AND ALWAYS

// JEFFREY C. WADDINGTON



Jeff Waddington

The apostle Paul told his protégé Timothy that men ought to possess God-given, Holy Spirit-produced, Christ-exemplifying character in order to serve as ministers of the gospel (1 Tim. 3:2; 2 Tim. 2:24; Titus 1:9). Using this array of gifts, a minister must be able to teach or give sound instruction, with the corresponding skill to refute false doctrine and living. We are more than familiar with this.

But have you ever thought about what being a teacher of the Word involves? Sure. We know that men who are called to the sacred office ought to be both *pious* and *learned* (to use the language common in another era). Piety and knowledge are like two legs, and to ask which is more important, the left leg or the right leg, is silly on the surface. The Gospels record that our Lord Jesus Christ trained twelve men for approximately three years before he gave his life for us and was raised and returned to the Father's right hand (Luke 5:1–11; John 17:1–26). Before that, there were schools of the prophets, where young men lived with an established, mature prophet and learned the ins and outs of the prophetic vocation (2 Kings 4:38–44).

A truism in the world of leadership is that you must learn to be a follower before you can be a leader. This is more so in the Christian life and in ministry. The apostolic band in the early church had to spend time with Jesus before it could go into all the world (Matt. 28:19–20; Acts 4:13). Ministers today must learn to be faithful disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ too. A disciple is a learner or student or follower. And a minister is a disciple, not just at the beginning of the Christian life, but his whole life long. So if a minister must be able to teach and also be a lifelong disciple, then he needs to continuously learn from both God's Word and God's world.

In our day, ministers are typically trained for pastoral ministry in college and seminary. The college and seminary experience today, especially when we include an internship in

a local congregation under the tutelage of an experienced minister, is much like the three years of training that the apostles received. Paul probably underwent a lengthy training period too (see Acts 9:30; 11:25; Gal. 1:17).

A man does not cease to be a disciple when he graduates from seminary. As grueling as the training can be (and it is!), seminary professors give men skills that they will utilize for the rest of their lives. There is not enough time in seminary to study every last aspect of each department of theology thoroughly. What a student gains is a certain skill set. This skill set will enable the man who is called, examined, ordained, and installed as a minister of the Word, to be able to study and learn day in and day out.

As I noted earlier, a minister as a disciple is to be a student of God's Word and his world. We are to be students of people and life. The point is that the man who never cracks the covers of a book after he leaves seminary ought to be ashamed. If every Christian disciple is a lifelong learner, the minister-teacher is more so.

Years ago I had an exchange of letters with a Christian college president, and he shared his reading schedule with me. While lifelong learning should not be limited to reading books, journals, and websites, it certainly should include that. This mature minister told me that he was always reading through eight to ten books at any given time. He of course studied the Scriptures directly. But he also read from a Bible commentary, a church history book, a systematics book, one or two favorite theologians, a book on pastoral theology, something on apologetics, and also books on secular history and philosophy, as well as great literature and poetry. Our own unique interests will no doubt play a part in the variety of material we read.

The fact of the matter is that we cannot be helpful nurturing teachers if we are not ourselves continually learning. A lake that only empties into rivers and streams without also receiving waters from rivers and streams will eventually run

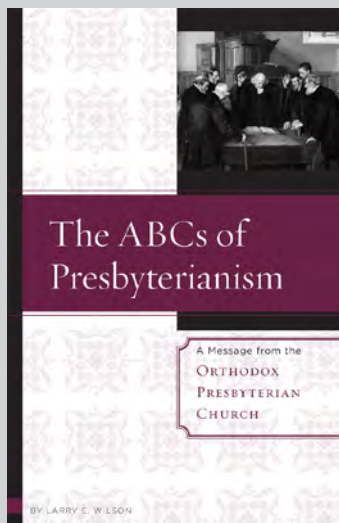
dry. Oceans will dry up without regular rainfall. You get my point. Truth be told, if we whom God has called to be his minister-teachers have no interest in taking in as well as giving out, that is a good indicator that we have not been called and fitted for ministry.

The Reformed scholastics used to talk about a *habitus* that the man who would be a disciple and minister must manifest. A *habitus* is a habit or inclination or desire to learn. Without this, we are not fit for duty. Of course, I do not mean to suggest this is the only requirement a minister must meet. Surely it is not.

I have not attempted to give a comprehensive catalog of all the character traits a minister needs to be faithful. My concern is simply to remind us that, as Christian disciples, we should want to learn all that we can from God's Word and world. And this is especially true for the man who would be a minister of God's Word. A disciple of Christ seeks to sit at Jesus' feet and learn from him. When we learn from our Lord and Savior, we are then, with the enabling of the Holy Spirit, to share the fruits of our learning with the saints wherever we serve.

The author is the stated supply for Knox OPC in Lansdowne, Pa.

ABCs of Presbyterianism



This 34-page booklet brings together the thirty messages on the basic principles of Presbyterian church government (with careful biblical support) that appeared on these pages over the last three years. The author is Larry E. Wilson, pastor of Redeemer OPC in Airdrie, Alberta, Canada.

Order copies for \$1.25 each (\$1.00 for 10 or more) at CCEsec@opc.org or 215-935-1023 (to be billed) or at store.opc.org (by credit card). Shipping \$4.00; free on orders over \$35.00.

OUR MEMBERSHIP VOWS

Does the Bible Authenticate Itself?

Glen J. Clary

Why do you believe that the Bible is the Word of God?

Some Christians might answer that question by saying, "I believe it is the Word of God because my pastor says so," or "Because my parents say so," or "Because the church says so." However, the best answer to the question is "I believe the Bible is the Word of God because the Bible says so." In other words, we should accept the Bible on its own authority.

Of course, it is good that your pastor believes that the Bible is God's Word, but that's not a good reason for accepting it as such. After all, he is just a man; he could be wrong. It is also good that your parents and the church believe that the Bible is the Word of God, but those are not good reasons for accepting it either. The testimonies of the church, of your parents, and of your pastor might confirm what the Bible says about itself, but they cannot prove that the Bible is divinely inspired.

The Bible does not depend on any authority outside of itself to prove it is the Word of God. Since it is God's Word, it possesses God's authority. It does not and cannot depend on anything apart from God himself to prove, authorize, or authenticate it.

Perhaps, we can state this in the form of a question that has an obvious answer. Should we accept the claims of the Bible on the authority of man or on the authority of God? The answer, of course, is that we should accept its claims solely on the authority of God and not on any human authority.

God alone can authorize his Word because he is the highest and only infallible authority. As the Word of God, the Bible carries the authority of God himself, and therefore it can be authorized only by itself. The Bible is self-authenticating.

Out of the Mouth . . .

Our granddaughter, age 6, was reading aloud the story of Moses coming down from Mt. Sinai: "He came down the mountain carrying two stone tablets." She paused, looked at her mother, and asked with amazement, "Did they have tablets back then?"

—Holly Soud
St. Augustine, Fla.

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

PRAYING FOR THE DEAD IN KARAMOJA

// DAVID A. OKKEN



“**P**astor, we are burying our cousin-brother who has died. Could you please come and pray for him?” It is a common request here in Karamoja, one which I have received countless times through the years. The majority of the folks here are Roman Catholic (mostly only nominally so) and are accustomed to hearing prayers for the dead. How do I respond? One approach would be to make sure that I always have handy a copy of the Westminster Confession of Faith. I could explain that I am a minister of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and have taken vows to uphold our doctrinal standards, which state that “prayer is to be made ... for all sorts of men *living*, or that *shall live* hereafter: *but not for the dead*” (WCF 21.4). There it is: my quick, clear, and simple answer. “I am very sorry, but you can see that my ordination vows do not allow me to pray for your dead relative.” It might seem unfriendly, but, hey, it will save some time and help me avoid finding myself in an awkward situation. But I would also be passing up on an opportunity for ministry.

In one sense, Karamoja is not unique. I often remind my friends that it is also the case in America that every life ends. As David reminded Solomon, to die is “to go the way of all the earth” (1 Kings 2:2). Yet in a place with a staggeringly low average life span (estimated at forty-two years), sometimes it feels like death is everywhere. On one occasion, I was walking home from the



burial of a young man whom I had known fairly well. I was trying to recall just how many individuals I had known personally down through the years who had died when they were younger than I was. Just off the top of my head, I was able to count about thirty, excluding infants. So sad!

Being well acquainted with untimely death does not mean that one will handle it particularly well. The Karimojong often withhold news of the death of a loved one for fear of a dangerous reaction. I once witnessed a situation where a teenage girl away in boarding school was told to come home immediately because there was an important family meeting requiring her presence. Only after her arrival was she informed that her mother had passed away. For the next hour or so, she had to be physically restrained repeatedly so she would not throw herself on the ground and injure herself. Such uncontrollable expressions of grief might seem excessive to us, but they are extremely common here.

Death is a tragic reminder of how desperately we need Christ. That is why we should see it as an opportunity. When large numbers of immediate and extended family, as well as friends and neighbors, are all gathered together, it is a great occasion to show them love. We do so by joining in their mourning and offering our condolences. We welcome an invitation to pray for them, even if the prayer that I offer is not exactly what they were expecting. Jesus is the only one who can bring them hope amidst the sorrows of death. But they must

come to him according to his *truth*.

The practice of offering prayers for the dead can lead people to hold to a false hope. They may very likely believe that, even if they are not right with God at their death, the worst thing that they will face is some time in purgatory. And they might expect that ongoing prayers for them will help bring their souls out of purgatory into heaven. That is why, if we truly love them, we will seek to share the truths of Scripture upon which the Westminster Assembly based its opposition to offering prayers for the dead. We must warn unbelievers of the immediate judgment they will face at death, as seen in our Lord's parable of the rich man who, in contrast with Lazarus, after dying was in torment and anguish in the flame (Luke 16:23–24). The Scriptures give no hope that our prayers will benefit those who have died in their sins (John 8:24) and are

kept under punishment until the day of judgment (2 Peter 2:9). Indeed, as our Confession says, "the souls of the wicked are cast into hell, where they remain in torments and utter darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day" (WCF 32.1). That is why, in love, we must warn lost sinners of their urgent need truly to repent and believe before death comes—when it will be too late.

Most wonderfully, we must share the good news that Christ died for the ungodly. As surely as he was raised from the dead, those who repent and believe can know with certainty that, even when their bodies are laid in the grave, their souls "immediately return to God who gave them ... being then made perfect in holiness, [and] are received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God, in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies" (WCF 32.1). Surely, such was the hope given to the criminal dying on the cross who trusted the Savior dying next to him—and dying *for him*—"Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43).

When I am invited to go and pray at a burial, I seek to share these very truths. Often I do so while reading and preaching from John 11. The Son of God understands the terrible pain and deep sorrow of losing a loved one. He wept at the tomb of his beloved friend Lazarus *before* he raised him up from death. Strange! I ask them, "Why did he first weep before raising Lazarus?" The answer reveals the wondrous mystery of the gospel. To bring us to share in his resurrection

glory, Jesus first had to share in our sorrow. Indeed, more than mourning Lazarus's death, Jesus himself had to suffer and die for our sins. Then he was raised to glory. The resurrection of Lazarus, and, more importantly, our Lord's own resurrection, point forward to the reward of his suffering, the future resurrection of all believers to everlasting life (John 5:29). But it also shows the work of the Spirit *now*. By calling Lazarus out

of the tomb, Jesus proved that those with saving faith do indeed pass from death to life (5:24).

How then do I respond when asked to go and pray for the dead? Somewhat differently than I suggested above. Even if I know nothing of the spiritual state of the one who has passed, I go and, yes, I pray for and preach to *the dead* (Eph. 2:1). I preach the gospel and then I offer a prayer, something like this: "O Lord, the righteous judge of all the earth, you alone know

the hearts of all people. What can we do for this one who has passed away but commit him (or her) into your hands? We thank you for the hope that all who truly repent and believe in your Son are forgiven and have everlasting life and that, even at death, they enter into life in heaven with you forever. So I pray for all those mourning here today, that amidst their great sorrow you might bring blessing by giving them the comfort, hope, and joy that come only from knowing you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. Please work in the hearts of those here who are yet lost in sin. Bring them truly to repent and trust and follow the one who alone has conquered sin and death. In this way, O God, call the dead to life in Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen."



David Okken speaking with a young Karimojong man

What's New

Rev. and Mrs. Markus G. (Sharon) Jeromin have been reappointed to serve as missionary associates to Uruguay, assisting the OPC Uruguay Mission in Montevideo. They returned to the field in mid-February.

Rev. and Mrs. Benjamin K. (Heather) Hopp, having concluded a yearlong furlough, are scheduled to return to their labors in Haiti in early April.

Rev. and Mrs. Eric W. (Dianna) Tuininga, having concluded a seven-month furlough, are scheduled to return to their labors in Mbale, Uganda, in early April.

STEWARDSHIP AND THE SAB- BATH PRINCIPLE

// ALAN R. PONTIER

Several years ago I preached a series of sermons on the topic of stewardship. As I studied the biblical teaching on this subject, I found three areas that the Scriptures address under the broader theme of stewardship. The first is the stewardship of our material and financial resources, such as tithing, offerings, and financial planning. Second, there are passages that teach us about the stewardship of our gifts. Romans 12:1–8 is one of these. Finally, there is the stewardship of our time. There are passages in the Bible that address the use of our time. One such is Psalm 90:12: “So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom.” In fact, the whole Psalm is “time sensitive” in that it causes us to think about the brevity of our lives—along with the hope that, after we are gone, the Lord will “establish the work of our hands” (v. 17).

However, I found that the most beneficial source for meditation on the stewardship of time is the principle of the Sabbath. In fact, the stewardship of time is foundational for the other two areas of stewardship, in that material possessions imply time spent in work, and the use of our gifts in the church requires a commitment of our time. Moreover, the Sabbath, as creation ordinance and moral law, is woven into the fabric of mankind’s existence. Here are three applications of the Sabbath ordinance that speak to our stewardship of time:

The Sabbath reminds us that our time is not our own. Question 62 of the Westminster Shorter Catechism asks, “What are the reasons annexed to the fourth commandment?” The answer is: “The reasons annexed to the fourth commandment are, God’s allowing us six days of the week for our own employments, his challenging a special propriety in the seventh, his own example, and his blessing the Sabbath day.” Notice that this answer is worded to teach us that even the six days that God has given us for labor are “allowed” to us. They do not belong to us as owners, but are given to us in stewardship. It

is the right stewardship of our time to work on six days of the week. In addition, God “(challenges) a special propriety in the seventh.” All days belong to the Creator, but the proper stewardship of the seventh is for rest, worship, and deeds of mercy.

The Sabbath brings order to our week. Pastors may be especially sensitive to this phenomenon since the Lord’s Day is the fixed point in every week that pastors usually see as their “deadline.” Sunday school lessons, sermons, bulletins, and a host of other details must be completed in time for the Sabbath observance. “Sunday’s coming!” is in the mind of every minister every week. Perhaps we should all have that sense of the flow of the week. The Sabbath is a goad to organize our workweek in such a way that Sunday is cleared from other pursuits and that we are prepared in both body and spirit to worship.

The eschatological Sabbath motivates us for present-day work. Hebrews 3:7–4:11 is the clearest exposition of what is sometimes called “the eschatological Sabbath.” The author of Hebrews contrasts the unbelief of the ancient Jews who were prevented from entering God’s “rest” (i.e., the land of Canaan) with the perseverance in faith and faithfulness of God’s true children, who will enter the eschatological rest that God still has in store for his people. In addition, the time called “today,” in which we strive in faith, is contrasted to that future rest. The key verse is Hebrews 4:11: “Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience.”

It is often asked, “What do we have that we have not received?” This is true of all that we possess, including our time.

The author is an OP minister.

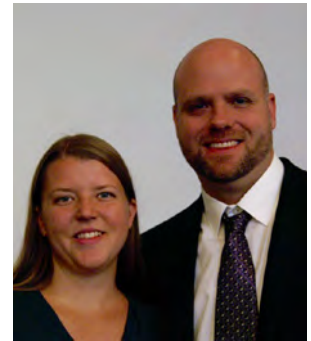
Worldwide Outreach and Thank Offering Results

Contributions to Worldwide Outreach totaled \$4,090,131 in 2016, up \$154,714 from 2015, and \$10,131 more than our goal of \$4,080,000. Home Missions and Christian Education exceeded their budgeted goals, and Foreign Missions came close to theirs, helped by savings realized by *New Horizons* and the Committee on Coordination.

Giving to the 2016 Thank Offering has reached a record amount: \$1,209,525 so far—well above our goal of \$1,000,000. Thank you! Contributions by year’s end (included in 2016 Worldwide Outreach giving) totaled \$1,032,801. An additional \$176,724 was received in January (credited to Worldwide Outreach in 2017).

MARCH

1. Foreign Missions associate general secretary **Douglas Clawson**. Pray that leadership training seminars held in Haiti will be a blessing to pastors and their flocks. / Pray for **Brett and Maryann Mahlen**, Orland Park, Ill., as he ministers to inmates at Stateville Correctional Center. / **Kathy Bube**, Loan Fund administrator, and **Mark Stumpff**, OPC office assistant.
2. **Phil Strong**, Lander, Wyo. Pray that Grace Reformed Fellowship's landlords will give them another year at their current location. / **Mr. and Mrs. F.**, Asia. Pray for three men who are beginning their seminary studies. / **David Haney**, director of finance and planned giving for the Committee on Coordination.
3. Missionary associates **E. K., D. V., and S. Z.**, Asia. Pray for their witness to their students in the classroom. / **Mike and Katy Myers**, Royston, Ga. Pray that Heritage Presbyterian Church will grow in grace and numbers as the year goes on and be able to organize this year. / **Bulut Yasar**, yearlong intern at New Life OPC in Montoursville, Pa.
4. **Ron and Carol Beabout**, Gaithersburg, Md. Pray that the Word preached at Trinity Reformed Church will bear the fruit of Christ's righteousness. / **Mr. and Mrs. M.**, Asia. Pray for Mr. M. as he works with local churches. / **Miller (and Stephanie) Ansell**, yearlong intern at Faith Presbyterian Church in Garland, Tex.
5. Tentmaker missionary **T. D.**, Asia. Pray that she will have opportunities in everyday conversations to be a witness to the gospel message. / Home Missions associate general secretary **Al Tricarico**. / **Alan Strange**, president of the Board of Trustees of Great Commission Publications.
6. **Jay and Andrea Bennett**, Neon, Ky. Pray for the Lord to organize Neon Reformed Presbyterian Church as a local congregation by 2020. / Tentmaker missionary **T. L. L.**, Asia (on furlough). Pray for qualified applicants to serve as missionary associates in a large Asian country. / **Andrew Moody**, OPC.org website technical assistant.
7. Pray for Foreign Missions general secretary **Mark Bube** as he presents the work of OP missions to the church. / Pray for **Mark and Peggy Sumpter**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of the Southwest, as he follows up on contacts and visits Bible studies. / **Lou Ann Shafer**, music editor for the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal*.
8. **Larry and Kalynn Oldaker**, Huron, Ohio. Pray that God would add four families to Grace Fellowship this year. / **Heero and Anya Hacquebord**, L'viv, Ukraine. Pray for spiritual growth and understanding for those attending Bible studies. / **Ryan (and Rochelle) Cavanaugh**, yearlong intern at Prescott Presbyterian Church in Prescott, Arizona.
9. Pray that retired missionaries **Betty Andrews, Cal and Edie Cummings, Greet Rietkerk, and Young and Mary Lou Son** will be blessed with good health. / **Bill and Sessie Welzien**, Key West, Fla. Pray that the Lord would add to Keys Presbyterian Church. / **Ryan (and Rachel) Heaton**, yearlong intern at Tyler Presbyterian Church in Tyler, Tex.
10. **John and Wenny Ro**, Chicago, Ill. (downtown). Pray that God would bring new people to Gospel Life Presbyterian Church through its outreach activities. / **Ethiopian Reformed Presbyterian Church**. Pray for the ongoing ministry of the Word and sacraments. / **Janet Birkmann**, Diaconal Ministries administrative assistant.
11. **Ray and Michele Call**, Montevideo, Uruguay. Pray that the church plant will grow in faith, maturity, and new believers. / **Matt and Elin Prather**, Corona, Calif. Pray for new visitors to Corona Presbyterian Church and for opportunities to reach the lost. / **Adrian (and Rachel) Crum**, yearlong intern at Bayview OPC in Chula Vista, Calif.

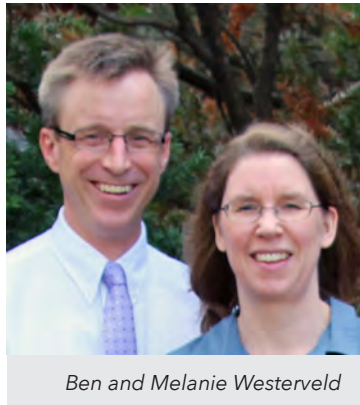


Matt and Elin Prather

12. **Brad and Cinnamon Peppo**, Springfield, Ohio. Pray that the Lord would add several new families to Living Water OPC. / **Mark and Jeni Richline**, Montevideo, Uruguay. Pray for the Mission as they develop strategies to reach the nearby community. / **Doug Watson**, part-time staff accountant.
13. Missionary associates **Markus and Sharon Jeromin**, Montevideo, Uruguay, are thankful they can return to assist in the work in Uruguay. / **Josh and Kristen McKamy**, Chambersburg, Pa. Pray that Covenant OPC's regular outreach activities will bear fruit. / **Daniel (and Marcy) Borvan**, yearlong intern at Merrimack Valley Presbyterian Church in North Andover, Mass.
14. **Eric and Donna Hausler**, Naples, Fla. Pray that the Lord would bring young families to Christ the King Presbyterian Church. / **Ben and Heather Hopp**, Haiti (on furlough). Pray for the family as they prepare to return to Haiti following their yearlong furlough. / **Jan Gregson**, assistant to the finance director.
15. Associate missionaries **Octavius and Marie Delfils**, Haiti. Pray for Octavius as he works with churches seeking to meet the diaconal needs of their members. / Home Missions general secretary **John Shaw**. / Pray for Christian Education general secretary **Danny Olinger** as he prepares for next week's CCE meeting.

- 16. Bob and Grace Holda**, Oshkosh, Wis. Pray that many will be invited to worship at Resurrection Presbyterian Church, and that new worshippers will come. / Foreign Missions administrative assistant **Linda Posthuma** and secretary **Katrina Zartman**. / *New Horizons* proofreader **Sarah Pederson**.
- 17.** Pray for the labors of affiliated missionary **Linda Karner**, Japan. / **Brian and Sara Chang**, Cottonwood, Ariz. Pray for new opportunities to make the name of Christ, and Christ Reformed Presbyterian Church, known to the community. / Pray for stated clerk **Ross Graham** as registrations arrive and preparations are made for the 2017 General Assembly that will begin May 31.
- 18. Jim and Eve Cassidy**, Austin, Tex. Pray that God would bless South Austin Presbyterian Church's extensive outreach efforts this year. / Affiliated missionaries **Craig and Ree Coulbourne**, Japan. Pray that God would send men who can become leaders in the church. / *New Horizons* cover designer **Chris Tobias**.
- 19. Joshua and Jessica Lyon**, Carson, Calif. Pray that God would bless new outreach efforts at Grace OPC. / **Church in the Horn of Africa**. Pray that believers there will find God's grace sufficient as they persevere during challenging times. / Pray for the **Subcommittee on Ministerial Training** tomorrow as they approve interns and mentoring churches for 2017.

- 20.** Home Missions staff administrator **Sean Gregg**. / **Ben and Melanie Westerveld**, Quebec, Canada. Pray that the printing and distribution of Reformed literature in French will impact many lives. / Pray for stated clerk **Ross Graham** as registrations arrive and preparations are made for the 2017 General Assembly that will begin May 31.



Ben and Melanie Westerveld

- 21.** Pray for missionary associate **Janine Eygenraam**, Quebec, Canada, as she builds relationships with contacts in order to share the gospel. / Pray for **Jim and Judy Bosgraf**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of the Midwest, as he visits mission works throughout the regional church. / **Charlene Tipton**, database administrator.
- 22. Tim and Deborah Herndon**, West Lebanon, N.H. Pray that visitors to Providence OPC will join in communicant fellowship. / Affiliated missionaries **Jerry and Marilyn Farnik**, Czech Republic. Pray for the teaching and outreach ministries with which they work. / Diaconal Ministries administrator **David Nakhla**. Pray for David and the Committee for Diaconal Ministries in its

deliberations on March 23-24.

- 23.** Missionary associate **Kathleen Winslow**, Czech Republic. Pray that God would equip her to disciple her students. / **David and Rebekah Graves**, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. Pray for Coeur d'Alene Reformed Church's new members class and officer training. / **Joseph Johnson**, yearlong intern at Trinity OPC in Hatboro, Pa.
- 24. Christopher and Ann Malamisuro**, Cincinnati, Ohio. Pray that visitors to Good Shepherd OPC will become regular attenders. / **Bob and Martha Wright**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for guidance and wisdom in making daily decisions. / **Zachary (and Annie) Simmons**, yearlong intern at Bethel Presbyterian Church in Wheaton, Ill.
- 25. Charles and Connie Jackson**, Mbale, Uganda. Pray for the pastors and elders in the Presbyterian Church in Uganda. / **Kim and Barbara Kuhfuss**, Eau Claire, Wis. Pray that the Lord would replace the families which have left Providence Reformed Church. / Army chaplain **Stephen (and Lindsey) Roberts**.
- 26. Jim and Bonnie Hoekstra**, Andover, Minn. Ask God to bring unbelievers to a knowledge of himself through Immanuel OPC's ministry. / **Eric and Dianna Tuininga**, Mbale, Uganda (on furlough). Pray for the family as they prepare to return to Uganda following their seven-month furlough. / *Ordained Servant* proofreader **Diane Olinger**.
- 27.** Missionary associate **Leah Hopp**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for families reached through the community health work. / **Lowell and Mae Ivey**, Virginia Beach, Va. Praise the Lord for providing a single meeting location for Reformation Presbyterian Church. / *New Horizons* editorial assistant **Pat Clawson**.
- 28. Chris and Megan Hartshorn**, Anaheim Hills, Calif. Pray that Anaheim Hills Presbyterian Church will see visitors, adult conversions, and baptisms. / Missionary associates **Sarah Jantzen** and **Angela Voskuil**, Uganda. Pray for open hearts for the students they teach. / *New Horizons* managing editor **Jim Scott**.
- 29. David and Sunshine Okken**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for the Karimojong men teaching village Bibles studies. / **Mika and Christina Edmondson**, Grand Rapids, Mich. Pray for Christ to carry New City Fellowship through particularization. / **Bryan (and Heidi) Dage**, yearlong intern at Covenant OPC in Komoka, Ontario.
- 30. Paul and Sarah Moureale**, St. Louis, Mo. Pray for Gateway OPC's outreach to international students. / **David and Rashed Robbins**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for new members at Nakaale Presbyterian Church as they mature in their faith. / **Richard (and Erin) Chung**, yearlong intern at Theophilus OPC in Anaheim, Calif.
- 31.** Pray for the labors of missionary associates **Christopher and Chloe Verdick**, Nakaale, Uganda. / **Andrew and Billie Moody**, San Antonio, Tex. Pray for wisdom and guidance as San Antonio Reformed Church goes through the organization process. / *Ordained Servant* editor **Greg Reynolds**.

NEWS, VIEWS, & REVIEWS

KEN MONTGOMERY INSTALLED

Wallace B. King

On December 3, 2016, the Rev. Ken B. Montgomery was installed by the Presbytery of the Southeast as the pastor of Geneva OPC in Marietta, Georgia. Before coming to Geneva, he served as associate pastor of Redeemer OPC in Dayton, Ohio, for seven years.

The Rev. Dr. William Dennison (a professor at Covenant College) preached a sermon entitled “Christ Is with You” from Matthew 1:23 and 28:20. The Rev. Calvin Keller (pastor of Cornerstone Presbyterian Church in Chattanooga, Tennessee) gave the charge to the pastor. The Rev. Boyd Miller (pastor of Covenant OPC in LaGrange, Georgia) moderated the meeting and gave the charge to the congregation. The Rev. Zecharias Abraham Weldeyesus (pastor of Redeemer OPC in Doraville, Georgia) prayed for God’s blessings on Pastor Montgomery and the congregation.



At the installation of Ken Montgomery: Boyd Miller, Larry Mehne (ruling elder, Cornerstone), Wally King (ruling elder, Geneva), Calvin Keller, Ken, Bill Dennison, Christopher Lillie (ruling elder, Geneva)

Pastor Montgomery and his wife, Emily, have four children: Claire, Phoebe, Reuben, and Judah.

IN MEMORIAM ROY A. DAVENPORT

Don Taws

I first met Roy Davenport when Jeannette and I moved to Hendersonville, North Carolina. At that time, Roy was pasturing a small OPC group, Christ Presbyterian Church, meeting in Etowah. He had previously been the pastor at a PCA church in Brevard, North Carolina. He was supporting himself doing electrical work.

He faithfully served Christ Presbyterian Church until the onset of cancer in his jaw. It was a difficult time, as the pain was excruciating, and he needed surgery. Upon recovering, he continued to preach every Sunday morning until the church was unable to continue at the end of 2013.

As his cancer grew, he and his wife, Rachel, attended the PCA church in Brevard (Cornerstone) and continued to be active in the Presbytery of the Southeast. Roy remained faithful to his Lord until the end, never complaining about his evident pain. He was a good friend and committed to the Lord Jesus.

Roy died on December 27, 2016, at



Bill Hobbs, newly installed associate pastor at Covenant Presbyterian Church in Saint Augustine, Florida (center), flanked (left to right) by Larry Mininger (pastor, Lake Sherwood OPC in Orlando), Covenant's senior pastor Eric Watkins (pastor, Covenant), Joshua Downs (ruling elder, Redemption OPC in Gainesville), and Ron Lantrip (ruling elder, Covenant)

the age of 76. He is survived by his wife of fifty-two years, Rachel, their children, Carolyn Dupee, Robert, Scott (an OP minister), and Stephan, and many grandchildren. His son Jeremy predeceased him.

The church was filled for his funeral service, and the Rev. Ben Dowling, who took over the group in Etowah when Roy had to stop, gave a wonderful, stirring gospel message.

To God be the glory!

IN MEMORIAM RICHARD A. NELSON

Richard R. Gerber

The Rev. Richard A. Nelson departed this life on January 7, 2017, at the age of 70. He was the beloved husband of Jean for 47 years, the father of Jeremy, Bethany, and Abigail, and the grandfather of eleven. Rick grew up in Sharon OPC in Hialeah, Florida. He graduated in 1971 from Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia and was ordained by the Presbytery of the Dakotas. He served Caney OPC in Caney, Kansas, for six years, and Grace OPC in Hamilton Township, New Jersey, for thirty-two years. Rick received his Th.M. in church history from Princeton Theological Seminary in 1983. He was a member of the Board of Directors of French Creek Bible Conference.

Rick's sister-in-law, Dawn Zetto, sum-



Rick and Jean Nelson

marized his life in part: "He loved the Lord, the church, and his family. He was humble, humorous, and holy unto God. He was a master stitcher of Scripture. He had a passion for history as he told God's story. He sang with the best, Ricky Nelson, and all the rest—big bands, hymns, old and new, Psalms and catechisms. He hosted a hospitality of humor."

LOUIS CLOETE ORDAINED

Louis J. Cloete was ordained on November 25, 2016, and installed as pastor of Bethlehem Reformed Church (OPC) in Freeman, South Dakota. Two retired pastors in the Presbytery of the Dakotas, G. I. Williamson (moderator) and Leonard J. Coppes, participated in the service,

joined by Travis Grassmid, pastor of Zion Reformed Church (RCUS) in Menno, South Dakota. A time of fellowship and refreshments followed the service.

UPDATE

MINISTERS

- On November 25, **Louis J. Cloete** was ordained as a minister and installed as pastor of Bethlehem Reformed Church in Freeman, S.D.

- On January 6, **Micah I. Shin** was ordained as a minister and installed as pastor of Old Stockbridge OPC in Morgan Siding (Gresham), Wis., and Menominee OPC in Zoar, Wis.

MILESTONES

- Retired minister **Roy A. Davenport**, 76, died on December 27 after a long battle with cancer.

- Retired minister **Richard A. Nelson**, 70, died on January 7.

MICHIGAN WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

Sharon L. Bratcher

About eighty women attended the First Annual Women's Conference sponsored by Providence OPC in Southfield, Michigan. The topic for the November 4–5, 2016, conference, held at Oakland Hills Community Church (OPC) in Farmington Hills, Michigan, was "Living in the Face of Suffering."

Tamara L. Kelly, LPC, a longtime counselor and a member at Providence OPC, was the featured speaker. The final session was presented by Jeffrey Wilson, who had just celebrated twenty years as the pastor of Providence OPC.

Mrs. Kelly spoke on the subjects of "Hard Times," "Faces of Suffering and a Christian Response," "The Art of Contentment," and "Joy in the Midst of Suffering." Pastor Wilson closed with thoughts on "Walking with a Limp: The Purpose of Communion and Community." Fellowship time was enhanced by singing encouraging hymns and sharing an exceptional catered luncheon.



Participants in the ordination service for Louis Cloete (left to right): ministers G. I. Williamson, Leonard Coppes, Louis Cloete, Travis Grassmid; OPC ruling elders Jere D. Hieb (Volga, S.D.), Steven Nanninga (Freeman), Elroy Koerner (Freeman)



Tammy Kelly

Providence OPC plans to have their Second Annual Women's Conference in the fall of 2017.

LETTERS

WAYWARD CHILDREN

Editor:

It was striking to read the article "When Kids Go Astray," in the January issue, which had so many good things to say on the subject of unbelieving children of godly parents, but the author never mentioned warnings.

The Bible is full of warnings, often to the professing people of God. Perhaps none are stronger than those found in the book of Hebrews, written to Christians tempted to abandon the faith due to its demands and attendant suffering. How much more, then, should parents warn their rebellious and faithless children of what is ahead unless they repent? This ought not be done in anger, but after prayer and through tears.

Yes, it is entirely God's work to regenerate the soul, bringing that new life that normally comes through the word, but surely one means is God's specific and kind warnings of the consequences of sustained resistance to the Holy Spirit.

David Green
Tacoma Park, Md.

REVIEWS

Calling on the Name of the Lord: A Biblical Theology of Prayer, by J. Gary Millar. InterVarsity Press, 2016. Paperback, 264 pages, list price \$24.00. Reviewed by OP minister Philip B. Strong.

In *Calling on the Name of the Lord*, Gary Millar has done a service to the church that, if taken to heart, will help us deal with a big problem in the church today: our lack of

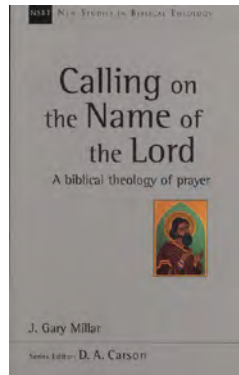
prayer. He states at the outset of this fine book, "At the root of my interest is simply a desire to pray more and more effectively as one who belongs to, is called to and is enabled to pray by the Lord Jesus Christ. To that is added a growing sense of disquiet at the marginalization of prayer in local churches across the English-speaking world" (p. 15).

Millar's goal is to present to his readers a "biblical theology of prayer." That is, he seeks to trace through the Scriptures what God has to say about prayer—a rather herculean task, but one that he does quite effectively.

Millar argues that Adam and Eve were looking for the "serpent crusher" promised in Genesis 3:15, but that when the births of Seth and Enosh did not produce that messiah, "people began to call upon the name of the LORD" (4:26).

He defines "calling on the name of Yahweh" as "crying out to God in prayer." "This is the Biblical-theological definition of prayer," which in essence "is asking God to intervene specifically to do one thing—to come through on his promises" (p. 22).

It is this premise that Millar traces through the whole of the Scriptures, even touching briefly on the prayer of Jabez! The prayers of God's people are offered in the context of the covenant of grace and should be prayed as such—not seeking first our own glory or goals, but ulti-



mately the fulfilling of God's purpose for his people, life with him as accomplished through Christ and all that is entailed in this.

Millar's writing style is warm and scholarly. It is easy to read and comprehend. He writes with pastoral concern for the church and does a great job of dealing with difficult passages concerning prayer. He concludes his book with some helpful counsel on prayer.

There is one thing better than having this book in your library, and that would be to read it and learn from its pages!

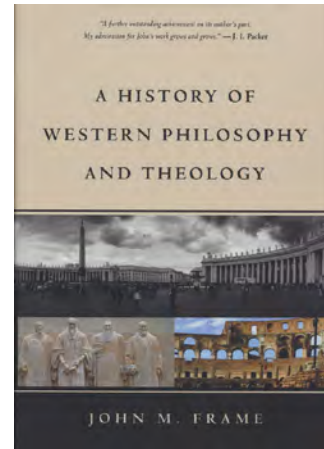
A History of Western Philosophy and Theology, by John M. Frame. P&R, 2015. Hardback, 875 pages, list price \$59.99. Reviewed by OP elder Richard M. Gamble.

The apostle Paul reminded the Corinthians that the Body of Christ wages spiritual warfare with spiritual weapons. But what it looks like to "take every thought captive to obey Christ" in that battle challenges every generation of believers.

The church can never rest comfortably in the assumption that it has destroyed every "lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God."

Working out the implications of Paul's exhortation, John Frame offers his new textbook. It is a massive book, packed with schematic outlines, diagrams, study questions, lists of terms, "famous quotes," and recommended readings. It draws heavily from his previous publications and gathers decades of accumulated resources from his experience as a teacher, writer, and debater. This is not a book for the fainthearted or the dabbler.

In the spirit of Abraham Kuyper and Cornelius Van Til, Frame excludes "religious neutrality," opposes the quest for autonomous human reason, and affirms "worldview" and presuppositions as the best way to understand the history of



philosophy and theology in the West. By his own admission, Frame tells a dramatic story punctuated by one convulsion after another. His purpose goes beyond description and analysis to embrace advocacy. “I have tried to write this book,” he stresses, “so that readers can see that a biblical philosophy and theology can prevail against even the most intelligent among its detractors.”

Frame’s presuppositions hold this book together: a Christian worldview exists; “working assumptions” are unavoidable; the Bible is applicable to “every aspect of human life”; believers confront an antithesis with unbelievers “in every area of life”; there is little difference between theology and philosophy; and the “history of philosophy” tells the story of “one phase of spiritual warfare.” Indeed, despite the book’s title, Frame offers not so much a history as “an extended apologetic.”

The reader should keep in mind not only Frame’s presuppositions but also the more fundamental question of how Christ enacts his lordship over life. Our Savior rules his church as mediator, shepherd, husband, brother, friend. He loves his Bride. He died for her. He nourishes and cherishes her. None of this can be said of Christ’s rule over creation and his sovereignty over human society and culture. The distinction is fundamental in Scripture and ought therefore to shape how (and to what degree) believers seek to conform the world to a biblical standard.

Frame takes it for granted that “worldview” is a durable, if not permanent, concept. This assumption seems unwarranted. Worldview is itself a product of modern philosophy—of Hegel’s idealism, to be precise. Frame doesn’t see an antithesis between worldview and Christianity. But that tension needs to be explored. Worldview as a concept may not even survive the passing of the modern age. If not, then Christians need to be equipped for life after worldview.

Given the degree to which Christian education at every level in the United States has been built on the premise of worldview, it would seem incumbent on teachers to move beyond what Frame defends and combats with this arsenal and ask a hard question: is a defense of

worldview inherently and inescapably a defense of modernity? It would take a whole book to answer that question.

Nevertheless, Frame sees a bright future for a renewed Christian philosophy. “God has not abandoned the world of thought,” he writes. Indeed. Christians are called now as always to submit to the doctrine of Christ under the guidance of the Holy Spirit through the ministry of the Word.

***The Forgotten Fear: Where Have All the God-Fearers Gone?* by Albert N. Martin. Reformation Heritage Books, 2015. Paperback, 175 pages, list price \$15.00. Reviewed by Prof. Ryan M. McGraw.**

Few Christians will question the fact that there has been a tremendous breakdown in ethics, both in the world and in the church. Yet, as Al Martin notes in *The Forgotten Fear*, “You cannot separate ethics, morality, and conduct from the true biblical religion” (p. 128). The Bible often summarizes true biblical religion with the phrase

“the fear of the Lord.” Martin’s book is calculated to promote godly character in believers, conversion in unbelievers, and joyful, God-exalting worship in all.

Martin is clear and deliberate in expounding his subject. One of the reasons why the Lord has used him so greatly as a preacher, and now as an author, is that he makes his hearers and readers think through the Bible carefully and deliberately. He treats his subject by tracing its importance in Scripture, defining his terms, delineating its components, rooting it in the gospel of Christ, and applying it to our personal conduct. Readers will not find fancy rhetorical devices here, but they will learn key passages of Scripture, accompanied by useful illustrations and robust applications. Martin is a good model to preachers in particular, as he develops a subject from texts of Scripture in a way that is orderly and focused. This fills a great need in our day, when preaching often meanders though texts without a clear sense of direction or purpose.

Martin is eminently practical, providing clear and specific examples of how to apply his subject. This is particularly true in his last chapter, where he notes that even though the fear of God and the resultant fruit of the Spirit are worked in us by God, we have more to do than simply pray (p. 143). We need to know what the Bible says (pp. 147–50), we need to experience God’s forgiveness (pp. 150–53), we need to learn more about God’s greatness (pp. 153–57), we need a growing awareness of God’s presence (pp. 157–59), we need to cultivate our sense of obligation to God (pp. 159–60), and we need to associate ourselves with those who fear God (pp. 160–65). This process should both begin and end with fervent prayer (pp. 165–66).

Martin addresses businessmen and students, parents and children, believers and unbelievers, and many other groups. His final chapter applies the principles taught in the rest of the book, creating a harmonious picture of the Christian life that is packed with practical suggestions. This makes his teaching

both specific and helpful, which is the best way to make biblical insights useful to our souls.

The fear of God can recover the ethical foundations of the church and impact the world for Christ. Solomon once wrote, “The words of the wise are like goads, and the words of scholars are like well-driven nails, given by one Shepherd” (Eccl. 12:11 NKJV). Read this book to prod you on toward godliness and help you recover the forgotten fear of the Lord.

***John 3:16: What’s It All About?* by Murray J. Harris. Cascade Books, 2015. Paperback, 54 pages, list price \$8.00. Reviewed by former OP minister Mark J. Larson, now in the RCUS.**

Murray J. Harris is professor emeritus of New Testament exegesis and theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. He calls the twenty-five words in the Greek text of John 3:16 the most famous sentence in all literature. In this short book,



Mid-America Seminary Interns

Churches are encouraged to apply for a seminary intern through the OPC's Committee on Christian Education. Please also contact Mid-America Reformed Seminary if you are interested in having a seminary student serve in your congregation. Contact Rev. Mark Vander Hart, Mid-America Reformed Seminary, 229 Seminary Drive, Dyer, IN 46311-1069; mvanderhart@midamerica.edu; tel. 219-864-2400, ext. 408.

he provides an excellent exposition of this famous passage, which is the heart of the gospel.

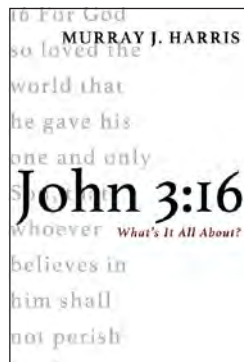
One of the strengths of this volume is that Harris constantly emphasizes context. He begins by placing John 3:16 in the wider context of the gospel of John and the more narrow context of Jesus' conversation with

Nicodemus. He argues that verses 1–10 present a dialogue between Jesus and Nicodemus, which are then followed by Jesus' monologue in verses 11–21. He acknowledges, though, that the monologue may end at verse 15, making verses 16–21 the reflections of the apostle John.

Harris divides the text of John 3:16 (following the NIV) into eight sections, providing two or three pages for each phrase. The exposition is intelligible without any knowledge of Greek, but there are copious footnotes for Greek enthusiasts.

Harris contends that the word *kosmos*, translated "world," refers to "all humans without distinction or exception" (p. 13). Preferable is Warfield's exegesis, that it refers to "all that is evil and noisome and disgusting" ("God's Immeasurable Love," p. 514). Ironically, Harris recognizes that in the John "there are ominous, negative ideas attaching to the term *kosmos*" (p. 13), but he chooses to go with a universal and distributive meaning here.

I do appreciate, however, his handling



of the clause "whoever believes in him." Harris writes that there is "an open and warm invitation to all and every—"whoever believes" (p. 19). Calvin understands the passage in the same way: "He has employed the universal term *whosoever* ... to invite all indiscriminately to partake of life" (*Commentary on John*, p. 125). The general call is part of the good news without a doubt.

In connection with this universal invitation, Harris does an outstanding job in explaining what John is driving at in his distinctive expression "believe in him." Harris explains, "To believe *in* Jesus is to have faith that is directed towards him, faith that is focused on him." "It involves the total commit-

ment of one's whole self to the person of Christ as Messiah and Lord forever" (p. 20). This is indeed the gospel invitation—to give ourselves in total allegiance to Jesus, to cast ourselves upon him completely for our salvation.

This little volume is a clear and scholarly presentation of the gospel, a book that we can share with people who need to know the way of salvation.

***The Ology: Ancient Truths, Ever New*, by Marty Machowski. Illustrated by Andy McGuire. New Growth Press, 2015. Hardback, 224 pages, list price \$29.99. Reviewed by Celeste Jenkins, OP pastor's wife.**

This book is a must-have treasure for families with children. Beautifully written, this illustrated systematic theology walks children simply and clearly through seventy-one short chapters, each covering one important truth. The chapters are organized into eleven units, each focused on a different "ology"—the ology of God, people, sin, the promise and the law, Christ, the Holy Spirit, adoption into God's family, change, the church, the end

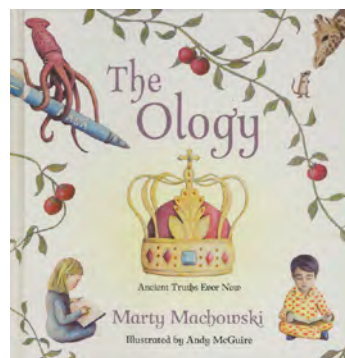
times, and God's word. The flow of the book carefully shows how each truth is connected to the next, providing a framework for a solid, biblical worldview.

Each chapter is short, usually a couple of paragraphs, making it convenient to cover a chapter during family devotions or to use the book as a children's Bible curriculum. A benefit to using *The Ology* is that it is set up to engage children from about four years old through teens—and even adults. Preschoolers will enjoy looking at the illustrations while listening to the conversational style of the lessons. It would take little effort to tie a question and answer from the Children's Catechism into each lesson. The illustrations in each chapter are sprinkled with a few supporting Bible references. Elementary-age children can participate by looking up the verses and using the *Think Theology*, *Talk Theology* discussion questions at the back of the book that correspond to the chapters. With each lesson, teens can be challenged to verbalize how the Scripture references connect to the truths covered in the chapter and how they tie in to the larger theme of that unit.

The introductory chapter reads somewhat like an adventure story, following two children who stumble upon a hidden room in the cellar of an old church. There they find a mysterious package with a note explaining that it contains the last known copy of a rare children's book called *The Ology*. From there the book proceeds with its lessons.

The unit on the ology of sin does such a good job of showing children their depravity, that it would be a comfort to little ones to end those lessons with prayer, thanking God for sending Jesus. *The Ology* gets to the amazing work of Christ, but not until many chapters later.

For a richer use of the book, the author suggests using a companion album by Sovereign Grace Music, also called *The Ology: Ancient Truths, Ever New*, which is a systematic theology for kids set to music.





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Director of Mercy Ministries at Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, and author of *“Not Just a Soup Kitchen: How Mercy Ministry in the Local Church Transforms Us All.”*

LECTURE/WORKSHOP TITLES:

- **Jesus is the Great Deacon**
- **Everyone is a Deacon**
- **Why the Office of Deacon?**



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Registration opens **FEBRUARY 1, 2017**

Register at OPCSTM.org/Register

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