

REVIEW: Letham's *Christian's Pocket Guide to Baptism* by D. Dillard

New Horizons

IN THE ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

FEB 2013

WHY CHRISTIANS NEED

Confessions

by Carl R. Trueman

ALSO: G. I. Williamson & John P. Galbraith on Confessions

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NEW HORIZONS

IN THE ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Editorial Board: The Committee on Christian Education's Subcommittee on Serial Publications

Editor: Danny E. Olinger

Managing Editor: James W. Scott

Editorial Assistant: Patricia Clawson

Cover Designer: Christopher Tobias

Proofreader: Sarah J. Pederson

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A ladies' tea was held at Grace OPC in Middletown, Delaware, on Saturday, October 13. The afternoon included a lovely time of fellowship shared over tea, along with a cake-decorating demonstration.

Linda Posthuma, who works for the Committee on Foreign Missions, spoke on "A Woman's Perspective on the World: Lord, What Would You Have Me Do?" She spoke from her own experience in changing careers, as well as from Scripture. In addition to explaining how we can know what God wants us to do, she discussed various things to be aware of when considering a change. Some of the ladies present mentioned how helpful Linda's words were for their own lives.



CARL R. TRUEMAN

Why Christians Need Confessions

Despite claims to the contrary, the Christian world is not divided between those who have creeds and confessions and those who just have the Bible. It is actually divided between those who have creeds and confessions and write them down in a public form, open to public scrutiny and correction, and those who have them and do not write them down. The reason is simple: every church (and indeed every Christian) believes the Bible means something, and what it thinks the Bible means is its creed and confession, whether it chooses to write its beliefs down or not.

Of course, those who argue that they have no creed but Christ and no book but the Bible are usually trying to protect something important and biblical: the supreme authority of Scripture in all matters of Christian faith and practice. They rightly fear allowing unbiblical traditions or ideas to impact the substance of what the church believes. Yet for all of the good intentions that they may have, I believe that that which they want to protect—the unique status of Scripture—is actually best protected through explicit confessional documents, connected to a carefully thought-out form of church government.

In fact, and somewhat ironically, it is those who do not express their confession in the form of a written document who are in danger of elevating their tradition above Scripture in such a way that it can never be controlled by the latter. If a church has a document that says it is dispensational in eschatology, then we all know where such a church stands on the issue of the end times, and we can do the Berean thing and test the position by Scripture to see if it is so. The church that tells you simply that its position on the end times is the same one as that taught in the Bible appears to be telling you everything, but is actually telling you nothing at all.

In short, creeds and confessions, connected to a biblical church polity, are a vital part of maintaining a healthy New

Testament church life. Here are seven reasons why every church should have them.

1. CONFESSIONS DELIMIT CHURCH POWER.

In an age when words, especially words that make truth claims, are always suspected of being part of some manipulative power game, it is perhaps counterintuitive to think of confessions as delimiting the power of the church. Yet a moment of reflection makes it clear that this is exactly what they do. An elder in the church has authority only relative to those matters that the confession defines. Thus, if someone in church declares the Trinity to be nonsense or commits adultery, the elders have both a right and a duty to intervene. Both issues are covered in the Westminster Standards. But if someone wishes to turn up at church wearing a bright yellow suit or decides to become a vegetarian, the elders have no right to intervene. They might have personal reservations about the person's sense of appropriate dress or wonder how anyone could live without the occasional burger, but it is not the church's business to address either matter. Indeed, this is what stops churches from becoming cults: clear and open statements about where church authority begins and ends, connected to transparent processes of exercising that authority.

2. CONFESSIONS OFFER SUCCINCT SUMMARIES OF THE FAITH.

If you have on your bookshelf or in your pocket a copy of the Westminster Standards, you have more theological punch per page than anything other than the Bible. Theological tomes often seem vast and forbidding, and few have the time to read them. Yet the Shorter Catechism can be carried in a pocket, read through in a few minutes, and easily memorized. It is an entire theological curriculum in an easily digestible form. Of course, there are other books out there that do similar things. But are there any that do it so efficiently and in such an easily digestible form? The church with a good confession and a good catechism has a ready-made pedagogical tool for instilling the truth into its people.

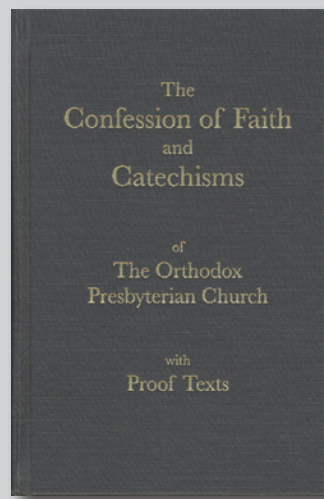
History has proved this over and over again. Here, for example, is a quotation from B. B. Warfield in 1909:

What is “the indelible mark of the Shorter Catechism”? We have the following bits of personal experience from a general officer of the United States army. He was in a great western city at the time of intense excitement and violent rioting. The streets were over-run daily by a dangerous crowd. One day he observed approaching him a man of singularly combined calmness and firmness of mien, whose very demeanor inspired confidence. So impressed was he with his bearing amid the surrounding uproar that when he had passed he turned to look back at him, only to find that the stranger had done the same. On observing his turning the stranger at once came back to him, and touching his chest with his forefinger, demanded without preface, “What is the chief end of man?” On receiving the counter-sign, “Man’s chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever”—“Ah!” said he, “I knew you were a Shorter Catechism boy by your looks!” “Why, that was just what I was thinking of you,” was the rejoinder. (*Selected Shorter Writings*, vol. 1, 383–84)

And Warfield’s laconic postscript to that story is, “It is worth while to be a Shorter Catechism boy. They grow to be men. And better than that, they are exceedingly apt to grow to be men of God.” The reason, of course, is that the Shorter Catechism is arguably an excellent and concise statement of the whole counsel of God.

3. CONFESSIONS ALLOW FOR APPROPRIATE DISCRIMINATION BETWEEN OFFICE-BEARERS AND MEMBERS.

There is some debate within Reformed circles over exactly how much doctrinal knowledge should be required for membership in a church. For myself, I believe Romans 10 indicates that the bar should be set toward the lower, rather than the higher, end of the spectrum. A basic confession, as long as it is combined with a humble and teachable spirit, is enough.



This 464-page handbook, containing the official OPC Confession of Faith and Catechisms, with proof texts written out and a scriptural index, is available for only \$12.00 (plus shipping for orders under \$35.00) online (using a credit card) at store.opc.org or by e-mail at CCEsec@opc.org (to be billed).

Even if some disagree with setting the bar low, however, all should agree that there is to be a difference between the degree of knowledge required of an office-bearer and a new member. Where one starts in the Christian life should not be where one finishes. There is to be growth in maturity, one aspect of which is growth in doctrinal knowledge, and the confessional documents of a church offer a road map or aspirational framework that gives substance and structure to this growth. The church with no confession or with only the most minimal of doctrinal statements has the disadvantage of not being able to set before the people any biblically ambitious vision of what a mature Christian’s theology should be.

4. CONFESSIONS HIGHLIGHT THAT WHICH IS OF IMPORTANCE.

One could perhaps express this point in negative terms: if it is not in the confession, it is going to be difficult to argue that it is of any great importance. This is one reason why confessions should be somewhat elaborate. If, for example, a church has a ten-point doctrinal basis or confession, the problem the elders are going to face is how they are ever going to convince their people that an eleventh doctrinal point is really that important. If it is not in the confession, then the church is functionally allowing for liberty of conscience on the matter. For example, if the statement does not reference baptism and thereby allows both paedobaptists and credobaptists to hold office, then baptism as an issue has been made a matter of practical indifference. The same applies to any doctrine—perseverance, sanctification, eschatology: if it is not mentioned, then the church has no official position on it and it is relegated to being a matter of minor importance.

Again, to return to the former point: the new convert or the new member is not necessarily going to know at the moment of joining the church what is important and what is indifferent. A good, elaborate confession provides the church not only with a great pedagogical map, but also with a fine

resource for teaching the people about what really matters and why.

5. CONFESSIONS RELATIVIZE THE PRESENT AND CONNECT US TO THE PAST.

We all know that Christianity is not reinvented every Sunday. We all stand on ground that has been laid for us by many brothers and sisters in Christ who have gone before us. Yet often we can be tempted to live as if this were not true. This is hardly surprising, as we live in an age where the antihistorical forces of the wider culture are powerful and all-pervasive. Whether it is a commercial telling us that the next purchase we make will bring us happiness or science promising some great breakthrough that will ease our lives, everything around us points to the future as that which is most important and certainly as vastly superior to the past.

By contrast, Christianity is a religion rooted in history. It was constituted by God's historical actions culminating in Christ, and it comes to us through the faithful articulation and preservation of its message by God's church throughout the ages. That is profoundly countercultural and something of which we need to be constantly reminded. Ironically, it may well be that those who claim no creed but the Bible are actually reflecting merely the spirit of our age in all of its antihistorical triumphalism.

In this context, the use of creeds and confessions is one intentional means of connecting ourselves to the past, of identifying with the church of previous ages, and thereby of relativizing our own significance in the grand scheme of things. The recitation of ancient creedal formulas in the worship service is one practical example of such. The affirmation of historic confessional standards, as expressing the doctrinal commitments of the church's office-bearers and the content of the church's pedagogical ambitions for her membership, is another.

6. CONFESSIONS REFLECT THE SUBSTANCE OF OUR WORSHIP.

When I teach my course on the Ancient Church, I always emphasize that the dynamic of early Trinitarian and Christological debates is doxological and inextricably connected to Christian worship. Put simply, the early church's cry of worship, "Jesus is Lord!" and the conjunction of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the baptismal formula point toward a foundation of deep theology. They provided the context for the discussions that would ultimately bear fruit in the Nicene Creed and the Chalcedonian Definition. The church's confessional tradition begins with reflection upon the meaning of acts of worship.

For two millennia, the worship of the church has not changed relative to the fundamental points—that it is a

declaration that Jesus is Lord and that salvation is an act of the triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—and our confessions explicate the content of these points.

Thus, we should not think of confessions and the doctrine they contain as being antithetical to vibrant worship. The possession of a confession, of course, does not equate to vibrant worship, nor does it guarantee it, any more than the mere existence of a legal code guarantees a civilized society. Yet confessions are prerequisites of vibrant and thoughtful worship, the things that make sense of what we do as Christians.

This confessional function is likely to become more obviously important in years to come. As other religions collide with Christianity, and especially as some of those religions use the same kind of biblical vocabulary that we use, it is going to be more and more crucial that we understand not only what words to use, but also what those words actually mean. Your friendly Mormon neighbor might well agree with you that Jesus is Lord; he may even sing some of the same hymns at his worship service. Thus, you are going to need to know what exactly your church means when it says "Jesus is Lord" or performs baptism in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Good confessions enable you to do that with greater ease than anything else.

7. CONFESSIONS FULFILL A VITAL PART OF PAUL'S PLAN FOR THE POST-APOSTOLIC CHURCH.

As Paul wrote from prison to his protégé, Timothy, his mind was focused on how the church was to manage once he and the other apostles had passed from the scene. His answer had two components: a structure in which the governance of the church was put in the hands of ordinary but faithful men, and a form of sound words. Both were necessary. Without structure, the church would have no leadership; without a form of sound words, she would drift from her theological moorings, losing touch with her past and with other congregations in the present. A form of sound words, a confession, was crucial for maintaining both continuity with the apostles and unity among Christians in the present. And that is what our confessional documents do today: they bind us to faithful brothers and sisters in the past and with the same in the present.

The cry "No creed but Christ, no book but the Bible!" has a speciously pious and biblical ring to it, yet we should not be ashamed of being confessional Christians, for confessions enable us to maintain certain biblical priorities. We should give thanks for this, even as we try to show nonconfessional brothers and sisters a better way of preserving the things that are of value to all Christians. □

The author, an OP minister, teaches church history at Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia. He has written The Creedal Imperative.



G. I. WILLIAMSON

How the Standards Changed My Life

When the editor of *New Horizons* invited me to write this article, I knew I had to do it. Why? Because of what the Westminster Standards did for me. So let me tell you my story.

I begin with an event that took place in my fortieth year as a pastor. My father died at the age of 93 in 1993, and I was honored to officiate at his funeral. Before returning home to North Dakota, my wife and I paid a final visit to my 95-year-old mother, who was living in a care center in Seguin, Texas. We were quietly talking about spiritual things when she said something that prompted me to blurt out these words: “But Mother, what is the chief end of man, anyway?”

She immediately replied, “Man’s chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.”

I was astounded. I couldn’t remember ever hearing her say those words before! So I immediately asked the next two or three questions from the Shorter Catechism, and she came back again with flawless answers. I never knew, before that last visit with her (she died ten days later), that my mother had memorized the Shorter Catechism in the old United Presbyterian church in Pawnee City, Nebraska, where she had grown up.

Her five children were never catechized. Memorizing the Shorter Catechism was no longer part of the Sunday school training when we grew up in the United Presbyterian Church. We did hear some sound Bible preaching, though. And through it I felt called to the ministry after U.S. Army service in World War II. So off I went in 1949, with my wife and daughter, to Pittsburgh-Xenia Theological Seminary.

HOW I DISCOVERED THE WESTMINSTER STANDARDS

Right away I felt myself to be immersed in a babel of confusion. Among my professors were two or three men who were orthodox to various degrees, but another teacher was

neo-orthodox, and one was liberal enough to hold an honorary office in the modernistic National Council of Churches. I vividly remember the day when, as a result of the conflicting instruction, I had serious doubts about the doctrine of the virgin birth of Christ. And then, when funds provided by the G.I. Bill ran out, I accepted an invitation to serve a country church as a student-pastor.

It was while serving in that capacity that I first discovered the Westminster Standards. One Saturday, when some of the members were cleaning the church, the treasurer came to tell me that they had found some old books in a dusty closet and were about to throw them away. If I wanted any of those books, she said, I was free to take them. So I went to have a look, and one that caught my eye was an edition of the 1858 Subordinate Standards of the United Presbyterian Church of North America. That was the first time that I had ever laid eyes on the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms.

From that moment on, my life was radically changed. I began to study the Confession and Catechisms, paying close attention to the proof texts printed out below the text of these documents to support their statements. And within a few weeks, as I continued commuting to and from the seminary and diligently studying that book, I was delivered once and for all from my confusion. Next to the Bible itself, no other book even comes close to the importance of this one in my life as a Christian and a pastor.

And now, after sixty years as an ordained minister of the Word of God, I am more convinced than ever that no creed that has yet been written even equals (let alone surpasses) the

Westminster Standards for stating the system of truth revealed in the Bible in such a succinct, yet adequate, way. I also came to love the Three Forms of Unity, to which I gladly subscribed when I served as a pastor in the Reformed Churches of New Zealand. I also have sincere respect for the historic ecumenical creeds that mark the progressive fulfillment of the promise of Jesus, who said, “The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things” (John 14:26).

THE VALUE OF THESE CONFESSIONAL DOCUMENTS

There is much to learn from all of these confessional documents, which express the truth of the Bible in uniquely different ways. As an Orthodox Presbyterian called to serve a church holding to the Three Forms of Unity, I came to the conclusion that they and the Westminster Standards are fully compatible with each other, but also that there is much to learn from each. I believe that people in churches holding to the Three Forms of Unity would benefit by getting acquainted with the Westminster Standards, as I have benefited from their standards. I will even add that there are some issues I wouldn't know how to handle without help from both quarters.

Let me give you an example. The church of Jesus Christ at the present time is splintered and fragmented. (This is also true of us who are Presbyterian and Reformed.) No wonder so many people are confused! What I need, therefore, in order to navigate for myself and to help those I'm privileged to teach, is the understanding of the teaching of the Bible that is provided by both the Westminster and the Belgic Confessions! The Belgic Confession (article 29) states with incomparable simplicity what the difference is between the *true* church and the *false* church. The true church is the church in which “all things are managed according to the pure Word of God, (and) all things contrary thereto rejected.” In other words, there is an absolute standard! The standard we find the apostles upholding in all of their epistles, supported by their actions as recorded in the book of Acts, is that of the Belgic Confession. Any church that did not then, and does not now, strive to live up to that standard does not qualify as a true church.

But, at the same time, we all know that there is no *perfect* church here on earth. That was also true in the time of the apostles. Therefore, keeping the absolute standard in mind—and never compromising it or forsaking it—I also find that I can't do without the equally clear statement in the Westminster Confession (25:5) that “the purest churches under heaven are subject both to mixture and error,” while “some have so degenerated, as to become no churches of Christ, but synagogues of Satan.” As I read my Bible, I see that this was just as true in the time of the apostles as it is today. So both of these historic Reformed Confessions define precious aspects of the truth.

The apostles never settled for error or immorality in churches they founded and cared for, yet most (if not all) of the churches we encounter in the New Testament were afflicted with “mixture and error.” And all of the “true” churches, though imperfect even in the apostolic age, were keenly conscious of “the falling away” (1 Thess. 2:3 NKJV) which had brought the old church of the Jewish nation to become “a synagogue of Satan” (Rev. 2:9).

SHARING THE WESTMINSTER STANDARDS WITH OTHERS

When I began my labor as a home missionary of the OPC in Fall River, Massachusetts, in 1955, I determined that my people—however few or many there might be under my ministry—were not going to be deprived (as I had been) of their confessional and catechetical heritage. So I began writing lessons on the Westminster Confession that were handed out weekly to be studied and discussed at the midweek prayer meeting. As I wrote those lessons, I never had any notion that I was writing a book! But Dr. William Young, who was then teaching philosophy at the University of Rhode Island, often came to worship with us on Sunday evenings. When he saw a few of those lessons, he began to urge me to send them in to Mr. Charles Craig of the Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company to see if he would publish them. He said he was pretty sure he would, because I quoted Van Til and Murray! And to my amazement, he was right.

So in 1964 my lessons on the Westminster Confession were published in book form. And now, nearly half a century later, they are still teaching many people—not only in the English language, but also in Spanish and Korean. My positive experience with my first book encouraged me to write a study of the Westminster Shorter Catechism, in collaboration with the Rev. Thomas Tyson. This book is now available in Arabic, Chinese, Korean, and, most recently, Japanese. Many people who have used my books have written to thank me for them because they too have found more edification in these long-neglected forms of sound words than in many of the popular books that are being written today. They have found, as I did, that a careful study of the Westminster Standards has given them a new, exciting, and clear understanding of what the Bible really teaches. I have been surprised and even overwhelmed at times by the e-mails that I have received from around the world, expressing the joy of discovering (with the help of these studies) these wonderful doctrinal summaries of our Reformation faith.

Let me conclude by urging the readers of *New Horizons* to buy a copy of the OPC Confession of Faith and Catechisms with proof texts, if you don't already have one. I think it deserves to be your favorite book, next to the Bible. ◻

The author is a retired OP minister, living in Iowa.



JOHN P. GALBRAITH

Our Church: Looking Back and Ahead

Where is the Orthodox Presbyterian Church going? Where has it been? Where should it be? If these questions are answered correctly, the responses to them will be the same. Let's have a look.

We are *standing fast*—not standing still—on the same foundation as we were when the Orthodox Presbyterian Church was founded in 1936. The Word of God tells us that we are in a spiritual war, and he actually commands us to stand fast in the evil day, even providing us with the spiritual armor to do that (Eph. 6:10–18). Be strong! Be courageous! Fight the good fight! Stand fast! Pray!

Some 150 people assembled in Philadelphia on June 11, 1936, to establish a new church in which they could and would stand fast together. So they did. They laid a foundation on which we could stand fast: the unchangeable Word of God, inspired by him, without error or untruth from beginning to end—the first and last authority for our faith.

A CONFESSATIONAL CHURCH

Presbyterians worldwide for nearly four centuries have had secondary standards, derived from the Bible and subordinate to it. An assembly called by the English Parliament, consisting of 121 Reformed scholars and 30 members of Parliament, worked from 1643 to 1649 at Westminster Abbey in London and drew up a Confession of Faith, a Larger Catechism, and a Shorter Catechism, which are together commonly called the Westminster Standards. Every minister, ruling elder, and deacon in the OPC must accept the Bible as the inerrant Word of God and adopt the Westminster Standards as teaching what the Bible teaches, and minister in accord with them.

That is a confessional church. We are a confessional church. So wherever you attend an Orthodox Presbyterian church or see that name on its outdoor sign or hear our mis-

sionaries who preach in foreign lands, you will know that their message will be from the same biblical and confessional roots.

Sinners that we are, however, we may not boast. Our sinfulness may lead us astray, as it has others before us. If we are a faithful, confessional church today, it is by God's grace in blessing our efforts to remain so. We may not be slack in the spiritual warfare that he has set before us to fight in dependence on his Word and Spirit.

So we confess together, we profess together, we stand together, on a common foundation: primarily the Bible, and, subordinate to that, the Westminster Standards. We need such subordinate confessions, and they need to be held by the whole church. We need to be a continuing, confessional church. We need people who will stand fast.

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA)

Look at what has happened to our predecessor church, now called the Presbyterian Church (USA), during the past forty years. They adopted a set of weakening generalities called the Confession of 1967 and a *Book of Confessions*, which now contains twelve confessions and theological/social formulations, as additions to the Westminster Standards. Just what responsibility a person taking vows for ordination in the PC(USA) has toward each confession or to them all as a whole is vague, since each confession differs from the others. Their general assemblies have provided funds for communist Angela Davis, have been led in "prayer" by a Hindu priest, and have used a Muslim as an advisory delegate. They have even ordained a candidate for the ministry who explicitly said that he did not believe in the deity of Jesus. All church offices have

been open to women for many years. Homosexuality for both members and church officers is officially accepted, and same-sex “marriages” have been performed while a church committee studies the issue. As this has been going on, the membership of the denomination has dropped from about four and one-half million to approximately two million.

THE ESSENTIAL TENETS

Two procedures have been adopted by the PC(USA) that will cement its departure from its original confession (the Westminster Confession) without having to change it one whit. First, their *Book of Order* has been changed so as to give it authority over the way in which the Confession is interpreted (thus avoiding the need to follow the purposely difficult process of amending the Confession). Second, the ordination vows for church officers now employ vague language, so that, together with their multiple confessions, wide latitude is given to the meaning one gives to the vows. For example, the candidate for ministry is asked, “Do you sincerely receive and adopt *the essential tenets* of the Reformed Faith as expressed in the confessions . . . ?” The catch: nowhere are “the essential tenets” stated; it is left to the candidate to determine what they are *to him*. This is an open door to virtually any heresy or practice. Combined with this is a constitutional provision protecting one’s conscience in ministry, which in effect removes all limitation on what one may read into the vows. The Confession is still on the books, but it is just a piece of paper; ministers in the PC(USA) can deny almost any doctrine in it.

The continuing decline of the PC(USA) shows what could happen to our church, if we allow it. The PC(USA) has become a broad road, with plenty of room for entrance from many side roads. It is, as it were, Inclusive Highway—very attractive and easily entered, but a road to destruction. The Orthodox Presbyterian Church, however, was born on a narrow road, sometimes rough and having no entering side roads. Its name is Confessional Lane; the Bible and the Westminster Standards alone are our road signs pointing to the city of eternal glory. We have nothing to boast about. God made the road, and by grace set us on it. The PC(USA) got to where it is today by simply letting heresy and immorality, coming from many directions, be included in its teaching and practice. The OPC was born out of that church by the Spirit of God, working grace in the hearts of chosen people and giving them a biblical map that led them at their beginning along Confessional Lane through Calvary to the eternal house of God. Where will our church go from here?

THE ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

The circumstances of the birth of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church give us an advantage over the PC(USA): we did not begin our life with an inborn organizational virus

of inclusiveness, which infected that church from its beginning (though it became much worse). When the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. was born in 1788, it included both Old Side and New Side ministers with their unresolved differences. But when our church was born in 1936, we went directly back to the Westminster Standards, whose witness to the Reformed faith was undiluted. Our commitment to the purity of the church was strong.

Today, as we recognize how inclusivism has devastated the PC(USA), we must never lose sight of the sinfulness of every one of us and our capacity to fall into any of the myriad ways of bringing falsehood into the church. Being the sinners that we are, we can hardly expect that none of us will listen to Satan’s skillful planting of doubts about God’s Word, as the not-yet-fallen Eve listened to Satan’s beguiling words: “Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the trees of the garden’? . . . You will not surely die.” So what will happen to our confessional church when it is challenged to depart from God’s foundational Word in our evil generation?

To be sure, in our short history, Satan has challenged us often, but he has been defeated time and again. He has sought to lead us from the truth on a number of occasions. And, yes, by God’s marvelous grace, we have survived those challenges. But maybe others are gestating among us at this very time.

We have also been tempted to enter into mergers that God wisely prevented. Do we dare take a route on which there may be hidden turns that would take us astray? Church mergers, even cooperative works with other churches that we deem faithful to our Reformed faith, can be paths of danger by which we could be led into unbiblical, unconfessional error; such churches themselves can change, unbeknownst to us.

The wiles of Satan are great. We could succumb to temptation or inadvertently embrace error. We must continue to be a confessional church. From the opposite viewpoint, we need very much to beware of becoming a mere sect, focusing on minor, extrabiblical matters. We are protected from that, however, if we remain faithful to the Westminster Standards.

But be sure of this: temptations will come. Watchmen on the walls are not enough. Every one of us needs to be a watchman who will learn day-by-day from God’s Word and pray diligently for his grace to know false doctrine and immoral practice when we see them—and to reject them.

As I look back over the life of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church from the first day onward, I can only give thanks to God. It is his way. Today it is my hope that the young men who are on Confessional Lane with us will stand fast and pass it on. It is my prayer that this church will still be confessing and declaring Christ in truth when he comes again. □

The author, now a retired minister, was a founding member of the OPC on June 11, 1936, and has served the church in many capacities.

A Place for Evangelism

ROSS W. GRAHAM

There is a place you can go in the world to learn about evangelism. It is a place unlike any other I have found, where the beauty of God's creation and the darkness of humanity's sinfulness stand in such stark contrast to each other. It is a place where evangelism is the focus of the conversation three hundred and sixty five days a year, and where Christians can talk about, observe, and practice sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ. The place is Key West, Florida. The venue is Keys Presbyterian Church, a small and always struggling little congregation of the OPC.

Let me set the scene for this venture into evangelism. While it could be in New York's Central Park, or in the park in your own town, tonight it is at a boat dock called Mallory Square in Key West. Tourists from the cruise ships pour onto the streets to eat and shop and then stand side by side with locals and other vacationers to watch the sun set over the Gulf of Mexico with cheers and celebration. Amid the arts and crafts exhibitors, street performers, food carts, and general merriment, some pause to listen to a thin, bearded man speak about God, sin, the Bible, Jesus, and repentance. Three nights each week for the past twenty-six years, from two hours before sunset until two hours after sunset, he has been faithfully preaching the gospel at the Sunset Celebration, where the Gulf of Mexico meets the Atlantic Ocean.

The man on the pier is the Rev. William V. Welzien, pastor of Keys Presbyterian Church—better known to the locals as “Bible Bill.” Now a sixty-two-year-old grandfather, Bill grew up in Chicago during the hippie movement.

Bill Welzien using “ladder lettering” to keep the crowd focused on the gospel truths



After graduating from high school, he traveled the world with no money to find adventure and discover himself. For more than two years, he moved from place to place as a free spirit, looking for answers and experiences. But in his travels he repeatedly encountered obnoxious but well-meaning Christians, who told him he would find the answers he was looking for in a relationship with Jesus Christ. Finally, at a desperate moment in his travels, God gloriously saved him, and Bill spent the first months of his Christian life being discipled at an evangelical church in Jerusalem. His conversion story is a powerful one that is still featured on the Pacific Garden Mission radio drama series *Unshackled*.

Then it was home to Chicago, where he began to study at Moody Bible Institute. During his studies at Moody, his teachers noticed that he had a steel-trap mind and remembered everything he read in the Bible, and also that he had a natural

inclination to tell everyone he met about Jesus Christ. Soon he was leading Moody gospel teams. One of those was a visit to a homeless ministry in Key West. An offer was waiting for him to take over that ministry when he graduated.

But by the time Bill and his young family arrived in the Florida Keys, the ministry that drew him there had all but evaporated. He was left with an apartment to live in, a handful of supporters to help pay the bills, and a ministry he would have to develop on his own from scratch. As he walked the streets of the city, he discovered that nearly everyone in town would visit the Sunset Celebration at least once or twice a week. So with the help of friends from Open Air Campaigners, he devised a gospel presentation and became one of the “performers” on the pier. Over the next two or three years, his presentations got deeper and fuller as he learned to appreciate and incorporate the crisp truths of the Reformed faith. You can find

several of his YouTube videotaped messages at Keys-Christians.org.

It is always a thrilling experience to stand shoulder to shoulder in the crowds that throng the pier as he introduces Jesus and God's plan of salvation to people of all walks of life and of every lifestyle imaginable. It is equally thrilling to watch him spend hours after a message answering questions, handling objections, and using his knowledge of the Scriptures to allow God to speak to them directly from his Word.

Bill is rarely alone when he stands to deliver his message. Others from his church come out to support what he says and the God he represents. In fact, that is how I got to know him. Back in 1989, he called the OP offices to inquire about what he could do with the group of followers who had gathered around him, many of whom were converts from his preaching. "We meet together on Sundays to study God's Word and to praise him and pray—I think we have a church," said Bill. And since that time, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church has had a warm and continuing relationship with the man and the group that God raised up around him.

With his steel-trap mind now focusing on Reformed theology, he was welcomed as a ministerial member of the Presbytery of the South in 1990. For more than a decade, he has been a member of their Candidates and Credentials Committee and is their Bible examiner who quizzes prospective ministers on their knowledge of the Scriptures.

Home Missions Today

For up-to-date Home Missions news and prayer updates, e-mail HomeMissionsToday@opc.org.
New editions: **February 13, 27.**

A typical crowd at Mallory Square in January



God has done amazing things with this evangelist and the ever-changing group that gathers around him. With the help of the OPC Loan Fund, he provided them with a two-story office building at mile marker 10 on US Highway 1, which they converted into a first-floor worship and classroom area and a second-floor apartment for the Welziens and their nine children. Then with bountiful, unsolicited gifts, the group was able to pay off the mortgage on their property, build a home for their pastor and his family, and convert the second-floor apartment of their "Bible Center" into a dormitory for groups and individuals who want to learn about evangelism and help with the ministry.

Groups from more than one hundred churches have stayed at the Bible Center, studied evangelism with Bill Welzien, and gone with him to the pier to support the preaching ministry and engage in gospel conversations with those whose interest is piqued by the presentation. And more than two

dozen pastors have spent time as guests of the Bible Center to learn the art of street preaching and the winsome style of confrontational evangelism that Bill Welzien has developed.

No one knows how many lives have been changed by this unique ministry. But many of those who have heard the gospel at Mallory Square have gotten back in their cars or onto those cruise ships and have returned home to

Iowa, Montana, Maine, or New Jersey with new hearts. They have found their way into evangelical churches. And they want that now-balding evangelist to continue to preach the gospel at the pier. So an organization called Keys Evangelistic Ministries was formed to receive their gifts and to keep this work of evangelism going. Together with Keys Presbyterian Church, they partner to allow the small congregation to have a half-time pastor and to keep a half-time evangelist down at the pier sharing the life-changing message of the gospel.

The author is the retiring general secretary for the Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension and the president of the board of Keys Evangelistic Ministries.

The Bible Center in Key West



How Jesus Runs the Church

LARRY WILSON

I love the title *How Jesus Runs the Church*—the title of a book written recently by Guy Prentiss Waters. Too often we lapse into a kind of practical deism, as if our Lord has set things in motion and now it is up to us to run the church according to his directions. Far from it! As Waters points out in his introduction, the church is a spiritual organization; it is the Spirit of Christ who gives it vitality (pp. xxvii–xxviii).

Waters highlights two goals for this book: (1) to make a biblical case for the Presbyterian form of church government, and (2) to make this case as accessible as possible (p. xxix).

For the most part, he does an outstanding job in pursuing these goals. I once heard R. C. Sproul summarize the differences among three branches of the church in this way: Pentecostals shout, “Fire! Fire!” Baptists shout, “Water! Water!” And Presbyterians respond, “Order! Order!” Waters is a true Presbyterian in the orderliness of his treatment of how Jesus runs his church. This book is readable, thorough, and well outlined; it is not hard to follow. There is a lot of good information in the footnotes, and, happily, they are at the foot of the pages. Waters not only explains what Scripture teaches on the topic, but also shows where—and why it is important. The book has good indexes and a helpful annotated bibliography.

Waters digests and distills a great

deal of material, much of it long out of print. Accordingly, his handling of what the church is and why it is important in God’s plan and in the life of the believer is excellent. So is his discussion of the importance of church membership (for the children of believers, too). His treatment of church authority—its nature and limits—is excellent.

The book is not abstract theory. For example, his discussion of “term eldership” versus “life eldership” is outstanding. His discussion of the object of diaconal ministry is excellent. His discussion of women in office is

very good. His treatment of the courts of the church, and of connectionalism on broader levels, is superb. And there are many other good points.

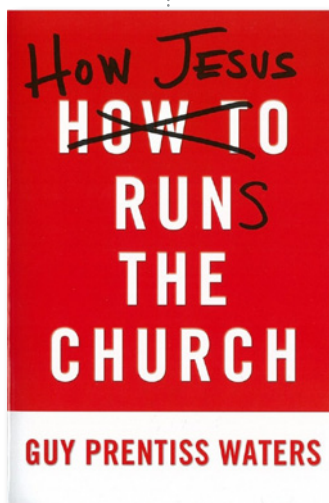
Indeed, because the book is so excellent, a few disappointments seem especially to leap out in contrast. First, he seems to have written mainly for a Presbyterian audience; I wish he had made his case more with non-Presbyterians in mind. Furthermore, this book focuses on the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA). Waters is a minister in the PCA, so that is understandable, but it does lessen the book’s usefulness for churches of like faith and practice.

Second, that PCA orientation seems to predispose Waters to favor the so-called two-office view. One of the great strengths of this book is that it is fair in presenting various views and in citing

Scripture to make his case. This section, however, seems more to assume the view than to argue for it. He rests his case on a fact that advocates of the three-office view also point out—that the words *elder* and *overseer* are used interchangeably in the New Testament. Alas, by limiting his treatment of this question only to New Testament texts, Waters seems temporarily and unwittingly to adopt an Anabaptist hermeneutic. This stands out in contrast to the whole rest of the book.

He summarizes the case for the three-office view like this: “Scripture describes church office in terms of three functions: teaching, ruling, and serving” (p. 88). From that summary, who would ever think that the Westminster Assembly discussed the distinct service of ministers of the Word, paralleling them to the old covenant priests and Levites (The Form of Presbyterian Church Government, “Of the Officers of the Church: Pastors”)? From that summary, who would ever think that the Westminster Assembly discussed the office of ruling elder like this?

As there were in the Jewish church elders of the people joined with the priests and Levites in the government of the church [2 Chron. 19:8–10]; so Christ, who hath instituted government, and governors ecclesiastical in the church, hath furnished some in his church, beside the ministers of the word, with gifts for government, and with commission to execute the same when called thereunto, who are to join with the minister in the government of the church [Rom. 12:7–8; 1 Cor. 12:28]. Which officers reformed churches commonly call Elders. (The



Form of Presbyterian Church Government, "Of the Officers of the Church: Other Church-Governors")

Who would ever think that some of the men he references in his footnotes (e.g., Edmund P. Clowney, Leonard J. Coppes, and Robert S. Rayburn, not to mention the "sundry ministers" who wrote *Jus Divinum Regiminis Ecclesiastici*) point out that the old covenant Levitical priests who ministered the Word and sacrifices (sacraments) and the elders of the people were both designated "presbyter" (elder)? All priests were elders, but not all elders were priests, thus providing the assumed background to understand the distinction between "elders" in general and "those who labor in preaching and teaching" (1 Tim. 5:17).

In fairness, Waters does make a distinction between "teaching elders" and "ruling elders." He embraces what many call the two-and-a-half-office view. This may well be the majority view among our own churches. Accordingly, he does not advocate any practices that a conscientious three-office advocate would have to reject. In my judgment (following Ed Clowney's), however, this two-and-a-half-office view is an unstable compromise. It not only has the disadvantage of neglecting the Old Testament underpinnings of the offices and the disadvantage of straying from our Presbyterian roots, but also tends to break down in one of two ways. Either, little by little, it so raises the expectations for the office of ruling elder that godly, wise men who lack gifts for public speaking are disqualified from

[Continued on page 19]

Congratulations

The Shorter Catechism has been recited by:

• Clara Hannon (Covenant OPC in Grove City, Pa.)

The First Catechism has been recited by:

• Caitlyn Cassidy (Calvary OPC in Ringoes, N.J.)

Four Favorites

Books on Apologetics (Defending the Faith)

1. Cornelius Van Til, *The Defense of the Faith*. P&R, 1967; ed. K. Scott Oliphint, 2008.

It is almost impossible to overestimate the importance of this pioneering work in the area of apologetics. Van Til valiantly argues that the Christian faith must be defended as a whole, without compromise. After laying a thoroughly Christian theological, philosophical, and epistemological foundation, Van Til carefully sets forth a method of defending the faith that is rooted firmly in God's revelation of himself in the Scriptures. Van Til's style of writing can be difficult to navigate; therefore, I recommend Greg Bahnsen's *Van Til's Apologetics* (P&R, 1998) as a helpful tool in better understanding Van Til.

2. Greg L. Bahnsen, *Always Ready*, ed. Robert Booth. Covenant Media Press, 1996.

This book is a compilation of material produced by Greg Bahnsen. It seeks to provide students of apologetics with concepts that are necessary for a biblical defense of the faith. Bahnsen's chapters on the myth and robbery of neutrality are as convicting as they are enlightening. Particularly helpful is the book's final section, which addresses a number of thorny issues that Christians must tackle, such as the problem of evil

and the question of miracles. Finally, Bahnsen's exposition of Acts 17 is in itself worth the price of the book.

3. K. Scott Oliphint, *The Battle Belongs to the Lord*. P&R, 2003.

In a clear and nontechnical way, Oliphint introduces his readers to the foundational elements of presuppositional apologetics, reminding them that God's revelation of himself in the Scriptures stands at the core of defending the faith. This book is saturated with Scripture and is devotional in nature. The questions at the end of each chapter make the book excellent for a group study.

4. Richard L. Pratt, Jr., *Every Thought Captive*. P&R, 1979.

With a title taken from 2 Corinthians 10:5, *Every Thought Captive* provides readers with a helpful primer on apologetics. In fact, Pratt himself sees it more as a training manual to help believers do apologetics. In doing so, he argues that the way Christians defend the faith must be determined by God himself. Pratt shows that in order to do apologetics biblically, we must remember that we are creatures, dependent for all things on our Creator.

Daniel F. Patterson

Out of the Mouth ...

My daughter Jillian, 3, was playing with the Foreign Missions prayer cards. Suddenly she yelled out, "Hey!" when she got to the card for Jim and Jenny Knox. "They're the mysteries!" (that is, the missionaries we had recently seen).

—Sean Gregg
Glenside, Pa.

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

Our Ministry in Montevideo

MARK E. RICHLINE

Picture a fourteen-mile-long avenue winding its way along the coastline of Montevideo, dividing hotels and apartment complexes from sandy beaches on the Rio de la Plata. This is La Rambla. In the early morning and evening hours, Uruguayans of all ages walk, run, bike, or rollerblade along the sidewalk for exercise.

But on a Sunday afternoon in October, as our family strolled La Rambla, we saw crowds of all ages sitting on the low wall overlooking the river. They were just hanging out, soaking in the sun, chatting with friends, and sipping on their *mate* (a beverage similar to tea) while watching young boys playing soccer on the beach.

This image reinforced what my Uruguayan friends like to say about their country. Everybody is *tranquila*, meaning “very laid back.” But then an echoing noise in the distance drew our attention. We followed the sound until we came to a park where people were gathered in a circle, dancing to the loud, rhythmic beating of drums.

They were performing a native dance called *candombe*, which originated with the Africans who were brought here by the Spaniards as slaves. The dance involves moving one’s feet in small rapid tapping motions, simulating the way slaves danced while their ankles were shackled together.

Although our Uruguayan friends

appear peaceful and relaxed, they are actually enslaved to sin, no differently than the way I was once enslaved. The Lord has given me and my family a Montevideo ministry to proclaim freedom from sin through the power of forgiveness in Christ Jesus. And our hope is that what Paul told the church in Rome will be true of the church here: “But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin,

The wall overlooking the Rio de la Plata in Montevideo



you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted. You have been set free from sin and have become slaves of righteousness” (Rom. 6:17–18 NIV).

MARINATING IN MATE

Not a day goes by without seeing several people walking the streets, with a *mate* mug in one hand and a thermos tucked under their arm. *Yerba mate* is the strong herbal drink that is consumed by Uruguayans of all ages. What I love about *mate* is not so much the taste, but the way people share it. Someone you barely know may offer you his *mate* as a way of

starting up a conversation.

Sharing a *mate* cup with a friend is just one of the new customs we’ve embraced. Our lifestyle has been changing without us really trying to change it! Like other people in Uruguay, we greet our friends with a hug and a kiss on their right cheek. We eat our meals later, stay up later, and get up later. We hang out our clothes on the roof to dry. On hot summer nights, we sit outside and chat with our neighbors. We invite people over for barbecues at an hour we would normally be heading to bed. This is all part of soaking in the culture, and we love it.

MISSIONARY TEAM BUILDING

Our transition to this new lifestyle has been helped by short-term missionary Jana Crum from Providence OPC in Temecula, California, who was part of our team for five months. Our Lord enabled her to put our needs before her own as she interpreted for us, taught our children, helped us all practice Spanish, and encouraged us with her Christlike spirit. She also ministered in the church, playing the guitar, organizing youth activities, and teaching Sunday school. Though she has finished her work here, Jana continues to serve the Lord in her home church.

Our full-time partners in this work are Pastor Mauricio Rolim, his wife, Sandra, and their children, Caleb and Ana Teresa, who are with the Igreja Presbiteriana do Brasil. They served with New Tribes Missions for several years in Senegal, Africa. After returning to Brazil, the Lord called them to plant a Reformed church in Montevideo—La Iglesia Presbiteriana del Uruguay—which they have been doing for the past four years. We

count it a great privilege to work alongside such dedicated, gifted, and loving people, who have a bold vision of bringing the Reformed gospel to Uruguay.

MINISTERING IN MONTEVIDEO

On Tuesday nights, I accompany Pastor Mauricio to a Bible school where he teaches systematic theology to people from various church backgrounds. On Wednesdays, Mauricio and I meet to pray for each other, our families, and the families in our church. At other times during the week, we teach the Scriptures to those who regularly attend our church, encouraging them to become members of Christ's body.

Every Friday night, I serve as taxi service for several teens who participate in our youth group, where we study God's Word, sing his praises, pray for one another, play goofy games, and eat until around midnight. This group is focused on growing in God's Word, drawing other teens to Christ, and serving others in our church and community in Christ's name.

On Saturday afternoons, our Club Feliz draws the little children from the neighborhood to show them God's attributes from Scripture. On the Lord's Day, around twenty-five people meet to worship using Scriptures and prayers of adoration and confession, followed by several hymns and praise songs. Pastor Mauricio preaches exegetically through various Bible books. I will preach more regularly once I have sharpened my Span-

ish. After the service, we enjoy a sweet time of fellowship and often invite people into our home for the afternoon.

MINISTERING TO PEOPLE

Julio and Irma are a kind couple in their eighties who live next door to our new house.

When Julio learned that I was a Christian pastor, he frankly declared himself to be an atheist, yet he seems willing to talk about God. Please ask our Lord to soften their hearts through our words and our family's witness to them.

Eduardo is our new mechanic, who rescued us after someone ransacked our car in the middle of the night, stealing our CD player and cutting the cables to our battery. When I walked to Eduardo's shop and explained what happened, he drove me back to the house, fixed the cables, and then helped fix other electrical problems at no extra cost. We thank God for leading us to a new friend and pray that we might lead him to Christ, who alone rescues souls.

Two young women, Veronica and Carolina, have been baptized and have become active members of our church within the past year. Their

desire to know Christ and serve him has greatly encouraged us. When Carolina was baptized, she confessed, "I am ashamed of my past without God, and I would never return to it, because the joy and peace that I receive as a daughter of God are better than anything this world could

Mark Richline preaching



offer." Please keep these new Christian sisters in your prayers.

Also attending our church are several young people who belong to the local branch of Youth with a Mission. They have come from all over South America to study God's Word and prepare for different types of Christian ministry. Though most of them have Pentecostal backgrounds, they join in Reformed worship every Lord's Day and listen to Reformed preaching. We are asking the Lord to show us how we can challenge them to reform their doctrine while being challenged by their evident passion for evangelism.

One family that attends church faithfully has been studying the Bible, helping in the kitchen, and making needed repairs in the church and our home. The father is a former Catholic priest who became convinced that the Scriptures, not the church, are our final authority in doctrine and practice. He is a methodical thinker who is committed to the Word and to the people of God. Mauricio and I pray for loving wisdom to develop the potential we see in him for future leadership.

We thank the Lord for the privilege of ministering the gospel in Montevideo. Thank you for partnering with us through your prayers, your encouraging letters, and your short-term mission workers. We look forward to how the Lord will use his Word to free his people from their slavery to sin in order to build his church in Uruguay.

Mauricio Rolim (r.) and Mark Richline baptizing Carolina



The Thankful Recipient

WAYNE K. FORKNER

We live in tough economic times that cause many to worry. It is in times like these that Christians need to be content. Paul speaks of his contentment in difficult times in Philippians 4:11–12 as he both explains his reliance on the Lord and praises the Philippians for their gifts to him (4:10–18).

The Philippian church was established on Paul's first missionary journey and had supported his work right from the start. Paul was appreciative of their gifts (4:10, 14–16), for they showed the church's concern for him (v. 10) and supplied his material need (v. 18). Paul rejoices in the fruit of the gospel being evidenced in their care for him, but before he does so, he focuses on Christ as

the supplier of all needs and the source of all contentment. In verses 11–13, Paul explains that he has learned to live in times of need and in times of plenty. He can do so because it is the Lord first and foremost who takes care of him.

In verse 17, Paul tells them that he did not seek their gifts for his advantage, but for theirs. It is true that he received material benefit from the church, but the church received spiritual benefit. Paul prayed that the Philippians would be "filled with the fruit of righteousness" (1:11), and he desired their "progress and joy in the faith" (1:25).

It is the phrase "in the Lord" (4:10) that provides the secret of Christian contentment and Christian sacrifice. Contentment does not flow from man-centered stoicism, but from the recognition that it is the Lord who supplies strength (v. 13). This understanding of the Lord's provision allows Paul to rejoice in receiving material gifts for the furtherance of

the gospel while he suffers. It enables him to fight the good fight and to be poured out as a drink offering. Paul can give his life for the church of Christ because Jesus Christ gave his life for Paul and continues to supply all of his real needs.

In the same way, we all need to be reminded that the Lord will continue to supply our needs (4:19). In whatever way we give or minister to his church, we do so as thankful recipients of the grace of God in Christ Jesus. For we, like Paul, have been given the gift of salvation, our heavenly inheritance through Christ. Christ partook of our flesh and suffered our punishment so that we might share in his inheritance. As we focus more on our Lord Jesus Christ and what he has done for us, we become more content with what we have in him, and we become more concerned for the needs of others.

The author is pastor of Covenant Presbyterian Church in Berkeley, Calif.

Worldwide Outreach Falls Short in 2012

Goal \$3,520,000
Received \$3,402,325

COMMITTEE FUNDING

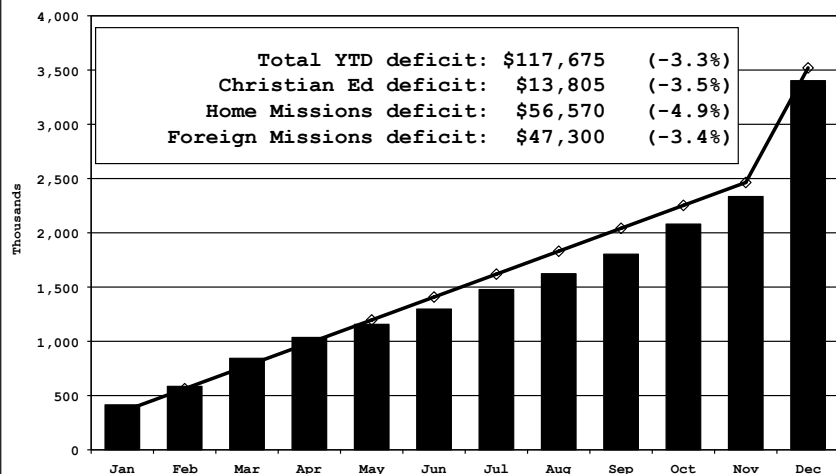
Christian Education 96.5%
Foreign Missions 96.6%
Home Missions 95.1%

2012 THANK OFFERING

Goal \$800,000
Received in 2012 700,489

Note: More is anticipated yet to be received for the 2012 Thank Offering (by September 1, 2013). However, this will be credited to Worldwide Outreach for 2013.

Worldwide Outreach Year-to-Date
2012 Receipts with 2012 Goal



WORLDWIDE OUTREACH

February

1. **James and Jenny Knox**, M.D. and R.N., Nakaale, Uganda. Pray that the people whose lives they touch will see Christ through their words and deeds. / Pray for Home Missions general secretary **Ross Graham**, retiring at the end of this month. / Pray for GA stated clerk **George Cottenden** as he begins planning for the 80th General Assembly.
2. **Sacha and Martina Walicord**, Mt. Vernon, Ohio. Pray for Knox Presbyterian Church as the process of selecting church officers begins. / Pray for **Al and Laurie Tricarico**, Nakaale, Uganda, as Al returns to his schedule of preaching and teaching. / Pray for **Stephen Estock**, the PCA's provisional coordinator for Christian Education and Publications.
3. Pray for the labors of missionary associates **Erika Bulthuis** and **Christopher and Chloe Verdick**, Nakaale, Uganda. / **Philip and Jenny Dharmawirya**, Philadelphia, Pa. Pray for wisdom regarding the future of the Indonesian congregation that meets at Emmanuel Chapel.
4. **Joseph and Carla Fowler**, Gastonia, N.C. Pray that visitors to Reformation OPC will desire to join in communicant fellowship. / **Eric and Dianna Tuininga**, Mbale, Uganda. Pray that God would bless Eric's teaching ministry at Knox Theological College. / Pray for **the Ministerial Training Institute's instructors and students** as the Spring 2013 term begins today.
5. **Bob and Martha Wright**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for Bob's safety in travel, as his labors have him on the road frequently. / **Todd and Cheryl Bordow**, Rio Rancho, N.Mex. Pray that God would continue to bring new visitors to the OPC of Rio Rancho. / Army chaplain **Jonathan (and Marion) Gibbs**.
6. **Brian and Sara Chang**, Cottonwood, Ariz. Pray that the Lord would bless Verde Valley Reformed Chapel with new growth. / **David and Sunshine Okken**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for Dave's efforts to give people a solid understanding of God's Word. / Pray for **Danny Olinger**, Christian Education general secretary, as he fulfills his responsibilities as intern director.
7. Pray for our missionary associates in Uganda: **Leah Hopp, Emily Pihl, and Jesse Van Gorkom**. / **Chad and Katie Mullinix**, Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. Pray for wisdom in ministering the gospel and for further growth of the congregation of Holy Trinity Presbyterian Church. / Army chaplain **Graham (and Carla) Harbman**.
8. **Christopher and Della Chelpka**, Tucson, Ariz. Pray that God would bless those who are taking a membership class at Covenant OPC. / **Ben and Heather Hopp**, Haiti. Pray that Ben's preaching would bear much fruit in Haiti. / Pray for short-term missions coordinator **David Nakhla** as he points churches and individuals toward suitable short-term mission opportunities in the OPC.
9. **The Church in the Horn of Africa**. Pray for God's continued protection as believers gather to worship him in difficult circumstances. / **Jonathan and Kristin Moersch**, Capistrano Beach, Calif. Pray that God would use Trinity OPC's outreach and evangelism to bring people to faith in Jesus Christ.
10. Home Missions staff administrator **Sean Gregg**. / Pray that retired missionaries **Betty Andrews, Greet Rietkerk, Young and Mary Lou Son, and Fumi Uomoto** will be an encouragement and blessing to their families and caregivers. / **Doug Watson**, staff accountant.
11. Affiliated missionary **Linda Karner**, Japan. Pray for



Praise the Lord for the profession of faith and baptism of Dieugrand Louis, who emigrated from Haiti, at Grace OPC Mission in Huron, Ohio. Regional home missionary Larry Oldaker has been focusing his efforts on this group since the summer. Praise the Lord that visitors attend Lord's Day worship on a regular basis. Attendance remains in the twenties. Larry asks you to pray that God would bless the work of the gospel in and through Grace OPC Mission to gather a group large enough to move forward with calling an organizing pastor.

the details involved in returning to Japan and for God's perfect timing. / **Todd and Julie Wagenmaker**, St. Louis, Mo. Pray for new visitors at Gateway OPC and for opportunities to reach the lost. / **Jim Scott**, publications coordinator for Christian Education and managing editor of *New Horizons*.

12. **Drew and Sonya Adcock**, Williamsport, Pa. Pray for the continued growth and spiritual development of the congregation of Omega OPC. / **Woody and Laurie Lauer**, Numazu, Japan. Pray for increased attendance at prayer meetings and Bible studies. / Pray for **Greg Reynolds** as he edits *Ordained Servant*, the online magazine for OP church officers.
13. **Cal and Edie Cummings**, Sendai, Japan. Pray for the spiritual growth of new believers. / **Ben and Sarah Miller**, Huntington, N.Y. Give thanks to God for many opportunities for the congregation of Trinity OPC to minister to others in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy. / **Kathy Bube**, Loan Fund administrator.
14. **Mark and Michele Winder**, Collierville, Tenn. Pray that the Lord would provide a suitable meeting place for the congregation of Wolf River Presbyterian Church. / **Kaz and Katie Yaegashi**, Yamagata, Japan. Pray for Kaz's pastoral ministry at the church in Yamagata. / **David Haney**, director of finance and planned giving for the Committee on Coordination.
15. Pray for missionary associates **Adam and Sarah Thompson**, Sendai, Japan, as they work to improve their understanding of Japanese. / **Stephen and Catalina Payson**, Mifflinburg, Pa. Pray that abounding generosity at Providence OPC will lead to abundant thanksgiving to God. / **Jan Gregson**, office manager and assistant to the director of finance.
16. **Ken and Cressid Golden**, Davenport, Iowa. Pray that God would continue to bring core families to Sovereign Grace OPC of the Quad Cities and that he would bless the upcoming leadership class. / **Mark and Jeni Richline**, Uruguay. Pray for God's blessing on the outreach activities of the church in Montevideo. / **Pat Clawson**, Christian Education office secretary, MTIOPC coordinator, and *New Horizons* editorial assistant.
17. **Ben and Melanie Westerveld**, Quebec, Canada. Pray that God would work in the lives of unbelievers who visit St-Marc Church. / **Geoffrey and Sharon Willour**, Mayfield Village, Ohio. Pray for growth in peace and unity and for effectiveness in outreach at Lake OPC. / **Geoff (and Heather) Downey**, yearlong intern at Trinity OPC in Hatboro, Pa.
18. **John and Wenny Ro**, Chicago, Ill. (downtown). Pray that God would bless the outreach events held by Gospel Life Presbyterian Church. / Missionary associate **Debra Blair**, Quebec, Canada. Pray that the Lord would bless her times of prayer and conversation with various contacts. / **Carson Ryan**, yearlong intern at Lake Sherwood OPC in Orlando, Fla.
19. **Heero and Anya Hacquebord**, L'viv, Ukraine. Pray for Heero as he tries to maintain a balance in his weekly schedule of ministry activities and preparation time. / Home Missions associate general secretary **Dick Gerber**. / **David (and Jenna) DeRienzo**, yearlong intern at Second Parish OPC in Portland, Maine.

20. **Brad Hertzog**, Queens, N.Y. Pray that leaders will be raised up and brought to Reformation Presbyterian Church. / **Mr. and Mrs. F.**, Asia. Pray that new believers will grow in grace as they face the challenges of leading Christian lives in their circumstances. / **Justin (and Hannah) Rosser**, yearlong intern at Matthews OPC in Matthews, N.C.
21. Pray for the labors of missionary associates **Mr. and Mrs. C.** and **T. L. L.**, Asia. / **Doug and Kristi Bylsma**, Beamsville, Ontario. Pray that more visitors will come and that new members will be added to Living Hope Presbyterian Church. / **Mark (and Karissa) Soud**, yearlong intern at Calvin Presbyterian Church in Phoenix, Ariz.
22. **Andrew and Billie Moody**, San Antonio, Tex. Pray for San Antonio Reformed Church as they seek to bring people under the ministry of the Word of God. / **Mr. and Mrs. M.**, Asia. Pray that the printing and distribution of Reformed literature in Asia will impact many lives for the sake of Christ. / **Sarah Pederson**, *New Horizons* proof-reader.
23. Pray for our missionary associates in Asia: **E. C., T. D.**, and **E. H.** / Pray for **Glenn Jerrell**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of Michigan and Ontario, as he supports various church plants throughout the presbytery. / **David (and Karen) Koenig**, yearlong intern at Covenant OPC in Orland Park, Ill.
24. **Kent and Laurie Harding**, Doniphan, Mo. Pray for wisdom as Sovereign Grace OPC prepares to elect church officers. / Pray for Foreign Missions general secretary **Mark Bube** as he reports to the Committee on Foreign Missions meeting February 26–27. / Navy chaplain **Tim (and Janine) Power**.
25. Pray for Foreign Missions administrative assistant **Linda Posthuma** and secretary **Janet Birkmann** during this busy week of Committee meetings. / **Everett and Kimberly Henes**, Hillsdale, Mich. Pray that God would give wisdom to the elders of Hillsdale OPC as they care for the flock. / **Camden (and Erica) Bucey**, yearlong intern at Bethel Presbyterian Church in Wheaton, Ill.
26. **Tim and Joanne Beauchamp**, Bridgton, Maine. Pray that the congregation of Pleasant Mountain Presbyterian Church will be in constant prayer, seeking God's blessing on their ministry and development. / Pray for Foreign Missions associate general secretary **Douglas Clawson** as the Committee begins two days of meetings.
27. Affiliated missionaries **Jerry and Marilyn Farnik**, Prague, Czech Republic. Pray for many opportunities to talk about the Lord with the students in their English classes. / **Brandon and Laurie Wilkins**, Crystal Lake, Ill. Pray for God's Spirit to direct and empower Christ Covenant Presbyterian Church's gospel witness. / Navy chaplain **John (and Linda) Carter**.
28. **Jeremiah and Elizabeth Montgomery**, State College, Pa. Pray that God would provide new contacts and visitors at Resurrection OPC. / **Brian and Dorothy Wingard**, South Africa. Pray for Brian's students to gain a fuller understanding of the Scriptures and to develop ministry skills. / Pray for **the Psalter-Hymnal Committee** as it meets with the URCNA on March 5–6 in Holland, Mich.

RUNNING THE CHURCH

[Continued from page 13]

... serving, or, bit by bit, it so lowers the expectations for the office of minister that the quality and faithfulness of the ministry of the Word is diminished. But does not King Jesus build and rule his church by the agency of the Holy Spirit through the instrumentality of the Word, especially its preaching? The danger of the two-office view, it seems to me, is that it tends to shunt aside the centrality of the ministry of the Word as the Holy Spirit's primary instrument.

This implies a third disappointment, which, to me, is the most serious. On the front cover, the title is first printed as "How to Run the Church," and then letters are crossed out and added to change the title to "How Jesus Runs the Church." That is outstanding. But does the book adequately deliver what this title promises? In his introduction, Waters approvingly quotes F. P. Ramsey, "It is not constitutional regularity, it is not mechanical perfection, that makes the church effective for its end; it is the Spirit of Christ using the church as his agent. . . . Alas, form and machinery may exist without life and power. . . . [The Holy] Spirit creates fit instruments for his own use, and therefore we may expect the church to become more nearly perfect in organization and methods as it becomes more perfectly the obedient organ of the Spirit" (p. xxviii). Then Waters comments, "To be sure, the Spirit and not church government is the source of the church's life and power. And yet God works by means. The government of the church is one of those appointed means" (p. xxviii). And that is that. "How Jesus Runs the Church" seems to break down to "How to Run the Church." I am confident that Waters agrees with this concern. He does reiterate it in the conclusion. I just wish that he had treated it in a way that was more integral to the entire book, so that it would actually deliver what its title promises.

I feel bad about voicing these criticisms. Readers can consider the source

as they decide whether or not they have any merit. As I said, the reason these disappointments stand out to me is that the book as a whole is so good. I would love to see Waters address these questions more adequately, and the publisher put it out as a durable hardback. In the

meantime, there is no other book like it. Highly recommended.

How Jesus Runs the Church, by Guy Prentiss Waters. Published by P&R, 2011. Paperback, 178 pages, list price \$14.99. The reviewer is an OP pastor.

The Duties of Pastors

(From the Westminster Assembly's Form of Presbyterial Church Government, "Of the Officers of the Church: Pastors")

The pastor is an ordinary and perpetual officer in the church [Jer. 3:15–17], prophesying of the time of the gospel [1 Pet. 5:2–4; Eph. 4:11–13].

First, it belongs to his office,

To pray for and with his flock, as the mouth of the people unto God, Acts vi: 2, 3, 4, and xx: 36, where preaching and prayer are joined as several parts of the same office [James 5:14–15]. The office of the elder (that is, the pastor) is to pray for the sick, even in private, to which a blessing is especially promised; much more therefore ought he to perform this in the publick execution of his office, as a part thereof [1 Cor. 14:15–16].

To read the Scriptures publickly; for the proof of which,

1. That the priests and Levites in the Jewish church were trusted with the publick reading of the word is proved [Deut. 31:9–11. Neh. 8:1–3, 13].

2. That the ministers of the gospel have as ample a charge and commission to dispense the word, as well as other ordinances, as the priests and Levites had under the Law, proved, Isa. lxvi: 21. Matt. xxiii: 34, where our Saviour entitleth the officers of the New Testament, whom he will send forth, by the same names of the teachers of the Old.

Which propositions prove, that therefore (the duty being of a moral nature) it followeth by just consequence, that the publick reading of the scriptures belongeth to the pastor's office.

To feed the flock, by preaching of the word, according to which he is to teach, convince, reprove, exhort, and comfort [1 Tim. 3:2; 2 Tim. 3:16–17; Tit. 1:9].

To catechise, which is a plain laying down the first principles of the oracles of God [Heb. 5:12], or of the doctrine of Christ, and is a part of preaching.

To dispense other divine mysteries [1 Cor. 4:1–2].

To administer the sacraments [Matt. 28:19–20; Mark 16:15–16; 1 Cor. 11:23–25; Compared with 1 Cor. 10:16].

To bless the people from God, Numb. vi: 23, 24, 25, 26. Compared with Rev. xiv. 5, (where the same blessings, and persons from whom they come, are expressly mentioned,) Isa. lxvi: 21, where, under the names of Priests and Levites to be continued under the gospel, are meant evangelical pastors, who therefore are by office to bless the people [Deut. 10:8; 2 Cor. 13:14; Eph. 1:2].

To take care of the poor [Acts 11:30; Acts 4:34–37; Acts 6:2–4; 1 Cor. 16:1–4; Gal. 2:9–10].

And he hath also a ruling power over the flock as a pastor [1 Tim. 5:17; Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Thess. 5:12; Heb. 13:7, 17].

KING INSTALLED AT ROANOKE, VA.

Hank L. Belfield

The Rev. Rodney T. King was installed as the new pastor of Garst Mill OPC in Roanoke, Virginia, on Friday evening, November 30. The installation service was conducted by a special committee appointed by the Presbytery of the Southeast.

The service was conducted by the Rev. Peter Stazen II, pastor of Grace OPC in Lynchburg, Virginia. The Rev. Cliff Blair, pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in Charlotte, North Carolina, preached the sermon from Acts 18:1–17. Also participating in the service were the Rev. Wayne Buchtel, ruling elder Nathan King (son of Rodney King), ruling elder Gary Flye, and deacon Robert Lynam (Rodney King’s son-in-law).

It was a blessed and meaningful service of worship for all who attended. Please pray that God would be pleased to bless the labors of Rev. King in Roanoke in the coming years.

**In Memoriam
Robert J. Cameron**

William Shishko

Born on February 23, 1932, and raised in the South, Robert Cameron enlisted in the US Army after high school and eventually served in Korea. Then he worked for Ford Motor Company until, in 1961, he became the owner-operator of his own trucking company. A burden to serve the Lord’s people as a pastor led him to sell his trucking business and begin formal training at Reformed Episcopal Seminary. He continued his theological studies at Trinity Theological Seminary, earning an M.Div. (1982), a Th.M. (1984), and a Th.D. (1985).

What would become Mt. Carmel Church began as a Bible study in his home in Somerset, New Jersey, in 1976. Pastor Cameron was ordained in the Reformed Episcopal Church in 1978. In March 2001, Mt. Carmel Church and Pastor

Participants in Rodney King’s installation (from the left): Wayne Buchtel, Robert Lynam, Nathan King, Rodney King, Cliff Blair, Gary Flye, Peter Stazen



Cameron were received into the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. He retired from active ministry in 2010. During the latter years of his life, he also served on the Board of Directors of Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary.

Pastor Cameron’s first wife, Jacquelyn, to whom he was married for 48 years, went home to be with the Lord in March 2002. He subsequently married Edith, who was his faithful helpmeet, particularly during his struggle with cancer during the last two years of his life. He died on December 6, 2012.

He was ever a contender for the Reformed faith. I will miss this special

friend, whose entire life and ministry was a fragrance of Jesus Christ!

**In Memoriam
Thomas R. Patete**

Allen D. Curry

The Reverend Thomas R. Patete, longtime executive director of Great Commission Publications, died suddenly on December 14, 2012. He was 71 years old.

Mr. Patete was born in New Jersey and grew up in Pensacola, Florida. He graduated from Belhaven College and Columbia Theological Seminary and was ordained in the Presbyterian Church in the United States. He joined the Presbyterian Church in America at its founding. He served churches in Hattiesburg, Winona, and Marks, Mississippi. While at Marks, he was chosen to be the second executive director of GCP, where he served faithfully for thirty-four years.

GCP went through significant transformations under Mr. Patete’s leadership. With him at the helm, GCP moved from being a subsidized to a self-supporting ministry. During this period, GCP repaid a sizeable loan to the OPC.

Mr. Patete was well liked and highly respected within both the OPC and the

Robert Cameron



Tom Patete



PCA. He had the difficult task of leading an organization answerable to two different denominations, which frequently had differing agendas. Members of OP general assemblies remember him patiently responding to questions and criticisms of GCP. He always gave an attentive ear, without ever losing his composure. His irenic spirit characterized his dealings with the two overseeing denominations.

Mr. Patete developed a love for the OPC. His family worshipped at Trinity OPC in Hatboro during the years GCP was located in Philadelphia. He frequently played the piano for evening worship services at Trinity Church.

Members of the OPC can be grateful to God for Mr. Patete's godly leadership of our publications program. His life was characterized by a transparent piety that communicated respect for those who supported and those who opposed his ideas. He lived his life in a way that mirrors the GCP motto, "Show Me Jesus."

He is survived by his wife (Jane), two children (Amy [Gresham] and Rob), six grandchildren, and two siblings.

UPDATE

Churches

- **Dayspring OPC** in Manassas (Warrenton), Va., was dissolved by the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic on December 1.

- On December 4, the Presbytery of New Jersey erased the congregation of **Stratford OPC** in Stratford, N.J., from its roll of churches, since it had renounced the jurisdiction of the Presbytery and the OPC.

- The Presbytery of Philadelphia dissolved the congregation of **Yardley Presbyterian Church** in Yardley, Pa., effective December 31.

Ministers

- **Glen J. Clary**, formerly pastor at Immanuel OPC in West Collingswood, N.J., was installed by the Presbytery of the Southwest as associate pastor of Providence Presbyterian Church in Pflugerville, Tex., on November 30.

- On November 30, **Stephen D. Doe**, formerly pastor of Bethel Reformed Presbyterian Church in Fredericksburg, Va., was installed as an evangelist by the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic to serve as their regional home missionary.

- The Presbytery of the Southwest has dissolved the pastoral relationship between **Edward W. Ludt**, who had resigned for health reasons, and Covenant Presbyterian Church of Fort Worth (Tex.), effective December 1, 2012.

- The pastoral relationship between **Harry R. "Buster" McLeod** and Yardley Presbyterian Church in Yardley, Pa., was dissolved by the Presbytery of Philadelphia, effective December 31.

- **Kevin L. Medcalf**, formerly pastor of Providence Presbyterian Church in Aiken, S.C., was installed as pastor of New Hope OPC in Hanford, Calif., by the Presbytery of California and Nevada on December 13.

- The pastoral relationship between the retiring **Robert B. Needham** and New Hope OPC in Hanford, Calif., was dissolved on December 13 by the Presbytery of Northern California and Nevada.

- On December 1, the Presbytery of the Southeast dissolved the pastoral relationship between **E. Cody Ray** and Sovereign Grace Reformed Presbyterian Church in Hickory, N.C., for health reasons, effective December 15.

- **Jonathan W. Shishko** was ordained

on December 8 as an evangelist of the Presbytery of Connecticut and Southern New York to serve as an organizing pastor (with Brad Hertzog) of Reformation Presbyterian Church in New York City (Queens), N.Y.

- The pastoral relationship between **Bennett B. Wethered** and Dayspring OPC in Manassas (Warrenton), Va., was dissolved on December 1.

Milestones

- **Robert J. Cameron**, 80, pastor emeritus at Mt. Carmel Church in Somerset, N.J., died on December 6.

- **Thomas R. Patete**, 71, a PCA minister who had served as executive director of Great Commission Publications for 34 years, died suddenly on December 14.

LETTERS

THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA

Editor:

Reading the lead article in the December 2012 issue left me thankful that a church was attempting to draw folks from the community to the truth, but it left me disappointed that no qualification was made regarding the many problems found in *The Chronicles of Narnia*.

While well intentioned in presenting the gospel through fiction, *The Chronicles of Narnia* fails in many areas to present the clear teaching of Scripture. Whether it is the death for only one, a seeming lack of total depravity and original sin, or the use of the name Aslan to represent Jesus Christ, the series seems to present more problems than solutions for Christian witness.

We have been given the truth unto salvation in the Scripture alone, and it is there that God reveals himself to us through his Son Jesus Christ. We do not have to rely on a fictional, errant story to understand or explain the true God and his work, because he has given us the inerrant historical account of redemption in the Bible.

When attempting to draw people to

the Scripture through the use of popular books and movies, it might it be helpful to point out the theological problems of those stories in contrast to the truth.

Benjamin Stahl
Atlanta, Ga.

REVIEWS

***A Christian's Pocket Guide to Baptism*, by Robert Letham. Published by Christian Focus, 2012. Paperback, 128 pages, list price \$7.99. Reviewed by pastor Daniel J. Dillard.**



“Good things come in small packages.” That saying is certainly true of this amazing little book on baptism by Robert Letham. It is jam-packed with biblical teaching on the riches of God’s grace in Christ, which are signified and sealed by the Holy Spirit in baptism and received by faith.

The book has three sections. In “Part One: Foundational Principles,” Letham advocates what he calls a “canonical” approach, meaning that we must understand baptism in light of the history of redemption recorded in both the Old and New Testaments. He refutes false dichotomizing between material and spiritual. He shows how God uses material signs from the Garden onward to express his love, and, after the Fall, to express his redemptive grace. God reinforces and applies his promises by means of his sacraments. Letham also corrects our modern individualism by calling attention to the corporate aspect of salvation. Baptism points to God’s grace to *households* within the covenant community, the church.

In “Part Two: What Baptism Signifies,” Letham carefully explains the significance of what *God* does in our baptism. He shows that baptism fittingly portrays the reality of God’s cleansing us from our sin. Letham also shows that in our

baptism God points us to and unites us with Christ, in whom God’s grace is both *exhibited* and *conferred*. Through baptism, God assures believers of their salvation, along with his promises. This section also includes helpful discussion of the relationship between baptism and regeneration, and further reinforces the covenantal household principles underlying baptism. The concluding chapter in this section outlines the teaching of the Protestant confessions on baptism.

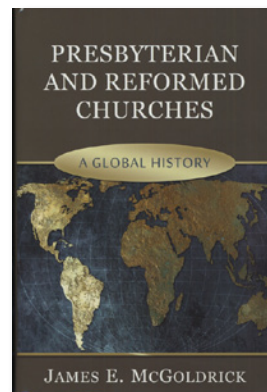
In the third section of the book, Letham brings his redemptive-historical study to bear on the practical questions of adult and infant baptism. He shows that the children of believers are graciously claimed by God and ought to be baptized and nurtured in the church as believing disciples, instead of being regarded as strangers to the covenant and outside of God’s grace. “They are, as Paul says, to be raised ‘in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.’ It is to be expected that, *given faithful teaching by parents and church*, that through the work of the Holy Spirit, they will soon confess their faith and grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ” (p. 101).

This little book will enrich both new and mature Christians in their understanding of the meaning and significance of their baptism. The style is very readable and easy to follow. The book employs a simple system of symbols in the margins to help the reader remember key points. Footnotes explain some points in greater technical detail and offer references to more detailed studies, as does the extensive bibliography. The small size and visual format of the book add to its user-friendliness.

* * *

***Presbyterian and Reformed Churches: A Global History*, by James E. McGoldrick. Published by Reformation Heritage Books, 2012. Hardback, 576 pages, list price \$40.00. Reviewed by OP pastor Jack Sawyer.**

Professor James McGold-



rick, of Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, has served our Presbyterian and Reformed community well in the production

of this volume. *Presbyterian and Reformed Churches* provides a helpful tool for anyone interested in, or involved with, the ecumenical calling of the church. It is a work on church history, to be sure, but the breadth of the survey, and the historical details recounted, provide the ecumenist (mindful of the prayer of our Lord Jesus, “that they may all be one”) with a sweeping handbook of Reformed Christianity.

I say “production” because, as McGoldrick himself acknowledges, he is deeply indebted to Richard Clark Reed, late church historian at Columbia Theological Seminary, and the unpublished manuscript of Thomas Hugh Spence, onetime director of the Presbyterian Historical Foundation in Montreat, North Carolina. Reed’s *History of the Presbyterian Churches of the World* was published by Westminster Press in 1905. Spence’s unpublished manuscript covers much of the same ground as Reed. McGoldrick has used both works.

While McGoldrick has acknowledged Reed and Spence as coauthors, one should not minimize his own excellent contributions to the volume. The portion on the twentieth century is his, as well

Did the Westminster Divines receive a revelation?

For the answer, visit the OPC website
opc.org/qa.html?question_id=159

Summer Interns Available

Mid-America Reformed Seminary encourages churches to request a seminary intern for the summer months. Such experience helps train a man for the gospel ministry. Church sessions should contact Rev. Mark Vander Hart, Mid-America Reformed Seminary, 229 Seminary Drive, Dyer, IN 46311-1069. Contact him at mvanderhart@midamerica.edu; tel. 219-864-2400, ext. 108; fax 219-864-2410.

as the suggested reading list at the end of each chapter. The book is chronological and geographical in its scope. Beginning with the ancient church and the extinction of Presbyterianism, the narrative moves to the Reformation in Europe and then unfolds the spread, development, and distinctives of the Reformed and Presbyterian churches worldwide.

The present reviewer was favorably reminded of the style of Kenneth Scott Latourtette's magisterial *History of Christianity*. That being said, surveys are naturally selective, and limitations of space and material forbid being exhaustive. Still, McGoldrick manages to put his finger on much that is central in each church. However, one may question what might be seen as an overemphasis on the author's own denomination (the Presbyterian Church in America). Our own Orthodox Presbyterian Church receives notice, as well as our sister churches in North America and around the world. If for no other reason, this will prove helpful for readers interested to find out about the personnel, history, and character of other churches with whom the OPC has fraternal relations.

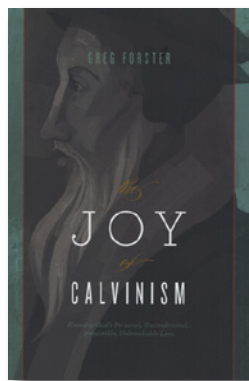
There are at least several minor mistakes. On page 283, the Reformed Churches of New Zealand are said to be associated with the defunct Reformed Ecumenical Council. The RCNZ left that body along with the OPC in the late 1980s. On page 288, the RCNZ are said to have initiated a missionary work in Taiwan. It would be more accurate to say that the OPC initiated that work and that

the RCNZ accepted the invitation of the OPC to participate.

These are minor matters, which illustrate the encyclopedic range of information that McGoldrick has successfully drawn together in *Presbyterian and Reformed Churches*.

* * *

***The Joy of Calvinism*, by Greg Forster. Published by Crossway, 2012. Paperback, 208 pages, list price \$15.99. Reviewed by OP pastor Mark Melton.**



to demonstrate that a proper understanding of historic Calvinism will find it to be imbued with joy. This book uses the term *Calvinism* as it is popularly used in evangelicalism, focusing primarily on Calvinistic soteriology.

To be sure, Calvinism is fre-

OPC Women's Retreat

April 19–20 • Pittsfield, Mass.

The nineteenth annual OPC Women's Retreat, sponsored by the Presbytery of New York and New England, will be held again this year at the Lakeside Conference Center in Pittsfield, Mass. Julie Courtney will be speaking on the theme of "A Praying Life." For more information about the retreat, call the registrar, Elise Pasqualino, at 518-762-2602 or e-mail her at epasqual@nycap.rr.com.

quently misunderstood. But, Forster says, "it seems to me that Calvinists, myself included, have not been communicating well about our ideas. And we have tended to blame the audience for what are really our own failures in communicating" (p. 14).

One cause of this failure to communicate is the tendency of Calvinists "to communicate about it (*viz.*, Calvinism) only in highly technical, formulaic, and (especially) negative terms" (p. 15). Forster points out that "the 'five points of Calvinism' are now virtually the only terms in which Calvinism is formulated" (p. 16). Sadly, these five points are "almost entirely negative; they tell you a lot about what Calvinists don't believe, but very little about what Calvinists do believe" (p. 16).

Forster's goal in this book is to describe "what Calvinism says about your everyday walk with God and the purpose of the Christian life, and how you can have the joy of God, even in spite of whatever trials and suffering the Lord has called you to endure" (p. 22). He makes the case that Calvinism is profoundly

Positions Available

Pastor: Church of the Lakes in Brainerd, Minn., is seeking a pastor to replace our retiring pastor. The church is a mission plant with four committed families (sixteen children, nine and under) and additional attenders. Some families are relatively new to the OPC and some have extended OPC and NAPARC experience. We currently use *Trinity Hymnal* and the RPCNA Psalter. Interested applicants should contact elder Kurt Swanson at: 302 265th St., Woodville, WI 54028; 715-220-5380; kurt.swanson@sonstool.com.

pastoral in its orientation.

Before launching into his explanation of why genuine Calvinism is “drenched with joy” (p. 26), Forster devotes the opening chapter to his own “five points about Calvinism.” He identifies and refutes five of the most egregious misrepresentations of what Calvinists believe.

To understand the joy that infuses Calvinism, argues Forster, one must begin with God’s love for his own. The bulk of the book is devoted to an overview of four principles summarizing a biblical theology of God’s love: (1) God loves you personally; (2) God loves you unconditionally; (3) God loves you irresistibly; (4) God loves you unbreakably. The book concludes with a helpful appendix that addresses twelve of the most frequently asked questions about Calvinism.

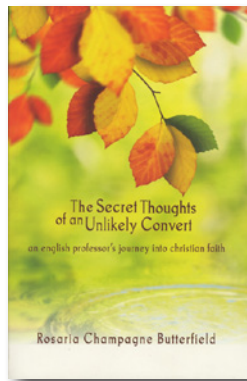
Forster has provided a great service to the church in crafting this basic primer on Calvinism. It is written for “the person in the pew” and is thus quite readable. He warmly and cogently demonstrates why “real Calvinism is all about joy” (p. 15). Thus, those within and without the “Calvinist camp” would benefit from Forster’s winsome portrayal of Calvinism.

I hope that this work will find an ever-broadening audience. It could certainly prove most helpful in Bible study groups, inquirers’ classes, leadership training, etc. I highly recommend this book.

* * *

The Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert, by Rosaria Champagne Butterfield. Published by Crown

& Covenant, 2012. Paperback, 154 pages, list price \$12.00. Reviewed by OP pastor Charles R. Biggs.



“And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified” (1 Cor. 6:11). Have you thought lately about how great and amazing God’s grace is to sinners? Here is an invitation to do so once again.

Rosaria Butterfield, the wife of an RPCNA minister, has written an exceptional spiritual autobiography that details her pains, frustrations, emptiness, and confusion in a world of sin and misery. Although she was a highly successful, intellectual woman, and a tenured professor at a major university, she was in desperate need of God’s forgiving grace in Christ.

Rosaria uncompromisingly and vulnerably shares the incredibly great power of God’s grace to a sinner who was caught up in homosexuality. She writes about the joys of learning about salvation from the lips of humble Christians who practiced mercy and hospitality, and the fullness of hope and light in her soul, and yet the messiness and chaos that can often attend seeking to follow Christ in this world, especially when breaking with the past to live a life of holiness. This book is a

testimony to the power of the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of all life, as he makes Christ known to his people!

Because of Christ’s powerful grace to Dr. Butterfield, the book reveals the dear, regenerated heart of an affectionate mother who loves her children and seeks to raise them in the covenant. Now she serves as the faithful minister’s wife who honors her husband and family as the church serves Christ (Eph. 5:21–32). Now she is the compassionate and caring friend who seeks to show the same merciful love of Christ to unbelievers. Now she is the learning disciple, seeking to know how to be like Christ in a fallen world of misery. Now she is the confessional Christian who has committed herself to the truth of God’s Word, who holds these truths faithfully and seeks the means of grace that Jesus has graciously given us to grow. In the words of another redeemed sinner, “Amazing grace!—how sweet the sound—that saved a wretch like me!”

May you read, rejoice, ponder, and digest this wondrous testimony to God’s amazing grace. I recommend the wisdom here with hopes that it will make you more compassionate, caring, and hopeful in the incomparably great power for us who believe (and those who haven’t believed yet) (Eph. 1:19ff.). I pray that you will read it to think more deeply about how Christ’s love can be demonstrated to those caught up in sinful lifestyles, without hope and without God in the world. Let us never forget when approaching unbelievers: “And such were some of you.” Highly recommended reading.