

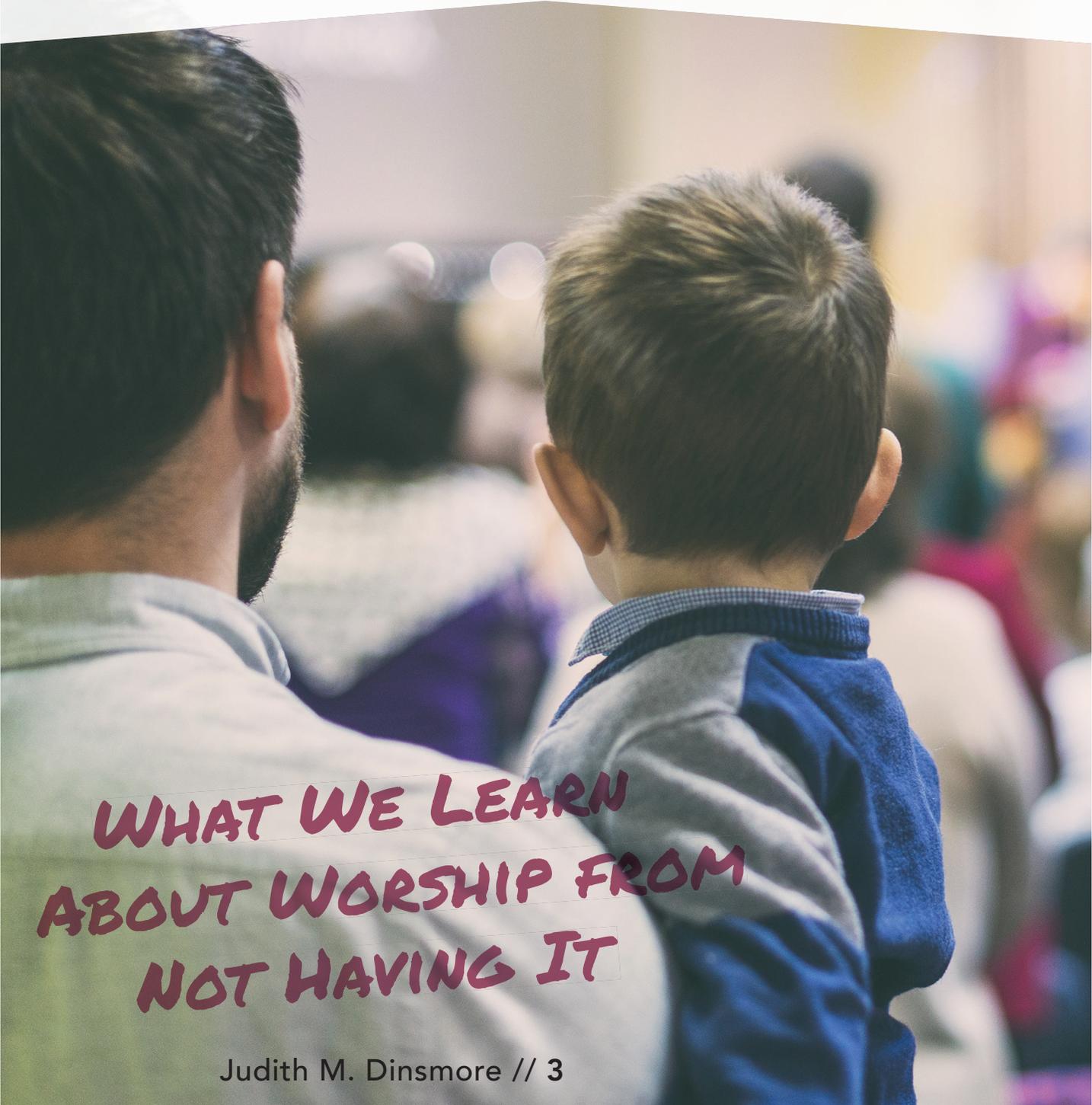
NEW HORIZONS

≡ *in the* ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ≡

6 The Physicality of the Church
// by John W. Mahaffy

JUNE 2020

7 Faith and Risk
// by Anthony A. Monaghan



WHAT WE LEARN
ABOUT WORSHIP FROM
NOT HAVING IT

Judith M. Dinsmore // 3

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New Horizons

in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church

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The OPC Committee on Diaconal Ministries recently opened a COVID-19 Pandemic Response fund. This fund will be used to bring financial relief to those impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. If you would like to contribute beyond your local diaconal giving, please go to our website: OPCDisasterResponse.org. If you have any additional questions, please email us at opcdisasterresponse@opc.org.



“ For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead. He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again. ”

2 Corinthians 1:8-10

WHAT WE LEARN ABOUT WORSHIP FROM NOT HAVING IT



JUDITH M. DINSMORE // Elizabeth Pearce was one of three people driving to worship at Church of the Covenant OPC in Hackensack, New Jersey, in late March when the country was, state by state, shutting down. She is the church pianist; the pastor and the sound guy were the other two members of the skeleton crew.

“I cried on the way there because I was experiencing for the first time just how precious worship is,” Pearce remembered. They set up the livestream, and the simple service commenced. “It was so surreal to be putting together the bare bones of a worship service. . . . I am never going to take worship for granted again—how sweet and necessary it is to be together.”

As OP churches trickle back into corporate worship and restrictions are slowly lifted, members may similarly find that their understanding of church life has changed or expanded. What do we lose from not being gathered together? What do we learn about worship from not having it?

A Hunger for Fellowship

Scott Pearce, brother-in-law to Elizabeth Pearce and a deacon at Church of the Covenant, hosts a twice-monthly small group in his home. A few weeks into the stay-at-home order, they had their first Zoom meeting. “Practically everyone who even occasionally comes to our small group was

there,” Pearce said. “You could just tell that everyone was starved to see their church family.” It was a bit like finally sitting down to a full meal when you’re famished. “You don’t know how hungry you are until you take that first bite, and then you just devour the whole plate,” he described.

Elizabeth Pearce leads a women’s Bible study of ten to twelve women that also gathers twice a month; about half the group is from church, half from the community. The group adapted quickly to meeting virtually.

“Even our most senior member, who’s in her nineties, logged in,” Pearce said. One woman can’t look at a screen because of health issues, so she put a big teddy bear on her chair as a stand-in and talked from the side. Another woman, a young mom, was interrupted by a toddler on a nap strike who ended up on her lap during the study. “She was frustrated by the disruption, but we were so happy to see her little son, and we could encourage her in that,” Pearce said.

On the opposite side of the

country, Covenant Presbyterian in Marina, California, has also turned to Zoom for church fellowship. Attendance at Sunday school actually went *up* in the move from in-person to video-conferencing.

“People are super eager to be in contact with one another, to be in some odd sense together,” said pastor Joel Robbins.

Covenant’s Sunday school, prayer meeting, women’s Bible study, systematic theology discussion, and even a weekly discussion of great Christian poetry, all happen over Zoom. When the meeting is finished, they purposely leave the meetings open for informal fellowship. “Sometimes chatting afterward goes up to an hour,” Robbins said. (Like some OP churches, Covenant decided against a livestream worship service by conviction and instead emails out a packet for household worship each week.)

At Harvest OPC in Grand Rapids, Michigan, most ministries were moved online and members have enjoyed and taken advantage of opportunities to

connect—more even than expected, according to Pastor Wayne Veenstra. An online congregational forum drew upwards of one hundred families and an online prayer meeting drew over fifty families. Some small groups are meeting more frequently via videoconference than they are accustomed to in person.

Tech Is No Savior

No one, however, is writing love letters to Zoom.

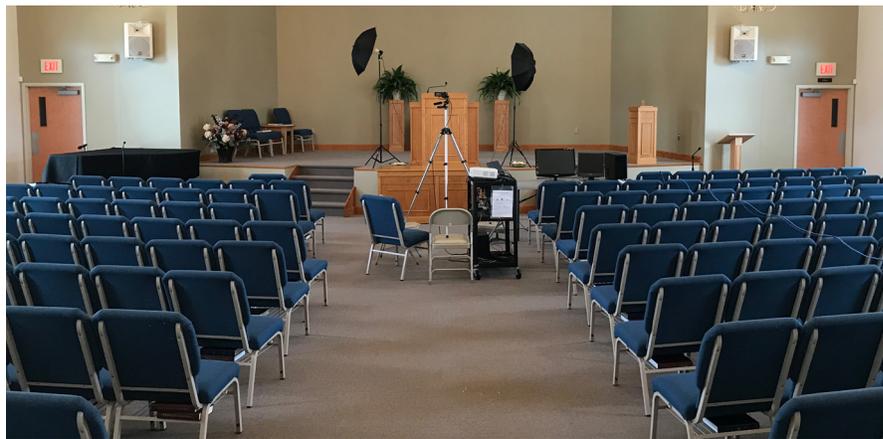
By mid-April, after a few weeks of stay-at-home or shelter-in-place orders, researchers all over the internet were pointing out that our bodies weren't meant for virtual connection. You can't read body language or pick up on someone's mood in the same way. When group calling, two or three people usually start talking at once. And what would be a comfortable silence in person is confusing on a video call. Zoom fatigue is real.

"It takes so much work to attempt to relate normally when you're on Zoom," Joel Robbins summed up.

As a psychologist, Elizabeth Pearce knows well the importance of listening and speaking face to face. "God created us to need that physical contact. It's not that I sit there and touch everybody!" she laughed. "But it's that joining of your life, of the soul, that only happens when you're in the same room, because you can see the look in the other person's eye and read what they're really saying to you non-verbally."

That same dynamic is intimately familiar to pastors during corporate worship. They speak in front of their congregations each Sunday, personally addressing, in the name of the Lord, a certain group of faces whom they know and love. It's not a one-way communication. Speaking to a camera during a livestream or for a pre-recorded sermon is not the same.

And it's not Matthew Holst's strong suit. As pastor of Shiloh OPC in Raleigh, North Carolina, Holst and co-pastor David Okken record sermons each week that the session sends out with a bulletin for family worship



Church of the Covenant in Hackettstown, NJ

on Sundays. "I preach from notes, not a manuscript, so I normally have a good degree of eye contact with the congregation. And when they're not there, it's somewhat disconcerting," he said.

Looking into a camera affects the quality of the preaching somehow, he thinks. "I'm not sure I know how to describe it. It almost becomes subjectively more speech-like than sermonic in its quality." There is something artificial about it that Holst doesn't care for. "It makes me feel a bit like a politician with a sound bite," he added wryly.

Not only do congregants and pastor communicate with each other during corporate worship in a way not replicable over screens, but congregants communicate with each other, too: "addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" (Eph. 5:19).

"We benefit from little ones belting out the doxology. We benefit each other by saying amen at the end of the prayer. It's the body of Christ coming together to work together, to serve together, to edify each other. . . . It's irreplaceable. Nothing can come close to God's people gathering together," Holst said. Virtual worship is not corporate worship, he explained; it is less than corporate worship. It is not without blessing and not without the grace of God, but it is still not corporate worship.

"How sweet and pleasant it is when brethren dwell in unity," Holst quoted from Psalm 133. Without corporate worship, "we can't do what we love to

do." Shiloh OPC eagerly moved to open-air services by the middle of May.

Catching a pixelated representation of a beloved face via videoconferencing is nothing like sharing a pew and a hymnal. But even this points us to our eternal hope of joining with all the saints to worship Christ himself face to face in glory.

Children and Worship

The loss of corporate worship affects each church member, including kids.

Shiloh OPC is a congregation full of children—just about a third the congregation is under fifteen, Holst said. "One of the things I enjoy most about church is that I hug all the kids every week. And they love being in church."

Children learn by tasting, sniffing, scratching, listening, watching, and, yes, hugging—and often all of the above during one worship service. Without church, they lose not just doctrinal instruction or time to play with friends after worship, but the very presence of a holy God with his people that they are busy absorbing in a sensory way even while they squirm in the pew. Screens are no substitute.

Pastor Wayne Veenstra of Harvest OPC, himself a dad of two young children in a church full of children, is guessing that there may be more squirming in the pews when families return to church after weeks of living room worship, as children may have forgotten their hard-won habits.

Back to Normal?

The line Joel Robbins hears over and over from his congregants and acquaintances is probably one that many of us have said ourselves: “I just can’t wait for things to get back to normal.”

Churches in states that never issued stay-at-home orders are still tasting normal. When states lift stay-at-home orders but keep social distancing, smaller churches will be able to space out congregants and return to corporate worship more quickly. Hardest hit will be larger churches in areas where COVID-19 orders have been most restrictive.

The effects of no corporate worship for months, however, will not be erased even when restrictions lift. “I have a certain level of concern that it’s possible the effect is going to be negative,” Robbins said. “We just so easily get used to things”—things like staying home on Sunday mornings. “I’m hopeful that instead it will be something that fosters a greater delight,” he concluded.

Holst similarly hopes that one of the hidden blessings after this crisis will be that people will realize just how valuable corporate worship is and recommit themselves to a fuller expression of what corporate worship is in the life of the church. But he, too, is concerned.

Ordained Servant on Mental Health

In areas more dramatically affected by COVID-19, the mental, emotional, and spiritual health of congregants during job loss, isolation, and illness, is weighing heavily on pastors and church leaders. For excellent insights on battling mental illness, both our own and others’, read Doug Felch’s recent article in *Ordained Servant*: “[Suicide Watch: Ministering to Christians Who Despair of Life.](#)”

The print issue of *Ordained Servant* Volume 28 (2019), which is usually released and distributed at General Assembly, will this year be mailed directly to all Orthodox Presbyterian ministers in June.

“When worship isn’t right, a lot of things don’t go right in our lives,” he said. “Corporate worship is the engine for the Christian life.” Not having corporate worship—even if we have something similar—wears and tears at us. With quarantine comes, at the very least, the temptation to be less diligent. “We’ve got time on our hands, and we’ve got to fill it with something. The question is what we fill it with,” Holst observed.

The Onion, a satirical “news” source, recently ran a mock article about a fictional man who discovered that being laid off and socially isolated was surprisingly not the catalyst he needed to meet all of his long-held personal goals. Some of us may similarly discover that more time on our hands does not result in more fervently seeking the Lord or training up our children in righteousness—but rather, perhaps, less. It should be no surprise if staying home on Sunday mornings hurts our repentance and faith.

“I would be surprised if we don’t find out after the fact that a lot of Christians have struggled in their assurance and in their holiness because they’ve not been able to gather for corporate worship.” People who are struggling are often reluctant to ask for help in the moment, “and I get that,” said Holst. But when we can meet together once again, it behooves us to assume that COVID-19 brought difficulty of one sort or another to



View from the pulpit of Shiloh OPC in Raleigh, NC

each one of us.

More positively, when COVID-19 is old news, the unprecedented shutdown may stir our sympathies for those who may long to be in worship but cannot, sometimes for years, due to ill health or imprisonment or other circumstances. “It gives a new view on what it means to be a shut-in,” Holst said. “I’m learning what it’s like to be on the other side of things—what it’s like to be distanced from God’s people on a regular basis.”

Blest Be the Tie That Binds

For the foreseeable future, Elizabeth Pearce will continue to drive to church for a three-person service on Sunday morning. But she is cheerfully resting, not on what our eyes can see, but on the church’s one foundation.

“Our church, when we have a new member or baptism, circles around and sings, ‘Blest Be the Tie That Binds.’ What unites us and binds us together is just so much more precious and so much more important than this whole difficulty. [Through it] we know more of life and hope and the promises we have from Christ through Scripture, and that is what our world is aching for more than ever.” □

The author is managing editor of New Horizons.

THE PHYSICALITY OF THE CHURCH



JOHN W. MAHAFFY // **The congregation I serve in Newberg, Oregon, loves to gather for worship. Yet, for the past month, as I write, we have not, both because corporate worship would put others in danger of contracting COVID-19 and because of restrictions on any gatherings.**

Since we cannot meet physically, we, like many churches, have moved to livestreaming. We cannot *not* worship. We will not stop worshiping. But we have changed *how* we gather for worship.

That has been a learning curve for me. Arrangements are jury-rigged. The camera stand is a folding chair set on a table. The borrowed laptop is connected to an ethernet cable unrolled across the lawn. It's makeshift, but it works. Following the livestreamed service, we open a Zoom session for informal fellowship.

As I worked to arrange the livestreaming of services to be held in a building empty except for my wife, the pianist, I was struck again by the physicality of the church. We are believers who actually meet together. We greet one another. We raise our voices together in praise. We do something very countercultural: we sit in the same room and listen to the reading and preaching of the Word. We eat physical bread and drink the fruit of the vine as the Lord feeds us from his heavenly meal, anticipating the banquet in the new heavens

and the new earth. These livestreamed services are so different. The members of the flock are in their own homes. Yes, we sing, but we cannot hear one another.

Our congregation normally celebrates the Lord's Supper at each Lord's Day morning worship service. Several members have told me how much they miss the breaking of bread together. We are being reminded of how important these elements of worship are.

Despite the frustration of what we cannot do, Sunday worship is not a disappointment for me. I soon realized that I was not preaching to an empty church building. Rather, I was preaching to and leading in worship the body of Christ, scattered to their homes because of a pandemic, but still united before the throne of grace. I remembered again the truth of Hebrews 12, that whenever the church gathers in worship, it is not simply the many or few believers at a particular time and place, but a glorious assembly that includes the saints and angels in heaven—and our Lord himself present with us.

Our present circumstances detract

from the physicality of worship. We dare not allow the separation triggered by the pandemic to normalize absence from gathering for public worship. Beware, lest the wonders of technology lure us into replacing meeting together with virtual church.

The constraints of our present worship situation remind us that even the best of our earthly worship is marred by our sin and imperfections. If there ever were a “perfect” worship service in which the preacher never stumbled over his words, in which the pianist never missed a note, and in which everyone in the congregation sang on key—even that service would need the intercessory work of our ascended Savior, because even the best we offer is tainted by our sin. Is our livestreamed worship service less than perfect? Absolutely! But our Mediator still presents it to the Father as an acceptable offering. Even so, we look forward eagerly to the time when we assemble together physically once again. □

The author is pastor of Trinity Presbyterian in Newberg, Oregon.

FAITH AND RISK



ANTHONY A. MONAGHAN // An ancient Chinese proverb says, “May you live in interesting times.” It sounds like a blessing. But its intent is not to bless. It is used ironically—a sour curse that reminds us of the fall. Well, we are living in interesting times. They are not particularly amusing in real life. But they remind us of the

important relationship between faith and risk. Christians are called to walk in faith, in every circumstance, and Christians are also called to walk in wisdom in evaluating risk. Faith and wisdom are not opposite ends of a spectrum but are coinhabitants of that faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.

It turns out that interesting times are an opportunity for witness in a way that we might never have conceived—the simple witness of going to work. We have two members of our congregation who work in grocery stores. Both have gone from part-time employees, struggling to find enough hours to provide for themselves, to full-time employees, often working overtime. Their labor is in high demand because some fellow employees, overcome by fear, have ceased going to work. But these two believers, trusting in God and unwilling to fear, continue to show up and do their jobs.

We live in an in-between age. Death still stalks every person on earth, and yet at the very same time death has been defanged for all who trust in Jesus Christ. Trusting in Jesus Christ, we still assess risk but we do not live in fear.

Neither do we tempt God by recklessness and foolishness. When Satan

tempts Jesus in the wilderness, he challenges Jesus’s faith. In essence, he says, “If you trust God, then throw yourself down from the pinnacle of the temple.” The implication, of course, is that if Jesus doesn’t do this, then he doesn’t trust God. But Jesus does not take the bait—he rebukes Satan: “You shall not put the LORD your God to the test” (Matt. 4:7).

Not Paralyzed by Risk

As Christians, our lives of walking in faith before God are neither reckless nor fearful. They are wise. And wisdom considers risk carefully and lives accordingly. Faith really does believe in the sovereignty of God. God really does protect his people. God really does provide for his people. God’s perfect love in the gospel casts out fear, so that we really are released from fear. And being released from fear, we have a sensible attitude towards risk. We recognize that risk is always all around us, and so we are not paralyzed by it.

The reality is that every day we do thousands of hidden calculations about risk. For example, 36,560 people died in motor vehicle accidents in the United States in 2018. That’s a lot of people. In no way do I want to diminish the

sorrow and horror of people dying in car accidents. Nevertheless we do not stop driving, and we do not stop crossing the street. We assess the risk, and apply wisdom to the risk. That kind of assessment could be multiplied across a million risk factors, and it absolutely applies today. We live as Christians, trusting God in the midst of a fearful world. We live as wise among the unwise.

Wisdom, in God’s *always* good providence, has become then a wonderful point of witness to an unbelieving world. One of the employees I mentioned above works for a notoriously anti-Christian grocery chain. All sorts of “spirituality” are welcome and a welcome subject for conversation, except for the gospel. This employee’s gentle faith is a stark contrast to the “spirituality” of many who are too fearful to come to work.

Risk is all around us in this fallen world; there is no escape from it. But God’s presence and promise is even more so, for he transcends this fallen world. And it is he himself, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who is our security. □

The author is pastor of Providence OPC in Charlottesville, Virginia.

DIACONAL MINISTRIES

A SACRIFICIAL GIFT OF FACE MASKS

// PATRICIA L. DUGGAN



Nurses receive masks from Asian Christians donated by New Hope Presbyterian in Green Bay, Wisconsin

During this global crisis, we may not be giving much thought about what we can do for people in other parts of the globe. But Christians from halfway across the world have been thinking of us in the OPC.

In early April, David Nakhla, administrator for the Committee on Diaconal Ministries, received an offer for a donation of 7,500 masks. The offer came from a man named Frank, who was representing a group of Christian churches in Asia. We happily accepted, since at that time masks were in short supply, but we didn't immediately know the circumstances of this sacrificial gift.

As we waited for the supply of masks, we began to learn more about the lives of the people behind this generosity through Frank. He wrote, "My tears almost came out when I heard our sister church donated about \$1,000 for the masks. This small church was forced by the government to move at least thirty times last year because their Christian school was being defined as a 'house church.' Most are factory workers with a salary of \$600 to \$800 per month, for 10–12 hours per day of work. You might have had the same feeling of mine, very touching moment, not because of the money, but because of their love from God!"

Our friends were not doing this for their own recognition. (In fact, for safety reasons, we can't fully identify them.) Rather, in genuine love for the Lord, their desire was that the masks be given to brothers and sisters and to the lost in a country far from them—and given in Jesus's name, not their own. "Let's pray that our Lord Jesus uses these masks to strengthen his people as well as reach those who are lost," wrote Frank.

Their donation enabled the distribution of thousands of masks to at least sixteen states. Deacons, elders, and pastors gave the masks to neighbors, church members, friends, and the vulnerable in the name of the Lord. What a blessing to be involved in meeting the needs of hospitals and healthcare

workers here in the states while proclaiming Christ!

David Nakhla sent a message of unity in Christ with the mask distributions: "I trust you receive and use these masks with thanksgiving for that communion we have in Christ, communion that can be experienced across country borders, language barriers, and economic differences. And may we all be encouraged to pray for our brothers and sisters in Asia who have plenty of distress and suffering of their own."

Vern Picknally, pastor of Bethel Reformed in Fremont, Michigan, wrote this letter of thanks: "Brothers and sisters in Asia, thank you so much for your care to my daughter, Vera, and many other nurses. Vera is a registered nurse at a hospital outside Chicago. Her unit/floor was converted to a COVID-19 unit, so she is in direct care of patients with the virus. Her hospital has a very short supply of masks and the nurses are regularly reusing them. She is taking the masks that you sent to distribute to other nurses and aides in her hospital. Both Vera and I thank you for your mercy and love shown to her and others."

Bob Scott, elder at Living Hope OPC in Allentown, Pennsylvania, wrote: "Please tell Frank that we really appreciate their sacrifice to get these masks to the United States and help our church. As I have read and reread his note to you, I am reminded of the New Testament churches supporting their brothers in Christ that they did not know personally but would be united to in heaven. Our church prays for the church in Asia, that one day they will be allowed to worship our God without fear of personal persecution."

Please pray for the saints in Asia who struggle daily. If you have received a supply of masks and would like to encourage our brothers and sisters in their faith, feel free to email your note to David Nakhla (David.Nakhla@opc.org).

The author is a member at New Hope Presbyterian Church in Bridgeton, New Jersey, and communications coordinator for the Committee on Diaconal Ministries.

JUNE



The Oldakers



The Bolyards

1 Pray for stated clerk **HANK BELFIELD** as he oversees matters related to the postponement of General Assembly. / **LARRY & KALYNN OLDAKER**, Sandusky, OH. Pray for God's blessing on the outreach of Firelands Grace.

2 **MARK & JENI RICHLINE**, Montevideo, Uruguay. Pray for the family as they work together to broadcast Sunday worship online. / **CHRIS (NANCY) WALMER**, area home missions coordinator for the Presbytery of Central PA.

3 **RETIRED MISSIONARIES** Cal & Edie Cummings, Brian & Dorothy Wingard, Greet Rietkerk, and Young & Mary Lou Son. / **CHRIS & GRACE ANN CASHEN**, Clarkston, GA. Pray for new opportunities to minister to refugees.

4 **LOWELL & MAE IVEY**, Virginia Beach, VA. Pray for the Lord to raise up officers at Reformation Presbyterian. / **DR. MARK & LAURA AMBROSE**, Cambodia. Pray for the health and safety of the medical staff.

5 **GREGORY REYNOLDS**, editor of *Ordained Servant*. / Pray for **BRYCE (KELCIE) SOUVE**, Reformation OPC in Morgantown, WV, and **PEDER (ANNA) KLING**, Prescott OPC in Prescott, AZ, as they finish yearlong internships.

6 Pray for affiliated missionaries **JERRY AND MARILYN FARNIK**, Czech Republic, as they make alternate plans for English camps due to COVID-19. / Pray for **SEMINARIANS** who are beginning internships and for their mentoring pastors.

7 Associate missionaries **JAMES & ESTHER FOLKERTS**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for the team's ministry decisions. / **ANDREW & REBEKAH CANAVAN**, Corona, CA. Pray that Corona Presbyterian might plant gospel seeds, water them, and trust the Lord.

8 **JEREMY & GWEN BAKER**, Yuma, AZ. Pray that members of Yuma OPC would love their neighbors. / **JOHN FIKKERT**, director for Committee on Ministerial Care, and **BOB JONES**, interim administrator for Committee on Coordination.

9 **MARK AND CARLA VAN ESSENDELFT**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for Mark's work on the Mercy Committee and the farm project. / Pray for those whose **SHORT-TERM MISSION TRIPS** have been canceled, that they would carry their enthusiasm into 2021.

10 **STEPHEN & FELICIA LAUER**, Wilmington, OH. Pray for outreach efforts of Wilmington Reformed. / Associate missionaries **CHRISTOPHER & CHLOE VERDICK** and **LEAH HOPP**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for AYP Clinic personnel as they continue to see patients.

11 **Ethan & Catherine Bolyard**, Wilmington, NC. Pray for wisdom as Heritage OPC makes progress toward renovations. / Pray for **OPC DISASTER RESPONSE** volunteers helping those affected by COVID-19.

12 Pray for tentmaking missionary **TINA DEJONG** (on furlough), and **DAVID & RASHEL ROBBINS**, Nakaale, Uganda, scheduled for furlough. / **JEREMY (AMY) ALLEN**, yearlong intern at Covenant of Grace in Oxnard, CA.

13 Pray for missionary associates **JOANNA GROVE**, **JOSHUA MARCOUX**, and **JONATHAN ROBBINS**, Nakaale, Uganda, and **ANGELA VOSKUIL** currently in the US. / Office manager **ANNELISA STUDLEY**.

14 **RYAN & ROCHELLE CAVANAUGH**, Merrillville, IN. Pray that Mission Church would exhibit boldness in love and witness. / Pray that the **BOARDWALK CHAPEL** would be able to open this summer, as well as for more volunteers.

15 **BEN & HEATHER HOPP**, Haiti. With the fragile economy exacerbated by COVID-19, pray that families would be able to obtain daily necessities. / **KERRI ANN CRUSE**, video and social media coordinator.

JUNE



The Delfils family

21 Pray for affiliated missionary **LINDA KARNER**, Japan, that her hip replacement surgery might be successful. / Pray for **DANNY OLINGER**, general secretary of Christian Education, as he directs the intern program.

22 Pray for **TYLER (NATALIE) DETRICK**, church-planting intern at First Street Reformed Fellowship in Dayton, OH. / Pray for associate **P. F.**, Asia, and for volunteers this summer semester.

23 **SHANE & RACHELLE BENNETT**, Grand Rapids, MI. Pray for three new families to join Reformation in the coming months. / Pray for the **SHILOH INSTITUTE** this week in Jefferson, NH, as attendees explore OP pastoral ministry.

24 Pray for **MR. AND MRS. F**, Asia, as he remains on the field while she is in the US due to travel restrictions. / **DAVID (JANE) CRUM**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of Southern California.

25 **BEN & MELANIE WESTERVELD** and missionary associate **ALETHEA FLORES**, Quebec, Canada. Pray that church members will seek to stay connected as they worship remotely. / **CHARLENE TIPTON**, database manager.

26 Diaconal administrator **DAVID NAKHLA**. Pray for OP deacons as they minister to needs that have arisen out of the COVID-19 crisis. / **BOB & GRACE HOLDA**, Oshkosh, WI. Pray that members of Resurrection Presbyterian would delight to receive the ministry of the Word.



The Kruchkows

27 **MR. AND MRS. M**, Asia. Pray for the security of those who began worship online during the COVID-19 lockdowns. / **KEN (MANDY) KRUCHKOW**, yearlong intern at Oakland Hills Community at Farmington Hills, MI.

28 Pray for **BILL & MARGARET SHISHKO**, Deer Park, NY, as they continue to settle into their new life in Deer Park. / Associate **M.S.**, Asia. Pray for rest and reflection as she concludes her term.

29 Home Missions administrative assistant **KATHARINE OLINGER**. / Pray for **GREAT COMMISSION PUBLICATIONS**, a joint ministry of the OPC and PCA, as it produces educational resources for the churches. / **CARL & STACEY MILLER**, New Braunfels, TX. Pray for new outreach opportunities in the wake of COVID-19.

30 Missionary associates **DR. JIM & JENNY KNOX**, Mbale, Uganda. Pray for Jim and the family as he has resumed work at Joy Hospice. / **MELISA MCGINNIS**, controller, and **MARK STUMPF**, Loan Fund manager. / Pray for the health and safety of **CHARLES AND CONNIE JACKSON** and **RICHARD DANIELS**, Mbale, Uganda.

16 Pray for **MARK (PEGGY) SUMPTER**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of the Southwest. / **OCTAVIUS & MARIE DELFILS**, Haiti. Pray for God's protection over Marie as she works as a nurse in a Port-au-Prince hospital.

17 Pray for **JUEON KIM**, church-planting intern at Christ the King Presbyterian in Naples, FL. / Active duty military chaplains **JEFFREY (JENNY) SHAMESS**, US Army, and **DANIEL (STACEY) HALLEY**, US Air Force.

18 **HEERO & ANYA HACQUEBORD**, L'viv, Ukraine. Pray for students and others now at home with families who do not support their church participation. / **CHRISTOPHER TOBIAS**, cover designer for *New Horizons*.

19 Pray for **CRAIG AND REE COULBOURNE**, Japan (on furlough), as they reconnect with supporting churches in the US. / Home Missions general secretary **JOHN SHAW** and associate general secretary **AL TRICARICO**.

20 **DAVID & REBEKAH GRAVES**, Coeur d'Alene, ID. Pray that Coeur d'Alene Reformed would be united in worship. / **LINDA FOH**, technical assistant for OPC.org, and **TRISH DUGGAN**, STM communications coordinator.

COVID-19 AND THE FRAGILITY OF WEALTH

// KEITH A. LEMAHIEU

Do you matter? “Of course I do,” you say, citing Westminster Shorter Catechism question and answer 10 concerning what it means to be made in the image of God. But let’s be honest, we often live life seeking ways to assure ourselves that our life really does have relevance. This quest for relevance is often a frustrating tussle between living our lives as image-bearers of God and desiring the approval of men.

It is not hyperbole to say that all of us find some measure of relevance in money—in how much we have or don’t have, in how well or poorly we manage it, or perhaps even in how little dominance we think money has over our lives. Did you know that in Scripture Jesus says more about money than heaven or hell? Jesus recognizes that money is a big deal and that there is a fundamental connection between our spiritual life and money. The lover of our souls knows that our hearts are “desperately sick” and that we need repeated reminders to guard our hearts. He lovingly reminds us to lay up treasures in heaven. Jesus is not denying that money has value (it does), but he is urging us to consider what it is that we ultimately value—earthly treasure or heavenly treasure?

I grew up on Lake Michigan and we were avid boaters. Navigating this great lake was usually pretty simple. On the Wisconsin side, we just pointed the boat west toward the shoreline when we wanted to go home. But when it was so foggy we couldn’t see past the bow of the boat, we steered a westerly course for home by keeping the W under the lubber line on the compass. When Jesus says, “Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matt. 6:21), he is giving us an important

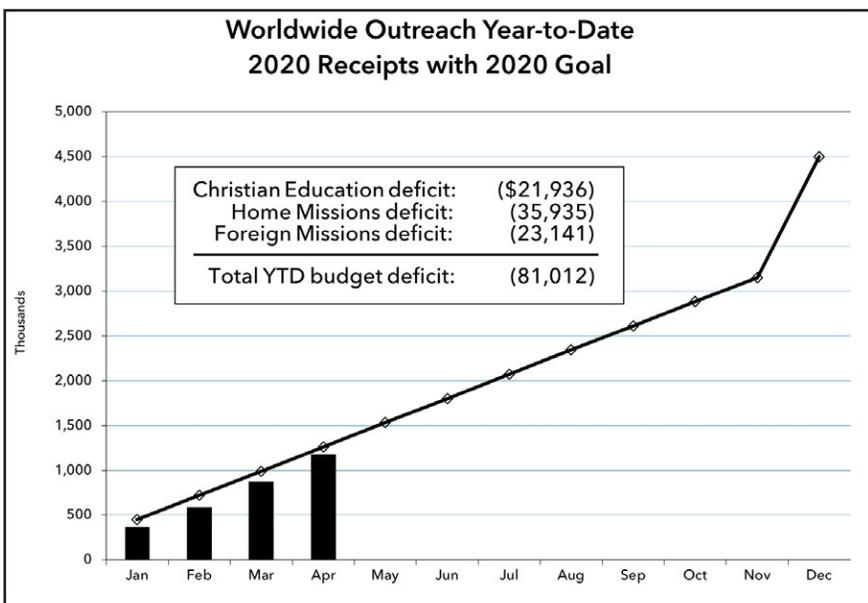
bearing on our spiritual compass. If money is always under my heart’s “lubber line,” that is the course my heart is going to steer.

Jesus doesn’t want (or need) our money. He wants hearts pointed toward him. He told his apostles (and us) to go and make disciples. Disciples of Christ are those who are committed to their Savior above all else. If the COVID-19 era has shown us anything, it is the fragility of wealth and life itself. Why would anyone want to put trust in that which “today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven” (Matt. 6:30)? On the other hand, what a privilege it is to be invited to participate in building a kingdom “whose designer and builder is God” (Heb. 11:10)!

Like the various individuals rebuilding the wall in Nehemiah 3, God has graciously given the Orthodox Presbyterian Church a place to labor in the building of his kingdom. Whether it is the Committee on Christian Education providing tools to help our local congregations in ministry, the Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension helping us plant and nurture churches in new communities, or the Foreign Missions Committee laboring to go into all the world to make disciples, we all have been given by God exciting kingdom building opportunities.

So, do you matter? You bet you do! As an image-bearer of the God of the universe, you have the privilege of being a co-laborer through your financial and prayer support of those ministries that God is using to build a kingdom that will never perish. What could be more relevant than that?

The author is ruling elder at New Covenant Community Church in Joliet, Illinois.



NURSE TINAH AND THE COMMUNITY HEALTH TEAM

// LEAH J. HOPP



Nurse Tina (left) with Leah Hopp

I have been a missionary associate in Karamoja, Uganda, for ten years. I work in association with the Akisyon a Yesu Presbyterian Clinic (AYPC) by supervising the Community Health Team, which travels from the mission to local villages to provide basic health education.

For the last year, I have been working with Nurse Tina, a skilled and experienced nurse who is familiar with the area and the Karimojong language. When I met Tina eight years ago, she was just out of nursing school and about to begin work at the clinic. After upgrading her nursing license in 2018, Tina is now back in Nakaale. I highly value our weekly meetings to discuss strategy for the Community Health Team (CHT). They have also been very helpful in focusing our work. Tina has long had an interest in community health and would accompany the team into village homes occasionally to help with sanitation assessments and teaching. I appreciated then her initiatives to highlight certain hygienic practices that could be improved in homes to prevent the sicknesses that bring people to the clinic.

COVID-19

Over the past few months, the focus of the CHT has changed to teaching in the villages about protection from COVID-19. I am thankful that the Lord has enabled me to already have a team trained to serve our community at such a time as this. We are taking many precautions while out in the villages to not contract COVID-19 ourselves, nor to spread it to others in case we become infected. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure,



A village latrine

especially in this case where there is no treatment available, neither in pill form nor ventilators, and a vaccine will likely not be available until at least mid-2021. The government of Uganda has helped to support the efforts of public health by restricting all travel and directing people to stay at home except for emergencies. I have also been in contact with our clinicians and clinic administrator to ramp up hygiene and sanitation measures at AYPC. We have set up a screening tent outside the gate as well as a mandatory handwashing station. Please pray for creativity in reducing face-to-face interactions to prevent the transmission of COVID-19.

Five-Year Plan

At the end of 2019, Tina and I together brainstormed a five-year plan for the CHT to submit to the Mission. Tina contributed some very interesting ideas to the plan that I am excited to begin pursuing. For example, she suggested that the CHT focus on encouraging our neighbors to build personal latrines. There is a dearth of latrines in our neighborhood—except at the Mission, our clinic, the primary schools, and the clinic staff housing. This dearth contributes critically to sanitation-related illnesses in our neighborhood, as does the low adherence to handwashing afterwards. Handwashing is an important element of our lessons on latrine building. We will be working with other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) who are encouraging people to build personal latrines at home where they will then be willing to clean and maintain them. (While other NGOs were previously paying people to participate in such programs, they will no longer be giving incentives.) We are happy to come alongside other such health initiatives and teach about

hygiene and sanitation.

Outreach to Local Villages

At the beginning of each year, I plan a schedule of six immunization outreaches. I was happy to do that this year in consultation with Tinah. In addition to the CHT's regular work of teaching in nearby villages, we also walk to villages that are a bit further away to make sure that children are caught up on their routine immunizations. Some villages are easier to walk to in the dry season than in the rainy season, so that often influences the order of our programming. One clinician from AYPC is accompanied by my CHT and one ministry team member who shares a Bible story. Sometimes a staff member from the clinic assists in translating, recording health information, gathering people together once it is time to start, and crowd control of children. While the children enjoy watching the event, many have completed their immunizations. Once the Bible story is told and the health lesson is taught, we tell the children to line up in rows according to age and gender and give them deworming pills, even up to age sixteen. Then we dismiss them and focus on mothers who have brought newborns and infants who still need to be immunized. Even if we discontinue bringing clinicians from AYPC to the outreaches due to most children being caught up on their immunizations, the CHT would still be able to give out deworming pills, counsel about malnutrition, and teach about health.

At one of our outreaches last year, we did not end up immunizing any children, but we did have an opportunity to counsel the caregivers of two children who were malnourished. As part of the outreach, we measure each child's Mid-Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC). The MUAC is standardized for children from six months to five years old. If a child is healthy, then they measure in the green section (>12.5 cm). If a child's arm is too thin, then they would measure in the yellow or red section, necessitating extra counseling to encourage the caregiver to bring the child to AYPC for follow-up tests.



Measuring MUAC to check for malnutrition



Pumping water from a borehole

Often, malnourished children are also sick, and this sickness contributes to inadequate weight gain, alongside food issues.

There are two common categories of malnutrition that we see in our region where up to 80 percent of the local population is malnourished: Kwashiorkor and Marasmus. Kwashiorkor is when the child eats a lot of one type of food (like posho, potatoes, or rice), so that they feel full, but are not eating the nutrient-rich protein that they need. These children may look fat, but they are

actually just retaining water. Marasmus is an illness where a child is not consuming enough calories. They may be eating very nutritious foods, such as chicken and spinach, but they are not eating enough to gain weight. Other sicknesses, like successive cases of malaria, worms, and diarrheal diseases, often contribute to children not gaining weight in line with their peers. If children had access to latrines that were closer to their homes, then they would be able to be more sanitary and avoid diarrheal diseases.

At another outreach, Tinah and I took along AYPC's midwife, Ruth, to the nearest secondary school. We taught about hygiene and sanitation while conducting some rapid blood tests for sexually transmitted infections. We noticed that, although all government schools are supposed to have a borehole to pump water, for some reason one has not been drilled at this school. Tinah and I have written a letter to an NGO requesting that they provide one for this school to prevent more sanitation-related illnesses. There is a borehole in the village next to the school, but students are generally not allowed to leave the premises unless they sign out with a guardian. Without a borehole, the school has to pay for people to bring them jerry cans of water every day, which can compromise the quality and cleanliness of the water, eat into their budget, and limit how much water is available. The amount of water purchased rarely covers all of their needs.

Tinah and Ruth conducted an inspection of the dorms and made other suggestions for improvements in sanitation, which invariably required access to more water. The head teacher is very excited that AYPC is willing to partner with the school to improve the health of all the students so that they can make the most of their opportunity to learn and remain healthy and able to study. Please pray for a continued good relationship with this school's staff as well as with some boys from the school who attend our Mission church.

The author is an associate tentmaking missionary from Parkwood Presbyterian Church in Canada laboring with the Uganda Mission in Nakaale, Karamoja, Uganda.

TORNADOES AND WATERMELONS



DONNA WILLIAMS SPILLER // Twenty-two Aprils ago, a tornado roared through my neighborhood. I kind of expected it. I'd had long conversations with the Lord and told him how grateful I was that he had strengthened my faith—that it was so strong, the only thing that might test it would be a tornado coming through.

(That was one of those draw-a-line-in-the-sand things, and I don't recommend doing that. Ever.)

So, this one day the air was so, so still. The birds were not singing, the wind was not stirring. The sky was blank, as if waiting for something to fill it. My daughter's boyfriend had brought her home early from a date, and, as he left, he commented that it felt like tornado weather.

I had made a trip to Home Depot and bought some pine straw bales for mulch, a tray of impatiens flowers, and several tomato plants. Now I carried the plants to a sheltered corner of my front porch. At two dollars a bale, the pine straw was on its own, but those plants, well, they were special. As I moved them, I said aloud, "Now, God, this is not because I have no faith. You know how terrified I am of tornados. So, just in case one comes, I am planning ahead and protecting my investments. You know I am trying to be sensible about money and these plants were expensive."

That night, the tornado came. My daughter and I huddled in the basement with my dog and our cats as lightning flashed, rain poured, and a downed tree kept rubbing up against the bricks out-

side my dining room wall. We were both scared. I tried reciting from the Bible, but what started as the Twenty-Third Psalm ended in the Lord's Prayer. I tried singing "Rock of Ages," but when I got to the verse about closing mine eyes in death, I cut it short. My daughter giggled at my attempts. I was scared but also elated because the worst was happening and my faith was still there. Next morning, so glad to be alive, I greeted everyone who passed by with a hearty "Good morning!"

I have often told folks that the tornado was one of the best things that ever happened to me.

Yes, we had damage. My daughter's old Chevy just got a scratch, but my pretty two-year-old purple Saturn was totaled—a tree from the backyard had settled right down the middle of it. Three of our house doors were blocked by branches and debris. Trees leaned against the back wall of our house, and some had crashed through the corner of the screen room. At least one huge branch had landed on the roof, made a hole, and flown again to land in the front yard. Wires and transformers were down. Roads were blocked.

And yet, safely protected there in

the corner of the porch, were my impatiens and tomato plants.

I planted the tomatoes in the front yard where they could now get plenty of sunlight. I gave an impatiens to everyone who came to help clean up the damage, including families from church and the Red Cross volunteers. You see, impatiens like shade. Before the tornado, I had lots of shade. Now the big oak and the cedars were gone.

When the birds returned, much of their food was gone. As I watched one tomato after another approach ripeness, I anticipated a harvest. But as soon as a tomato turned red, it disappeared. I figured the birds or the squirrels were watching, too. In exchange, the birds planted watermelons. That summer I had more than two dozen watermelons to share. And you should see how big the oak tree is out front—a seedling from the one I lost. Finally, I got my flowers after all. Wildflowers grew out back where all the trees had come down. My neighbor looked at them covering the hill and asked if I had planted them. I smiled as I told their story. □

The author is a member of Redeemer OPC in Atlanta, Georgia.

REVIEW: THEOLOGICAL ENGLISH: AN ADVANCED ESL TEXT

// MARTHA WAGAR WRIGHT

It is a joy to find a beautifully crafted text for English as a Second Language which takes the best of current understandings of language acquisition and applies it with creativity and compassion to practical and accessible instruction. In *Theological English*, we see at every turn that authors Hibbs and Reiley have given great consideration to the needs and experience of students in demanding seminary programs like that of Westminster Theological Seminary, where they work.

Each chapter contains a well-thought-through arrangement of readings, exercises, grammar, and even practical application activities. The authors clearly demonstrate a deep understanding of communicative competence and second-language acquisition theory, weaving together goals in theology, reading, vocabulary, and grammar, and even scaffolding instruction from spoken to written, less known to better known.

Chapters begin with thought-provoking quotes from well-regarded writers and theologians, followed by a clear list of lesson goals, an introduction to the reading, and then discussion questions, background to the reading, and pre-reading questions, all of which are excellent in preparing students



Wright teaching English in Mbale, Uganda

THEOLOGICAL ENGLISH



to undertake these very challenging reading passages. Many English language learners will have come from cultures where oral discussion has played a greater role in their education than written work, and this gives them the opportunity to enter into thinking about these profound texts in a manner that is more familiar. For other learners whose education has been largely written in their home country, oral discussions with native speakers are tremendously helpful in their language acquisition as well.

The readings include passages by Cornelius Van Til, John Frame, Greg Bahnsen, Vern Poythress, John Calvin, D. A. Carson, Edmund Clowney, and too many more to list here, and are annotated

so that learners can identify key points and critical vocabulary, and notes build from chapter to chapter as well. These carefully curated readings are then followed by a large variety of exercises and activities: these include written tasks that focus on comprehension and vocabulary, specific grammar lessons related to the main reading, then activities that include not only writing but even practical application to real life. One that struck me as just perfect for students I have taught in East Africa was the activity that began, “Imagine that a close relative of yours asks you what you have been studying in seminary. . . . Your relative asks, ‘What have you learned so far?’” I could imagine my students at African Bible University in Kampala beaming when they read this assignment, and really learning how to say, write, and analyze their responses in this activity—



Wright at the African Bible University in Kampala, Uganda

and even putting the exercise into practice, the next time they went to see their family in the village! The lessons teach practical strategies for dealing with these difficult readings and ways of writing, such as clear steps for finding grammatical forms like pronoun referents.

Another particularly good lesson was on an extremely challenging type of writing—paraphrasing, which is for many if not most students from overseas a new and even disturbing task, since they have been schooled in memorization and repetition. The authors go to great lengths to model by example, provide

ample practice in skills on both micro- and macro-linguistic levels, as well as suitable feedback, both in the chapter explanations and answer key. These are all the elements critical to language acquisition, especially at higher levels for students who come from many different backgrounds—some who have a long way to go in reaching the level of English comprehension and production they need to gain the greatest benefit from an advanced seminary program.

The result is a superb textbook that is, while most definitely challenging, very easy to follow and use, both for instructors and students. Indeed, I would highly recommend this text even to a wide variety of people who might want to know about or are considering seminary education—including instructors who need to be more aware of what their non-native learners may not know. Native speakers of English who have not had a rigorous academic education might also want to use this book to be sure that their vocabulary, grammar, and writing skills are up to the task of seminary education.

Hibbs and Reiley are to be applauded for their tremendously thorough work in helping to prepare many brothers and sisters for kingdom work worldwide. I will be eagerly looking forward to an edition for our Bible college students overseas next.

The author is a lecturer in English language programs at the University of Pennsylvania and a member of Faith OPC in Pole Tavern, New Jersey.

Theological English: An Advanced ESL Text for Students of Theology, by Pierce Taylor Hibbs with Megan Reiley. P&R, 2018. Hardcover, 376 pages, \$41.88 (Amazon).



Peter Hibbs, author of Theological English, at Westminster Theological Seminary's orientation

Favorite Psalms and Hymns *Trinity Psalter Hymnal no. 457* “Jesus, Thy Blood and Righteousness”

Denise Marcusse

There are hymns that pierce our hearts, and hymns that cause a tear to well in our eyes. There are others that move us to stand in awe of God or cause us to deeply ponder our Savior’s sinless life and sacrificial death. This powerful hymn, written by Nicolaus von Zinzendorf, does all of the above. In clear, concise musical expression, we sing the total efficacy of Jesus’s perfect earthly life and his shed blood for our salvation.

In a recent sermon, my congregation was asked, “Did Jesus die to save us? Did Jesus live to save us?” We answer with a resounding, “Yes!” for we need both aspects, the death of Christ and life of perfect righteousness, for our full and complete salvation.

We often focus on the cross, his suffering and death, for the payment of our sins. But do we realize that his perfect life is of infinite value and clothes us in perfect righteousness? Because all our works are polluted with sin, we in Christ are given his perfect life lived in righteousness and obedience to the Father as our “glorious dress” so that we might become the righteousness that God requires (Zech. 3:1–5; 2 Cor. 5:21).

In this complete sufficiency of Jesus’s blood and life of righteousness, we can now stand “bold” in that “great day” as stanza 2 reads: “Fully absolved through these I am from sin and fear, from guilt and shame.” This full and complete justification through Jesus’s life and death stirs us to endless praise for his “boundless mercy hath for me . . . a full atonement made, an everlasting ransom paid.”

“When from the dust of death I rise / to claim my mansion in the skies, / e’en then this shall be all my plea, / Jesus hath lived, hath died, for me.” Truly, Jesus, thy blood and righteousness!

☆ Congratulations

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

- **Anastasia McShaffrey**, *Five Solas OPC, Reedsburg, WI*
- **Isabella McShaffrey**, *Five Solas OPC, Reedsburg, WI*
- **Micaiah McShaffrey**, *Five Solas OPC, Reedsburg, WI*
- **Zechariah McShaffrey**, *Five Solas OPC, Reedsburg, WI*

THROUGH A PLANTER'S EYES

// CARL AND STACEY MILLER



Carl Miller (center) at a small group session during the conference for church planters

You are invited to attend the 2020 Church Planters Training Conference.” These were exciting words to read in an email from the Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension (CHMCE). As our family prepared to move to the home mission field in New Braunfels, Texas, at the end of 2019, it was good to know that this opportunity for training, support, and connection was up ahead and coming soon in January 2020.

Carl is used to attending conferences with his previous employers, but an added blessing was to learn that Stacey was invited too. We had never been to a Church Planters Training Conference before. We had never been to a conference that had training and breakout sessions specifically designed for both church planters and their wives. This was definitely a training that would be new and unique for us. And it would be an opportunity to grow and add more tools to our church-planting toolbox. Sign us up!

Through Eyes of Expectation

Becoming an evangelist in the OPC has brought a com-

plete set of new experiences for Carl. Our family moved to a new city, he began serving on a new session, and he began full-time ministry with a new congregation. Amidst the things on our long list of “new” in this call, a weeklong training conference on the sunny Florida coast was definitely a value-add.

As Carl shared the news about the upcoming conference with other church planters in our presbytery who had attended in previous years, some of the responses we received were, “You’re going to love it!” “It’s very helpful,” and “Meeting and building relationships with other church-planting couples is great!” These comments were encouraging and helped us to look forward to it even more.

But a big logistical question for us was how to attend the training while making sure that our six children would be cared for while we were gone. We were living in a new place, and we were away from extended family. Would our children be OK while we were in Florida? We’re thankful to have older children who can aptly care for the younger. We were also very thankful that members of our loving church family in New Braunfels were happy to help watch them. But in addition, we found out that, as part of making it easy and attractive for planters and their wives to come to the training, CHMCE helps with childcare expenses as needed. Although we didn’t need it, we were impressed with their practical ability to serve and support the church planter and his family.

When the travel date arrived, we boarded the plane and were on our way. St. Augustine, here we come!

Through Eyes of Experience

From the time we landed in Jacksonville, Florida, to our arrival in St. Augustine, it was obvious that transportation, preparation, and accommodations for the conference were made smooth and easy for us. The hotel that attendees



Church planters in their first and third years of funding attend the conference

stayed in was conveniently located right down the road from our host church and meeting place, Covenant Presbyterian (OPC).

The conference kicked off with dinner, fellowship, and a session on the church planter and his family. It was a timely presentation that connected well with those present as Rev. Eric Hausler and his wife, Donna, spoke on accepting the reality that your family is in a fishbowl, not forgetting to take time off, committing to family time, and keeping the outward focus before your family. These practical steps can dramatically affect your church-planting ministry.

On Tuesday morning, first-year and third-year planters split into small groups. (Church plants typically receive four years of financial support. Church planters in their first and third years of funding are invited to the conference.) Home Missions General Secretary John Shaw taught a small-group session with first-year planters on the foundations of church planting. He asked and answered questions such as, “What is Reformed church planting?” and, “How do we think about church planting in the OPC?” Al Tricarico, associate general secretary for Home Missions, led a small-group session with third-year planters on organizing a church. While the church planters trained with Shaw and Tricarico, their wives enjoyed an engaging session with the Hauslers on ways to keep family life “normal,” ways to encourage their husbands, and the importance of having enough family time in the midst of very busy schedules.

Our great and gracious God calls us to be a people who pray (Eph. 4:6; 1 Thess. 5:17). Some of the best hours of our week together were the scheduled prayer times. It was wonderful to become better acquainted, to share requests and needs, and to pray together.



Stacey Miller (third from left) with the ministers' wives enjoying training and fellowship

Home Missions Today

For up-to-date news and prayer requests, receive our newsletter by emailing HomeMissionsToday@opc.org. New editions: June 10 & 24.



Exploring Fort Castillo de San Marcos

Other training highlights included great sessions on “Developing the Work,” “Manners in Ministry,” “Evangelism,” “Hospitality,” and “Leadership in the Church.” We also heard very informative presentations from the committees on Christian Education, Diaconal Ministries, Foreign Missions, and Ministerial Care. Kerri Ann Cruse, social media coordinator for the OPC, gave an incredibly helpful presentation on how churches can maximize their use of their websites and social media in outreach. In addition, the wives had a roundtable session with Committee on Ministerial Care member Gregory De Jong and discussed the ups and downs of ministry. The ladies had the opportunity to share their experiences—both things that were going well and any struggles they were having, including matters for prayer.

The week was not all work and no fun! Attendees had many opportunities to fellowship with one another over meals and at the hotel in the evenings, as well as time to roam historic St. Augustine. In our free time, we explored Fort Castillo de San Marcos, a 313-year-old Spanish fort that sits on the water’s edge of the city.

Having Eyes for the Harvest

With our brains and toolboxes full, it was time to head for home. Sometimes coming home from a conference can be like coming home from a summer camp. The enthusiasm wanes quickly. The motivation to put what was learned into practice peters out. Not this conference! Having eyes for the harvest, we press on with great zeal for the long haul, to gather the harvest in service to our God. The time had come to share the enthusiasm, use the tools, and convey what we had learned to our congregation to build them up for ministry.

As you’ve been given a view of the 2020 Church Planters Training Conference through our eyes, we, Carl and Stacey, pray that you have been blessed and encouraged to see a piece of what our Lord is doing in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church to train and equip its ministers so that we can go and more effectively plant churches for the glory of Christ our King.

The authors live in New Braunfels, Texas.

COMMITTEE FOR THE HISTORIAN

THE MAN IN THE PICTURE

// DANNY E. OLINGER



The man in the picture: Frank Emley (right) with John Dowling

“Who is the man standing next to John Dowling?” I asked Greg Reynolds about a photo taken on May 2, 1980, at Greg’s ordination and installation as associate pastor of Franklin Square Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Franklin Square, New York.

Greg’s recollection was that the man was a ruling elder at Westminster OPC in Hamden, Connecticut—but he couldn’t quite remember his name. On my behalf, Greg asked Dick Gerber, who was Westminster’s pastor at that time. “Frank Emley,” Dick wrote. Then he added, “Frank just died about two weeks ago at age ninety-seven, due to COVID-19.”

According to Dick, Frank Emley had been in his own apartment in an assisted living community until two days before he died. He had served sixty-five years as a ruling elder in the OPC, “first at Covenant in Pittsburgh with Cal Cummings; then at Calvary Community in Harmony, New Jersey, with Lew Grotenhuis.” He came to Hamden in the mid-1970s and was there the rest of his life.

Dick’s note left me wanting to know more about this father in the faith. I asked Dick if there was an online obituary, and he sent me the link. Reading it brought so many emotions to bear for me—from sadness over the destructiveness of the virus to thankfulness for members of the “greatest generation” who had actively served the Lord in the OPC.

According to the obituary, Frank Emley had grown up “in a jolly Methodist family” with five siblings. On December 8, 1941, the day after the attack upon Pearl Harbor, he enlisted in

the United States Navy. He served in World War II in the Pacific theater handling communications on a submarine chaser.

Immediately after the war, he married his sweetheart, Alice Long. Using the G. I. Bill, he then attended the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York, and graduated with an engineering degree. A job with Westinghouse took him to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where, in the providence of God, Frank and Alice joined Covenant OPC. They sent their daughters, Betty, Lucinda, and Margaret, to Trinity Christian School, where eventually Frank served as the president of the board of trustees. Alice worked as a nurse. Despite such busy-

ness, the obituary reads, Frank and Alice were “masters of hospitality and served countless Sunday dinners to friends.” The obituary also states that Frank was a life-long opponent of racial discrimination.

After Frank accepted a job with Pfizer in the field of powder metallurgy, he moved his family to Hamden and they made Westminster their new church home. Dick Gerber, their pastor for twenty years, remembers an episode that typified their kindness to others: an unmarried deacon at Westminster had been hospitalized and could not be alone upon his release. The Emleys took the deacon into their home for several weeks until he was able to return safely to his home.

In the fifty-fourth year of their marriage, Alice went to be the Lord in glory. Frank died on April 16, 2020, and was buried next to Alice on May 2 in the Calvary Community Church cemetery in Harmony, New Jersey.



Frank and Alice Emley on a trip to England, c. 1993

The author is editor of New Horizons and president of the Committee for the Historian.

NEWS, VIEWS, & REVIEWS



Stan Sutton (left) with Rob Slack c. 1990

IN MEMORIAM: STANFORD M. SUTTON JR.

Ross W. Graham

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God” (Matt. 5:9). Stanford M. Sutton Jr., born in Morristown, New Jersey, in December 1934 was one of those dear and precious peacemakers who also served as a pastor in the OPC continuously for forty-eight years until his retirement in 2013 and his death on April 22, 2020.

During a summer break from his studies at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, he met a young visitor at Emmanuel OPC in Whippany, New Jersey, who was serving as a nanny on a work visa from her home in Great Britain. Married to Maureen Abbott in 1965, the Suttons would serve OP churches in Ohio, South Dakota, Maine, and finally New Jersey. A serious auto accident in the early 1970s sent Maureen to the hospital for three months, and was a defining event for their ministry lives.

Throughout his pastoral years, Stan was known for taking sincere interest in everyone he met and rarely left even a casual conversation without bearing testimony to his Savior. He could be counted on to find ways to encourage young men in pastoral ministry. He loved the Boardwalk Chapel in Wildwood, New Jersey,

and could be found there for a week every summer surrounding himself with young people who were eager to serve the Lord. And in his later years of ministry, he became a valued instructor at the New York School of the Bible in Manhattan, pouring his love of the New Testament into the lives of young pastors and Bible students who labored in urban churches.

When he was asked what kept him going through all those years of ministry, he

was quick to say that 1 Peter 3:8–9 spoke to him of his life’s ambition: to be compassionate, tenderhearted, courteous, not returning evil for evil but on the contrary blessing.

That sums up the Stan Sutton known to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY POSTPONED

Danny E. Olinger

On April 16, 2020, the Rev. Hank L. Belfield, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, on behalf of the Rev. John D. Van Meerbeke, acting moderator of the assembly, announced that the Eighty-Seventh General Assembly scheduled to meet June 5–11 on the campus of Eastern University in St. Davids, Pennsylvania, has been postponed.

In the weeks leading up to the announcement, Eastern University notified the Committee on General Assembly Arrangements that the commissioners to the assembly could not meet on the campus in the month of June due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Governor Thomas Wolf of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania had previously put in place severe travel and meeting-size restrictions.

In light of this postponement, Mr. Belfield stated that until action could be taken by the Eighty-Seventh (2021)

General Assembly:

- All budgets set by the Eighty-Sixth (2019) General Assembly would remain in effect.
- Membership of the classes of the standing committees and special committees of the General Assembly would continue.
- Reports intended for review would be distributed for information to the presbyteries and sessions at a time and in a manner agreeable to the moderator and the stated clerk.
- Appeals and complaints submitted to the stated clerk with the intention of their review would be held until the Eighty-Seventh General Assembly.

Mr. Belfield also announced that the new place, date, and time for the Eighty-Seventh General Assembly will be the campus of Trinity Christian College in Palos Heights, Illinois, beginning with a worship service at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, June 2, 2021, and concluding no later than noon on Tuesday, June 8, 2021.

UPDATE

MINISTERS

- On December 6, 2019, the Presbytery of the Midwest dissolved the pastoral relationship between Providence Reformed in Eau Claire, WI, and **Kim M. Kuhfuss**.
- On May 2, the Presbytery of Central Pennsylvania dissolved the ministerial relationship between Redeemer OPC in Carlisle, PA, and **Jody O. Morris**.

MILESTONES

- **Frank Emley**, 97, died on April 16. He had served sixty-five years as an OPC ruling elder in PA, NJ, and CT.
- Retired OP minister **Stanford M. Sutton Jr.**, 85, died on April 22. Ordained in 1965, he served congregations in OH, SD, ME, and NJ.

LETTERS

FOOLERY GOVERNING

Editor:

The May issue of *New Horizons* on the coronavirus “pandemic” reminded me of a quotation I first read at age fifteen that has stayed with me all the years since. John Selden, an outstanding jurist and scholar during the English Revolution who participated in the discussions of the Westminster Assembly and was a member of the Long Parliament, once said: “Thou little thinkest what a little foolery governs the world.”

Rollin Stearns
Bangor, ME

BLASTED MY GOURDS

Editor:

I cannot agree with Jonathan Cruse that “humbled my heart” is an improvement on “blasted my gourds” in Newton’s hymn, “I Asked the Lord That I Might Grow” (May). When I sing “blasted my gourds,” I immediately have in my mind’s eye the pouting Jonah under his gourd vine. God used a worm to smite Jonah’s gourd, causing the protective vine to wither. God often takes away a cherished earthly comfort lest we look for solace, pleasure, and protection there instead of looking to him. In three words, Newton reminds me to set my affections on God.

Mary Love Seay
Churchville, VA

REVIEWS

Beyond Authority and Submission: Women and Men in Marriage, Church, and Society, by Rachel Green Miller. P&R 2019. Paperback, 280 pages, \$13.50. Reviewed by OP elder Michael A. Chartowich.

Every once in a while, a book comes along that challenges the status quo in conservative circles. Rachel Green Miller, an OPC member living in Texas, has done this by writing *Beyond Authority and Submission*. Some will likely have issues with some of her positions. However, we

would do well to listen to our sister and take to heart the concerns she raises.

Miller’s chief concern is that authority and submission dominate how we view the relationship of men and women in conservative churches. She argues that “the hyper focus on authority and submission has done considerable damage to relationships between men and women in the home, church, and in our societies. Instead of promoting unity, interdependence, and service, this fixation on authority and submission as the crucial distinction between men and women promotes antagonism and disunity” (257).

In making her case, Miller divides the book into six parts. In part one, she defines authority and submission and shows how they are biblical concepts. Authority and submission in marriage and the church (members submitting to ordained male officers) is good and should be acknowledged by Christians.

In part two, she examines the beliefs of the Greeks, Romans, and Victorians. She argues that many of the views held about women in these cultures were pagan or distortions of Christianity. Women were believed to be inherently inferior to men and were not allowed to hold public office, vote, or control property in many cases. There were also double standards for women and men in regards to piety or sexual morality. Many of these ideas are deplorable and should be rejected by Christians. Miller argues that early feminists reacted to these injustices and brought helpful change. However, later feminists started to advocate for unbiblical practices like abortion. This led Christians to become suspicious of all feminism.

In part three, Miller discusses the nature of men and women. She rejects the teaching of the eternal subordination of the Son to the Father. Surprisingly, she does not give many biblical reasons as to why she rejects it. She then argues that in Scripture many of the attributes normally ascribed to men (strength, assertiveness, providing) are also said of women, and

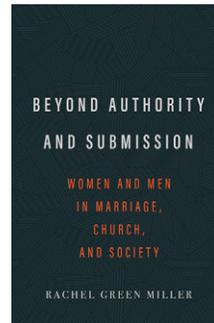
ones normally ascribed to women (gentleness, responsive, helping) are also said of men. This is true in many cases, but I found myself left with many questions. What then is masculinity and femininity? Why did God make men and women different? Why does he call men to lead in marriage and the church? Miller rejects many stereotypes, but spends little time building a positive case for masculinity and femininity.

Parts four through six address marriage, the church, and society. Miller makes several good points in reinforcing her argument that sometimes we wrong-

fully go beyond what Scripture teaches. I believe that she rightly rejects the idea, held by some, that all women are called to submit to all men in some general way rather than just to their own particular husband and church leaders. She also challenges the suspicion that some church leaders show when women want to learn theology. As part of

the body, women should also learn theology to be protected from false doctrine and not be limited to only hospitality and children’s ministries. Some complementarians, however, will likely differ with her in several places. For example, Miller does not believe that women have a biblical calling to be particularly oriented toward the home. She also implies that prohibitions against women teaching men theology at co-ed Christian conferences or in co-ed adult church groups are extrabiblical.

Some of Miller’s methods of biblical interpretation are problematic. For example, she uses the context of one passage to interpret another. Referring to Titus 2:5 and 1 Timothy 5:14, she says, “First Timothy gives us the context for these passages” (252). She then cites 1 Timothy 5:13 and implies that Paul’s directions to focus on the home were a result of the widows being busybodies and not because women have a unique orientation to the home. Whether or not this is true in 1 Timothy, it does not follow that this was also happening in Crete when Paul wrote Titus 2:5.



In conclusion, Miller does a good job of exposing some unbiblical ways of viewing men and women. However, her questionable interpretation of some key texts (and her neglect of others) detracts from the overall persuasiveness of her thesis.

***Who He Says I Am: A Study of Our Identity in Christ*, by Jean Y. Gaffin. Christian Focus, 2020. Paperback, 176 pages, \$8.81 (Amazon). Reviewed by PCA minister Robert Russell Drake.**

Let me say immediately what I didn't like about this book. I didn't like the cover. To me, it was too feminine with all those tiny roses. It looked like the wallpaper on a room to which men were not welcome. I didn't like it, because the title of the book grabbed me at first glance, and I wanted to be admitted into that room!

That title, *Who He Says I Am*, not only succinctly summarizes the message of the New Testament, it also addresses the fundamental issue of our day: identity. Jean Gaffin's introduction modestly gives a nod to the relevance this little book might have for this issue, but I would have elaborated on that relevance. I grew up in the days when both the sophisticated (*The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* with Gregory Peck) and the hip (the Beatniks) were talking about finding themselves. Today all generations are being told, paradoxically, "There is no you to find. Who you are must be invented—by you." Identity is *the* hot issue of our day. Two years ago, my granddaughter gave a senior speech in high school on identity. Just days before I read this book, our son addressed via Zoom the subject of identity to some business colleagues. The previous hot issues of abortion and homosexuality were only precursors to the fundamental problem that people have no way of knowing who they are—apart from Christ.

With meek wisdom, Jean Gaffin reminds everyone that the real issue is *Who He Says I Am*. I had read that title with an emphasis on that word "he." Before I

even opened the book, I heard that title saying, "Don't listen to the world telling you who you are. Don't listen to your desires, to your past failures, nor even to your dreams. Listen to *him!* Who does *he* say you are?"

When I went on to read the book, I wasn't disappointed. The format is for a women's Bible study, complete with discussion topics and helpful questions for personal reflection. The content consists of ten presentations on identity in Christ, such as "You are a new creation" and "You are a child of God." Bold headings let you easily follow her chain of thought. Under each heading, she gives several Scripture references and illustrates points using contemporary, real-life stories.

Then, she dares to go where many men are often reluctant to go. She asks "How are we to *do* that?" and answers with some practical advice. She even gives advice about individual Bible study. And, as if she has not been practical enough, she turns the whole book into a prelude for worship with an appendix that gives us a hymn to sing after every discovery of our identity in Christ.

I have granddaughters (and grandsons, despite the wallpaper) who could also appreciate this book as much as I have.

***Act of Grace: The Power of Generosity to Change Your Life, the Church, and the World*, by James C. Petty. P&R, 2019. Paperback, 339 pages, \$13.50. Reviewed by OP elder Gregory S. De Jong.**

James Petty boldly goes where pastors fear to tread with this wide-ranging treatise on Christians and their money. With surveys showing that evangelical Christians give only 3–4 percent of their income on average, it appears that the church has ceded much ground to worldly ideals about personal finance and

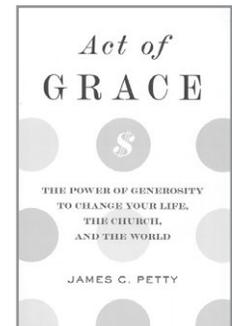
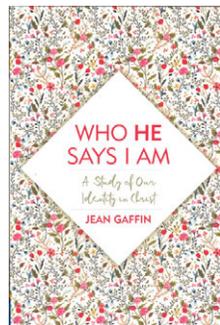
Position Available

Pastor: Harvest OPC (San Marcos, California) is looking for an experienced pastor we could call to minister beginning in January 2021. If you are interested or would like to learn more about Harvest, please email us at HarvestPSC@gmail.com.

the purpose of money. Amidst the daily onslaught of consumerism, should our churches hope that their members will "figure it out" on their own? Petty argues, "Giving is not a necessary evil for running a ministry; it is a divine grace to be cultivated, and one in which we should excel . . . intense spiritual battles are fought in this area" (155).

With a central thesis that "the final purpose of having money is to give" (27), the book sets out to explore first what the Bible teaches on the purpose of money and secondly how a proper biblical understanding should be lived out, both in the church and individually. Along the way, Petty offers enticing glimpses of what the church might accomplish if fueled by believers whose giving better reflected the grace that they have received.

The survey of biblical teaching in chapters 1–10 contains much that is fruitful. Petty goes beyond a careful discussion of Old Testament tithing to note other significant regulations, such as the year of jubilee, that God provided to guide his people in material matters. Yet the author presses his thesis too far at times, succumbing to occasional exegetical lapses and speculation about the motives of biblical characters. Chapter 1 declares, "Creation itself was a massive project of pure giving" (33). The reader is



left wondering if this is Petty's complete understanding of the purpose of creation until four pages later when he adds "God created for himself and for us, so that we can know and enjoy it [creation] for his glory" (37).

Those occasional discordant notes were made more palatable to me by favorable references to Calvin and the doctrines of grace, along with an extensive quote regarding communion of the saints from WCF 26. In asserting that Jesus's teaching about last-judgment rewards (Luke 6:37–38) in no way conflicts with a proper understanding of justification (125), Petty cites positively the OPC's 2006 *Report on Justification*.

Readers who embark on *Act of Grace* hoping for some clarity to the "how should we then live" question will be amply rewarded in Part 2 as Petty develops the implications of Part 1. After three informative and well-paced chapters about the Western church's history of giving and its role in society from the third century through today, he concludes with five chapters of well-reasoned, persuasively argued application. Whether you are a church officer wondering what to do about a congregation that struggles to meet its budget, a couple beset by financial pressures, or an age fifty-plus Christian willing to be challenged to greater generosity and kingdom service, Petty is practical, on target, and inspiring. One caution: this book may indeed change your life, the church, and perhaps even the world.

***The Whole Armor of God: How Christ's Victory Strengthens us for Spiritual Warfare*, by Iain M. Duguid. Crossway, 2019. Paperback, 128 pages, \$10.29 (Amazon). Reviewed by OP minister Douglas A. Felch.**

While a student at Wheaton College, in an essay for Dr. Arthur Holmes, I made reference to "the whole armor of God" from Ephesians 6:11. A typo altered the phrase to "the whole amour of God." Dr. Holmes circled the error with delight and penned a memorable annotation: "Ah, sweet *amour*! But love is not enough!"

This testimony is true and is confirmed in Iain Duguid's treatment of Ephesians

6:10–18. Up front, Duguid challenges us that we are engaged in a cosmic battle for which we must be properly equipped. As Paul reminds us, our battle is not with flesh and blood, but against supernatural principalities, powers, and the rulers of darkness and wickedness. God prepares us, not only with the same mighty power by which he raised Jesus from the dead (1:19–20), but also with armor appropriate to enable us to stand despite our own weakness and fear.

Duguid promotes two essential points often absent in sermons or Bible studies on this topic. First, the armor of Ephesians 6 is actually *God's* armor. We do not simply receive it from him. It is armor that he himself has worn as he defeated his enemies and redeemed his people. Duguid carefully supports this with numerous references from the Old Testament, but especially the book of Isaiah.

Second, he instructs us that Jesus wore this same armor as he accomplished our salvation. All the pieces point to Jesus. We wear the armor of God worn by Christ because Jesus wore it first. This enables us to be strong in the Lord and the strength of his might.

In successive chapters, Duguid unpacks the significance of the various components of the divine armor. Here are three short summaries of what you will find there.

The "Breastplate of Righteousness" (Isaiah 59:11) points to Jesus's work of redemption in which our sins were placed upon the Suffering Servant and his positive righteousness was imputed to us. Satan can challenge our feeble attempts at obedience, but is unable to penetrate the breastplate of righteousness.

The "Helmet of Salvation" is rooted in the description of the Divine Warrior of Isaiah 59:17. In 1 Thessalonians 5:8, Paul describes it more fully as "the hope of salvation." It provides the settled

conviction and confident assurance that what God has begun in us he will complete in the day of Jesus Christ.

The "Sword of the Spirit" emphasizes the necessity of skillfully handling God's Word especially in the day of temptation. We tend to feebly resist sin with soft defenses like concern for what other people might think. Duguid contrasts that with the response of the master swordsman, Jesus, to Satan in the wilderness. The assertions of the Bible are words of steel that stab temptation in the heart.

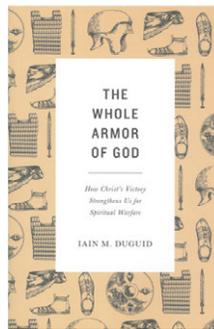
Duguid concludes his discussion in the same way as Paul, by emphasizing the necessity of prayer. In addition to wearing his armor, as Christian soldiers we must be in contact with our heavenly Father through the instrumentality of prayer.

I am happy to commend this thoughtful book. It would serve well as a companion volume for private devotions, or as an excellent resource for an adult Sunday school class or small group. To assist in such usage, Duguid provides helpful discussion questions at the end of each chapter, as well a comprehensive Scripture index.

***The Good Name: The Power of Words to Hurt or Heal*, by Samuel T. Logan Jr. New Growth Press, 2019. Paperback, 192 pages, \$14.85 (Amazon). Reviewed by OP minister Andrew H. Selle.**

This book is no abstract discourse. The author startles us with a personal confession of sin and repentance regarding his violation of the Ninth Commandment that led to the end of his tenure as president of a major Reformed seminary. In an excellent book about godly communication, this fine scholar and OP minister crystallizes what he learned during his pilgrimage (1).

The first chapter, "The Power of Words, Divine and Human," lays a solid theological foundation. God's Word creates reality. Whenever he speaks, something happens. We can hardly overstate the implications for our own speech. Because the ability to communicate is a crucial feature of humanity's creation in God's image, our words also contain meaning and power. Like God, people speak, and things happen. Unlike God,



NEWS, VIEWS, & REVIEWS *Continued*

sin pollutes human communication, with disastrous results. “God’s image becomes an anti-god” (17).

Our Lord’s warning should take our breath away: “I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak” (Matt. 12:36). “Careless” words? We expect a stronger adjective, like “evil” or “godless” or “destructive.” But Jesus leaves us no excuse for “rotten speech” of any kind (Eph. 4:29), whether said mindlessly, or in anger, or even with noble intent.



Digital social media, with its “online disinhibition effect” (83), raises the stakes because any cyber communication can become both global and permanent.

The author presents invaluable guidelines for its proper use.

Our speech must be gracious (moved by grace and offering grace) even with our opponents—which is where we are most tempted toward sinful communication. We must speak in a godly manner with every person. One gem to take home: “If, in the end, I cannot agree with you on this subject, what would you most like to see from me and others who take my position?” (124). Indeed, let’s carefully listen, affirm what we can, and speak truthfully to all. We should do the same when talking with a fellow Christian, a Muslim, a Hindu, or an atheist.

The writers of our Reformed standards

grasped the massive significance and pastoral practicality of the Ninth Commandment. Imagine a church characterized by “the preserving and promoting of truth between man and man, and the good name of our neighbor, as well as our own” (WLC Q. 144). Not only in the church, but in the culture, we are salt and light. The Holy Spirit transforms our communication according to the template of New Creation itself.

In all his labors over decades of ministry, Dr. Logan nurtured a vast network of contacts within the worldwide Reformed communion and far beyond it. His book reflects that rich experience. It also raises issues of ecumenicity: How do we relate to professing Christians whose doctrine and practice differ from our own? Where are the limits? Who decides them? The author’s strength is his generosity and charitable judgments toward any who credibly claim the identity of Christian. If we err, let us err on the side of acceptance (Rom. 15:7).

Yet every

strength carries with it a potential liability, and in this case, it might be to pretend Christian unity when, at the root, profound disagreements about core convictions torpedo it. The author is well aware of that sober reality, yet has taken the risky path of engagement, dialogue, and persuasion—and true Christian fellowship whenever it is possible. He has much to say, and when such a seasoned and humble churchman learns from God, the rest of us do well to listen.



Let's be ready.
WATCH THE VIDEO.
Register as a volunteer.

OPCDisasterResponse.org