

# NEW HORIZONS

— *in the* ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH —

**5** Living in Light of  
Christ's Resurrection  
*// by Robert S. Arendale*

APRIL 2022

**7** The History of  
the Resurrection  
*// by James J. Cassidy*

SINNER'S PRAYER  
*or the*  
SAVIOR'S  
PROMISE?



BY JEREMIAH W. MONTGOMERY // 3

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## New Horizons

in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church

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Neon Presbyterian in Neon, Kentucky, was planning to do some face-lift renovations in 2022. Then, in February, a car crashed into the front of the building. Thankfully, no one was seriously injured; the crash was, as pastor Jay Bennett said, "free demolition." This is the second time a car has crashed into the church's building. According to Bennett, the church will consider adding a concrete or steel barrier to the front of the building to protect the congregation in case of future accidents.



# SINNER'S PRAYER OR THE SAVIOR'S PROMISE?



**JEREMIAH W. MONTGOMERY // I grew up in a “first generation” Orthodox Presbyterian Church. The congregation that my parents began attending when I was an infant was the first Calvinistic, confessional body to appear in our region since theological modernism destroyed the integrity of the PCUSA a generation prior.**

There are many blessings to growing up in such a context. Yet there were also a few bumps.

Reformation is a process, not an event. In a church where most members come from non-Reformed backgrounds, certain questions can remain murky. One issue that was unclear for me growing up was the question of assurance. Many of the adult Christians surrounding me could remember the day and the hour that they gave their life to Christ. I heard about “asking Jesus into your heart.” One lady said, “It’s like giving birth; you *know* when it happens.”

But what do such testimonies say to those who grow up being taught to pray and seek Jesus? I could not recount the moment when I began to believe. How then could I be sure I was a Christian?

As a young man struggling with assurance, I tried to put the question to rest using the “sinner’s prayer.” Over and over again, I asked Jesus to save me—trying to make sure my head and heart were clear of any unholy thoughts. But

how could I ever be sure I had done it right? How could I be sure I had said the right prayer? The “sinner’s prayer” brought me no relief, only more exhaustion.

What should we say to those who grew up believing, but cannot remember “the day and the hour” when faith began to live in their hearts? Must we insist that a person “ask Jesus into your heart” before they can be sure of belonging to him? If so, what do we tell those who, like myself, obsessively tried asking but found no assurance? What if the “sinner’s prayer,” however well-intentioned, is pointing us away from a much firmer foundation for spiritual certainty?

## **Affirming What Is Right**

Before going any further, it is important to affirm three things. First, those who promote the “sinner’s prayer” truly are well intentioned. We must be born again (John 3:3), and the danger of formalism is real. Second, it is good and right to call upon the Lord in prayer

(Gen. 4:26, Isa. 55:6). A genuine Christian life without prayer is both disobedient and unimaginable (Matt. 6:9–13). Third, it is a wonderful thing when, like the thief on the cross (Luke 23:42), a person can remember “the day and the hour” when they first cried out to Christ for salvation.

Nevertheless, insisting upon the “sinner’s prayer” as our model of conversion is problematic. It makes past experience rather than present commitment the basis for assurance—potentially misleading the wayward and discouraging the sincere. It encourages Christians to rest on an act of faith rather than on the object of their faith—trusting a moment of decision rather than simply trusting Jesus. Finally, it does not accurately reflect the New Testament picture of conversion.

## **Conversion in the New Testament**

The Apostle John wrote his Gospel with an explicitly evangelistic intent (John 20:31). If we wish to see how the

New Testament presents conversion, then, here is a good place to begin. What do we see?

John's Gospel is filled with promises—of adoption (1:12), forgiveness (3:18), resurrection (6:40), and new life (7:38). It is from John that we receive what are perhaps the most well-known words ever written: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (3:16).

What is important to note as we examine these passages is that in every case, John's emphasis falls *not a sinner's prayer, but on the Savior's promise*. Jesus does encourage those who became his disciples to pray (14:13–14, 15:7, 16:23–34). However, in the context of conversion, the call to faith is not first and foremost a call to prayer, but rather a call to believe the gospel promises. After all, what else does it mean to "believe in" a person but to believe they will keep their promises to you?

Consider three examples where Jesus directly probes an individual for faith: the man born blind (9:35–38), Martha at the tomb of Lazarus (11:25–27), and Thomas after the resurrection (20:26–29). In all three cases, Jesus did not inquire about past experience, but rather for present commitment. "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" he asked the man born blind. "I am the resurrection and the life," he said to Martha. "Do you believe this?" With Thomas, he simply commanded: "Do not disbelieve but believe." And in all three instances, the response was not a request for salvation but a confession of faith: "Lord, I believe" (9:38); "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world" (11:27); "My Lord and my God!" (20:28).

In the book of Acts, when the Philippian jailer asked Paul and Silas directly, "What must I do to be saved?" (16:30), the apostles did not provide a sinner's prayer. Rather, they pointed to the promise: "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household" (v. 31). When the household of Cornelius heard the gospel, the Holy

Spirit fell on them not after they prayed, but "while Peter was still saying these things" (10:44).

The clearest example in the New Testament, however, is a character from the Old Testament. In his letter to the Romans, Paul asks: how was Abraham justified before God? "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness" (Rom. 4:3). What did Abraham believe? *He believed God would keep his promises* (Gen. 15:1–6). When was Abraham justified? The moment he believed.

### An Expression of Faith

The purpose here is not to undermine the importance of prayer in the Christian life. There *is* an intimate connection between faith and prayer. Rather, the purpose here is to underline the priority of God's promises—especially when it comes to questions of assurance. What does this mean?

Prayer is not an *addition* to faith; prayer is an *expression* of faith. In Romans, after quoting the prophet Joel, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved," Paul asks, "How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed?" (10:13–14). Notice this: we cannot pray to the Lord until we believe in him. Prayer simply pours out what is already in our hearts (Ps. 62:8; compare with Luke 6:45). This is significant: by the time a person utters their first prayer, saving faith is already there. We live the moment we believe the gospel (John 3:16, Rom. 4:3). We pray therefore not in order to be converted, but because we have been converted.

It will help if (following J. C. Ryle) we think of prayer as the breath of faith. We only breathe because we live. Yet in order to continue living, we must keep breathing! So prayer both flows out of faith and sustains the life of faith. This means while a "sinner's prayer" is not necessary prior to conversion, a converted person will inevitably enter upon a life of prayer. As communication requires language, so communion with the Lord requires prayer.

This explains why it is fitting in evangelism to lead an adult convert in their first prayer. It also explains why children growing up in the church are taught to pray from the time that they acquire language. In both cases, we begin teaching prayer as soon as a person becomes a disciple—whether that time is a "day and hour" of conscious conversion or a childhood of covenant nurture.

In the end, there is no real distinction between the "sinner's prayer" and every other prayer in the Christian life. Every prayer flows from a believing heart, from a heart afflicted by sin and in need of salvation. Therefore, every Christian prayer is a "sinner's prayer."

### A Firmer Foundation

Yet what happens at the end of each prayer? At the moment we say "amen," we rest everything in Christ's hands—believing he will keep his promises to us. All prayer does not just flow *out of* faith. Ultimately, every prayer flows *back into* faith.

In questions of assurance, therefore, our emphasis should fall back upon the promises of Christ. Do we want to be sure we belong to Jesus? Then like Jesus with the man born blind or with Martha at the tomb, we present our souls with the promises and call for faith: "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" Indeed, like Jesus with Thomas, we even confront our hearts with the promises and command faith: "Do not disbelieve, but believe."

Being born again is not like giving birth; it is like being born. The parents remember "the day and the hour"; the child only knows that they are alive! Prayer is proof that faith lives (Rom. 10:14), and we can deploy it to destroy doubt: if you want to be sure you are alive, breathe! Yet even as you do, remember that how you pray or when you began to believe doesn't matter. What matters is *who* you trust right now, *where* you rest your heart when you say "amen." Our assurance rests not upon a "sinner's prayer," but on the Savior's promise. □

*The author is a pastor of Covenant Presby-*

# LIVING IN LIGHT OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION



ROBERT S. ARENDALE // **The Christian life is filled with trials of various kinds (James 1:2). It is filled with suffering and hardship. It is filled with uncertainty and anxiety. Job rightly says, “Man who is born of woman is few of days and full of trouble” (14:1). We do not know what tomorrow may bring. We do not know what that**

next phone call or doctor’s appointment may bring. What will the diagnosis be? What will tomorrow’s meeting or conversation hold? Joy or sadness, despair or delight? We don’t even know how many tomorrows we will have; our physical life in this world is fleeting. We are like grass that withers and fades—here today and gone tomorrow. Although the inner self is being renewed day by day, the outer self is wasting away (2 Cor. 4:16). Creation itself groans and longs to be set free from its bondage to corruption (Rom. 8:21).

Given this reality, where does one find certainty and hope? Where does one look for peace and joy in the midst of life in this “present evil age” (Gal. 1:4)? Where can we plant our feet? Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians guides us.

## Paul’s Hope and the Empty Tomb

The Apostle Paul knew well such trials and hardships of life. He knew slander and injustice. He knew uncertainty and fear. He knew both physical and spiritual trials. Yet he also knew

peace, joy, and hope. And Paul’s hope is to be our hope. Paul’s hope is the hope of the believer. The hope of the risen and reigning Lord of glory, the Lord Jesus Christ. As did Paul, so also we set our feet on the firm foundation of gospel truth—the truth of the empty tomb and the risen Savior.

Paul’s letters to the Corinthians reveal the heart of a man burdened by life in this fallen world, yet rejoicing in the sure hope and life of Jesus Christ. He summarizes this mentality when he writes, “We are . . . sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing everything” (2 Cor. 6:10). According to the world, we may be poor and have nothing; yet in Christ we possess every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places (Eph. 1:3). By faith, we possess Christ himself who reigns from the right hand of the Father (Col. 3:1–4). Simply put, these epistles reveal a man who walked “by faith and not by sight” (2 Cor. 5:7); who knew that “this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory” (2 Cor. 4:17); and who

pressed on in service of the Lord looking “not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen” (2 Cor. 4:18). Paul did not find his identity and purpose in the passing things of this world, but in his union with the resurrected Christ (1 Cor. 1:30). For Paul, the resurrected Christ changed everything!

In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul revels in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. In this chapter, he expounds both the reality and the theology of the resurrection. As Paul states, “And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain . . . And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins” (vv. 14, 17). But Paul also declares the reality that Christ “was buried, [and] that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures” (v. 4). As the angel said to the women on that first Easter Sunday, “He is not here, for he has risen, as he said” (Matt. 28:6).

Moreover, Paul unpacks the rich theology of the resurrection. Christ was raised, so Paul states, as the “firstfruits

of those who have fallen asleep” (1 Cor. 15:20). His resurrection is the guarantee of our resurrection! His resurrection is the first installment of the great resurrection harvest at the last day (1 Cor. 15:23). As believers, we have been raised with Christ spiritually (Rom. 6:5–11), and we look forward to the day when we will be raised bodily and will see our Savior face to face (1 Cor. 15:35–49; 1 John 3:1–3).

### **Persevering in the Power of the Spirit**

Furthermore, by means of Christ’s resurrection, the new creation has exploded into this present evil age (2 Cor. 5:17). The age of the Spirit has come in Christ (Acts 2:33)! The age of righteousness, peace, and joy has come in Christ (Rom. 14:17). Brothers and sisters, it is this truth of the resurrection that rejoices our heart and strengthens us to press on in faith—that strengthens us to persevere in the power of the Spirit (see Col 1:29). Paul closes the majestic chapter of 1 Corinthians 15 with the following words:

Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain. (v. 58)

There are three items to note in this verse.

First, note the transition term, “therefore.” We must read this conclusion in light of what Paul has just declared in chapter 15; in light of Christ’s victory over sin and death—“O death where is your victory, O death where is your sting” (v. 55)—we are called to do something. Christ has conquered sin and death and has given us his Spirit (Col. 1:13; Heb. 2:14–15; Acts 1:4–5; 2:33). Brothers and sisters, this truth must, and in fact most certainly will, impact our lives and our ministries.

Second, in light of Christ’s resurrection, we are not to be moved from our hope in the gospel. We are to be “steadfast” and “immovable.” In other words, we are to let nothing move us

from Christ (see Col. 1:23). While some in the Corinthian church were denying the resurrection, Paul calls the Corinthians—and us—to take our stand on the resurrection. We stand on the gospel of Christ’s life, death, and resurrection—and we must stand firm as good soldiers for Christ (2 Tim. 2:3). Just as the world was seeking to move the Corinthians from the sure truth of the gospel, so the world today seeks to move us from the sure foundation of the gospel with its lies and deceptions. It is all too easy to give up, give in, and simply go with the flow of the world’s thinking (Eph. 4:14; Col. 2:8). But dear Christian, do not be moved. The name of the Lord is a strong tower. Christ is our strength, rock, and fortress. He is our shield and stronghold.

Third, we are to be “always abounding in the work of the Lord.” We are to be overflowing in our service to Christ. Serving the Lord is not a part-time responsibility; it is a full-time job. As my grandfather would often tell me, “there is no day off in the Lord’s army.” We are to serve him and to live for his glory all the days of our lives. “So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Cor. 10:31). Or as Peter puts it, “As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 4:10–11).

Thus, not only are we to be steadfast, not only are we not to be moved from the foundational truth of the gospel of Christ, but we are to press forward on the old paths of the gospel. We are to be “always abounding” in the work of the Lord!

Now what exactly is “the work of the Lord” in which we are to be always abounding? What or whose works of the Lord does Paul have in view? He doesn’t explicitly tell us. I would suggest, however, that the “brothers” of 1 Corinthians 15:58 is the same “broth-

ers” of verses 1 and 50. It is those who heard Paul’s preaching (vv. 1–2). In these verses, Paul is addressing the whole congregation. Thus, the “work of the Lord” is the believer’s work in service of the Lord. It is the work of each child of God—God’s adopted sons and daughters—in service of Christ, whether seen or unseen, whether acknowledged or hidden.

### **Not in Vain**

Serving the Lord each moment of our lives? This sounds exhausting. Often we struggle simply to make it through another day. But Paul closes 1 Corinthians 15:58 with a wonderful word of assurance: “knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.” What a truth! Regardless of the outcome or the results, our labor for Christ is not in vain. For those united to Christ and empowered by the Spirit, our service for the gospel is never empty. The Lord is *always* at work, in and through the humble labors of his children. It is a wonder of wonders that the Lord would use our feeble efforts. Even the smallest work for the Lord is not empty, but is pleasing in his eyes and used for his glory.

The faithful prayer of a grandmother, the simple faith of a five-year-old boy or girl, the Bible reading of a tired, single mom, the leading in family worship of a busy father pulled in a hundred directions, or the humble, faithful testimony of the young professional—all are pleasing to our Lord. Our believing is not in vain (1 Cor. 15:2) and our labor for the Lord is not in vain (1 Cor. 15:58). Brothers and sisters, may we always abound in the work of the Lord knowing that we belong to the risen and conquering King! And may our eyes be always fixed on our resurrected King—the founder and perfecter of our faith, the one who rose in victory and power, the one who loved us and gave himself for us, the one in whom there is forgiveness and life, the one who does all things well—the Lord Jesus Christ! □

*The author is pastor of Redeemer OPC in Dayton, Ohio.*

# THE HISTORY OF THE RESURRECTION



JAMES J. CASSIDY // Sixty years ago *Time* magazine published an issue featuring “Theologian Karl Barth.” On its April 20, 1962, cover was a picture of the Swiss theologian with a depiction of an empty tomb behind him. Across the top of that cover was a quote from Barth that read, “The goal of human life is not death, but

resurrection.” For a mere twenty-five cents, you could read all about it.

Barth was a peculiar option for featuring in an issue on the resurrection of Christ. His record on the historicity of the resurrection was not exactly crystal clear. When several American theologians asked Barth a question that had to do with the resurrection, Barth declined to answer, expressing frustration with “certain fundamentalists” and “cannibals.”

## Karl Barth on the Resurrection

So, is the resurrection a historical event for Barth? Does not Barth believe in the “corporeal resurrection” (*Time*, 59)? His answer is “yes.” But it is also “no.” Let me explain.

Karl Barth did not like the idea of trying to prove that the resurrection actually happened. In his day, many historians and theologians tried to do exactly that. For Barth, this was very disrespectful to the resurrection. After all, the resurrection is such a great event, how could its significance ever be made to stand or fall on our own human efforts

at history? So, the resurrection must be something better than what our history can offer. It is the kind of event that is so grand, it did not even occur in the history we humans experience here and now. It took place in a special, higher history. This is God’s history (sometimes referred to by the German word *Geschichte*).

So, for Barth, “yes” the resurrection is historical. But, at the same time, “no” the resurrection did not happen in the history we experience as humans.

Barth’s position is all the more troubling when you keep in mind that the Bible is not, for him, the revelation of God. It is a man-made document that witnesses to things like the resurrection in God’s special history, but the Bible does not reveal the fact and meaning of the resurrection.

## The Reformed View of the Resurrection

Now, if you find that confusing and unhelpful, good. It is quite confusing and unhelpful. And here is why.

First, according to our standards

the Bible is the infallible Word of God. The Bible is the “infallible truth” and has “divine authority” (Westminster Confession of Faith [WCF] 1.5). God’s Word, contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, contains “all things necessary for his own glory [and] man’s salvation, faith and life” (WCF 1.6). It is, in fact, “immediately inspired by God” (WCF 1.8). As Paul makes clear, “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16–17). The direct nature of the inspiration of Scripture is also taught by Peter: “no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit” (2 Pet. 1:21). It is true that if historians and theologians (not to mention every individual believer!) had to depend on only certain evidence (acceptable to the fallible historian’s guild!) for our conclusions about what happened in history, then our knowledge of the resurrection would be

irrational indeed. But God has not left us in the dark about these things. That Christ was raised, and what that means for us, are both to be believed upon because God revealed it to us. Only if one denies that the Bible is the very revelation of God is this a problem.

Second, the resurrection actually takes place in our history. If the resurrection took place in a special history distinct from our own, then Christ's body was in no way "man's nature, with all the essential properties" (WCF 8.2). But in fact, Christ has the same flesh as ours, yet without sin (Heb. 4:15). The great ancient theologian Gregory of Nazianzus said, "That which is unassumed is unhealed." What he meant was that if Christ in his incarnation, life, death, and resurrection is not of the same human nature—body and soul—as ours, then we cannot be redeemed. The human nature (no less than the divine nature) of Christ is necessary for our salvation. And so, if Christ is not raised in our history, then we are still lost in our sins. And there goes our real hope, grounded as it is in the historicity of the resurrection. Without it, there is no hope for a day when "believers, being raised up in glory, shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgment, and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity" (Westminster Shorter Catechism Q/A 38).

Third, not only is the historical fact of the resurrection revealed in the Bible, so is its significance. Without the Bible as the revealed Word of God, we would be utterly clueless as to the resurrection's meaning for our lives. But Paul, under the infallible inspiration of the Holy Spirit, wrote that Jesus was "delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification" (Rom. 4:25). Because of the resurrection of Jesus, we are now in him able to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:4). Because Jesus was raised, we can have hope that the Spirit will give life to our mortal bodies (Rom. 8:11). He is the firstfruits of our resurrection (1 Cor. 15:20). In fact, even now we are already raised with him in his resurrection (Eph. 2:6). We can be comforted to know that

by virtue of his resurrection from the dead, he is now head of all things for his church, reigning and ruling over all things for her good (Eph. 1:19–22). The resurrection of Christ even informs our ethical obligations as Christians (Col. 3).

Finally, the Bible reveals to us the relationship of the union we have in Christ's resurrection. In our union with Christ, which is wrought by the power of the Holy Spirit who works faith in our hearts, all the benefits of redemption he accomplished are applied to us in the here and now.

### Benefits Applied

This is such a large and rich area of theology, but we only have space here for a couple examples to illustrate our point (for more, readers would do well to consult John Murray's *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, and Richard B. Gaffin's *Resurrection and Redemption*).

In terms of what Christ accomplished, let's focus on his resurrection. How does the resurrection of Christ apply to us today? Consider our adoption and justification.

In Romans 1:4, Paul says Christ was declared the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead. Of course, Christ is from eternity past the divine Son of God. Nothing can add to or take away from that. But in our history, when God raised him from the dead, God himself made an open legal declaration that this Jesus of Nazareth is in fact his Son. There is a kind of adoption of Christ in his resurrection. And now we, in union and covenant identity with him, are also adopted into the family of God (Eph. 1:5; Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:5). This is an "act of God's free grace, whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges, of the sons of God" (Shorter Catechism Q/A 34).

But Christ's resurrection was also his justification. In 1 Timothy 3:16, Paul

explains that Christ was vindicated in the Spirit. In context, this is certainly a reference to his resurrection. The vindication in view here is his being openly declared righteous (it's the same Greek root for "justification"). And now we, in our grace-bestowed union with him, share in his vindication. Having received his perfect righteousness by faith alone, we have confidence to stand in God's presence as those who are pardoned of their sins and accepted as righteous in

his sight (see Shorter Catechism Q/A 33).

But neither of these benefits can be ours unless Christ shares in our same history in his resurrection. Unless Christ shared in our history back then and there, we cannot share in his benefits here and now.

### Conclusion

Barth's notion of resurrection does ring somewhat gnostic. While for him the resurrection was historical and bodily (in God's history), it still has its own special history related to, yet distinct from, our own history. But our own history is where God performed his mighty works of redemption. It is here, in our time, where we sinned, we fell, and in which we need to be redeemed. Can God in Christ really heal a people and their history if such a history is not the history of the resurrection? Certainly Paul believed that it is in our history where Christ was both "delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification" (Rom. 4:25), such that if Christ is not raised in our selfsame history as his, we are of all people most to be pitied (1 Cor. 15:19). But, praise be to God, Christ has been raised and is now the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep (1 Cor. 15:20). □

*The author is pastor of South Austin Presbyterian in Austin, Texas.*



Theologian Karl Barth

# FINANCIAL AND RETIREMENT EVALUATION FOR MINISTERS

// JUDITH M. DINSMORE



OP pastor Benjamin Snodgrass and his wife, Eileen, received a financial and retirement evaluation from Ronald Blue Trust and talk about their experience on a CMC webinar available to view now at [opccmc.org](http://opccmc.org)

Beginning this year, the Committee on Ministerial Care is offering all active OP ministers who are over age fifty a full financial and retirement evaluation through the financial planning services of Ronald Blue Trust. Every component of a minister's finances is reviewed and a plan is made "for your current budget, what you need to do to prepare for retirement, and what you can expect for your retirement income," John Fikkert explained.

The cost of Ronald Blue Trust's services is fully covered by the committee.

## Finding a Christian, Fiduciary Firm

To offer this, Fikkert, who is director of the Committee on Ministerial Care (CMC), knew that the committee wanted to partner with a financial planning firm that is both Christian and operates on the fiduciary principle—that is, one that is legally required to place its customers' interests ahead of its own and to fully expose any conflicts of interest or potential conflicts of interest. The committee found such a firm in Ronald Blue Trust, which was founded in 1979 by a Christian couple and now offers financial planning services to over ten thousand clients.

Ronald Blue Trust, and the CMC, recognize that financial planning for OP ministers is not about building a portfolio. Rather, "it's about preparing for financial stability in retirement," Fikkert said.

The barriers to preparing for retirement can be high. Newer ministers are often paying off not just college but seminary debt. The tax considerations for ministers are complicated. Churches may not be able to meet salary guidelines. Manse provision, while a blessing, provides no equity upon retirement. And sorting out paperwork, daunting for any non-finance professional, is particularly challenging for someone whose work week likely clocks in at well over forty hours.

The barriers may be high, but the CMC has been busy finding ways to help.

## A Meeting with Ronald Blue

Last fall, the committee launched a pilot program with five OP pastors and their wives: each couple met with a Ronald Blue representative to receive a financial plan. One of the five was Darren Thole, who since 2011 has been serving Providence Presbyterian in Huntsville, Alabama, and who is also a member of the CMC.

It may take a bit of courage, Thole admitted. "I could see someone not wanting to do this financial investigation, thinking *I already know what they're going to say—and it's not going to be good.*"

But, Thole said, an expert's advice on your financial situation is valuable information. Perhaps the adviser will affirm that the minister is on a good track. Perhaps not. If the latter, the adviser will be able to put a number on what preparing for retirement might look like. "When you have a concrete number you can work with, it's easier to allocate funds that were going elsewhere and channel them into retirement," Thole said. "It's OK to figure out, what would I need to do to fix this?"

A concrete number is also helpful for sessions as they evaluate salaries and helpful for a presbytery's diaconal committee or the CMC as they evaluate requests for assistance. "But how can you have the conversation if you don't have the details of your finances?" Thole pointed out.

And Ronald Blue is ready with the details.

"The hardest part of the process really is just getting together . . . all the paperwork that has to do with your financial situation," Thole explained. After communicating with the CMC to be paired with a financial adviser at Ronald Blue, the minister will then collect the required paperwork and send it to Ronald Blue through a secure online portal. About a week

[Continued on page 16]

# LIFE OUT OF DEATH

// DANIEL J. HALLEY



Bay Haven Presbyterian worship service

As the world shut down in early 2020 due to a global pandemic, Christians everywhere started attending virtual services. The lockdowns left many believers desperately desiring tangible fellowship beyond a screen. Amidst the sobering and difficult circumstances that were brought to us by the pandemic, and probably because of them, the Holy Spirit was on the move building the Lord's church. In John 3, Jesus tells Nicodemus that "The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going" (v. 8, NIV). That has very much been Bay Haven Presbyterian's experience in South Tampa.

### The Side Yard Fellowship

In early 2020, I had just returned home from a seven-month deployment as an Air Force Chaplain. Our family began the social distancing lockdowns extremely grateful to be together and to make up for lost time. As the months went on and the chapel on base remained closed, the Lord laid it on the hearts of several people, myself included, that we could safely have a worship gathering outdoors on Sunday mornings when I was available to preach. A dear friend, Rosemary Henderson, graciously offered her side yard as the meeting spot, and on June 21, 2020, about thirty of us met to worship the living God in her beautiful garden overlooking Tampa Bay.

Emails were sent and phone calls were made to invite people to our gathering. We emphasized that we were *not* starting a church, but just meeting temporarily during COVID. During the first few weeks, we sang a cappella, and then, a regular attender offered to accompany on his guitar. Each week I would greet the group saying, tongue-in-cheek, "Welcome to the Side Yard!" The name stuck, and we started referring to ourselves as the Side Yard Fellowship. Over the summer there were new visitors each week; as the summer came

to a close, there remained a core group of believers that had no desire to disperse. They wished to continue together as a permanent outpost of Christ's church.

Psalm 133:1 says: "Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!" I praise the Lord that we have gotten to taste the goodness and pleasantness of a unified group of believers; it truly is sweet. Our group was committed to being part of a denomination with biblical teaching and accountability within a Presbyterian system. Ultimately, the conclusion was that we would be served best by the OPC, and so we petitioned the OPC's Presbytery of the South to be an official church plant. That petition was accepted in April 2021.

With the pandemic restrictions lifting and my duties at MacDill Air Force Base resuming, I realized that I would need help filling the pulpit and guiding this group along. We have been well served by many ministers, licentiates, and men under care of the Presbytery of the South. Mr. Jueon Kim has been able to provide us consistent preaching in the pulpit over the last few months.

### A Change in Plans

My family was scheduled to move to Yokota Air Base, Japan, in the summer of 2021. As we made our preparations for this move, the Side Yard Fellowship's overseeing session asked if I would consider accepting a call to plant this church. I had initially determined that I was not the man for the job for several reasons—one of which being that I had never considered

### Home Missions Today

For up-to-date news and prayer requests, receive our newsletter by emailing [HomeMissionsToday@opc.org](mailto:HomeMissionsToday@opc.org). New editions: April 13 and 27.

myself a church planter! And yet God had placed this group of believers on my heart, and for some reason they wanted me to stay. Ultimately, I accepted the call. I will be released from active duty this June, moving into the Air Force Reserves.

When it came time to decide on an official name, it was hard to part with the sentimental attachment of Side Yard Fellowship, yet it was describing a location that can't be permanent—as hospitable as Ms. Rosemary is! As we considered a name, and our hopes for the church, we came to three realizations:

(1) We wanted a church that the entire Tampa Bay community would know is for *them*.

(2) We wanted a church that would be a shelter from the world; a church for sinners to flee to cry out to their glorious God.

(3) And we wanted a church where those sinners would hear God's words of reconciling peace in Jesus Christ.

We wanted a haven, and we desired to be a haven, guided in part by this passage from Psalm 107:

Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress. He made the storm be still, and the waves of the sea were hushed. Then they were glad that the waters were quiet, and he brought them to their desired haven. Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love, for his wondrous works to the children of man! Let them extol him in the congregation of the people, and praise him in the assembly of the elders. (Psalm 107:28–32)

Thus, after a few meetings, we settled on our new name: Bay Haven Presbyterian Church.

### Current Ministries at Bay Haven Presbyterian

Our group has gathered every Sunday, with only a few exceptions due to weather. We continue to have visitors al-



*Daniel Halley with wife, Stacy, and four children (left) and Rosemary Henderson (right), who hosted Bay Haven when it was just a group of Christians worshipping outdoors during lockdown*

most every week, and the Lord is growing our membership. We have a vibrant Sunday school class for both adults and children, Sunday evening instruction on the Westminster Confession of Faith and prayer time, a men's study, a woman's study, a Bible study in nearby St. Petersburg, Florida, and an outreach to the homeless. Several of our men went on a mission trip this past summer to help former inmates navigate challenges of this world with the gospel and tangible resources.

If you are in the Tampa area, please visit us. If you have any friends or family in Tampa, please let them know about this sprouting church in their city. Please continue to pray for this gathering—that the Lord would protect us and guide us forward, and that we would be used for his glory.

*The author is church-planting pastor of Bay Haven Presbyterian church in Tampa, Florida.*



*Bay Haven Presbyterian Church*

# OPC SUMMER CAMPS AND CONFERENCES IN 2022



Deerwander Bible Conference, August 2021

 **CALIFORNIA: BACKPACKING ADVENTURE**  
(Presbytery of Southern California)  
High Sierra Mountains  
Young people from around the OPC, ages 15 to about 25  
August 5–11  
Contact Thomas Jennings, 760-842-2669,  
[thomas.jennings91@gmail.com](mailto:thomas.jennings91@gmail.com), or Eli Hirtzel,  
310-738-1507, [ehmation@gmail.com](mailto:ehmation@gmail.com)

 **CALIFORNIA: BLUE RIDGE BIBLE CONFERENCE**  
(Presbytery of Southern California)  
PineCrest Christian Conference Center, Twin Peaks, CA  
Family/all ages, June 13–17  
[brbcfamilycamp.org](http://brbcfamilycamp.org)

 **CALIFORNIA: SIERRA CHRISTIAN CONFERENCE**  
(OP churches in Northern California)  
Sierra Christian Conference Association, Groveland, CA  
Memorial Weekend Family Camp, May 27–30  
Contact Brad DeBoer, [bradandjanetdeboer@yahoo.com](mailto:bradandjanetdeboer@yahoo.com)

 **CALIFORNIA: SUMMER BIBLE CAMP**  
(Presbytery of Northern California and Nevada)  
Redwood Christian Park, Boulder Creek, CA  
Family/all ages, annually in June  
[pncnopc.org/calendar](http://pncnopc.org/calendar)

 **FLORIDA: REFORMED YOUTH CONFERENCE**  
(Presbytery of the South)  
Lakewood Retreat Center, Brooksville, FL  
RYC High/Middle School Youth Camp, June 20–25  
Youth entering 6th grade (age 11 by August 31) through  
completing 12th grade  
[reformedyouthconference.com](http://reformedyouthconference.com)

 **MAINE, NEW HAMPSHIRE:**  
**DEERWANDER BIBLE CONFERENCE**  
(Presbytery of New York and New England)  
Junior High (entering 6th–8th grades), August 9–13  
Camp Berea, Lyman, ME  
Senior High (entering 9th–12th grades), August 13–20  
Chop Point Camp, Woolwich, ME  
[deerwander.org](http://deerwander.org)

 **NORTH CAROLINA: FAMILY CAMP**  
(Presbytery of the Southeast)  
Camp Caraway, Sophia, NC  
Family/all ages, July 4–8  
[psefamilycamp.org](http://psefamilycamp.org)

 **OHIO: YOUTH CAMP**  
(Presbytery of Ohio)  
Slippery Rock Baptist Camp  
Slippery Rock, PA  
Junior Summer Camp (ages 9–12), June 13–18  
Senior Summer Camp (grades 7–12), June 13–18  
[opcOhioyouth.wordpress.com](http://opcOhioyouth.wordpress.com)

 **OREGON: FAMILY CAMP**  
(First OPC, Portland, OR)  
Camp Morrow, Wamic, OR  
Family/all ages, August 17–20  
Contact [office@firstopcportland.org](mailto:office@firstopcportland.org)  
or call 503-253-0695  
[firstopcportland.org/camp.php](http://firstopcportland.org/camp.php)

 **PENNSYLVANIA: FRENCH CREEK BIBLE CONFERENCE**  
(OPC affiliated)  
French Creek State Park, Elverson, PA  
Grades 4–6, August 1–6

Grades 7–8, July 25–August 1  
Grades 9–10, July 18–25  
Grades 11–12, July 11–18  
Post-High, July 8–11  
Labor Day Family, September 2–5  
[frenchcreek.org](http://frenchcreek.org)

 **SOUTH DAKOTA—OPC-PCA BIBLE CAMP**  
(Presbytery of the Dakotas)  
Camp Judson, Keystone, SD  
Grades 4–12 (completed), June 25–July 1  
[opc-pca-biblecamp.com](http://opc-pca-biblecamp.com)

 **VIRGINIA: MACHEN RETREAT AND CONFERENCE CENTER**  
(Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic)  
Machen Retreat and Conference Center, McDowell, VA  
Science Camp (ages 10–17), July 11–16  
Stronghold Camp (grades 5–12), August 1–6  
[machen.org](http://machen.org)

 **WISCONSIN: CAMP WESTMINSTER**  
(Presbytery of Wisconsin and Minnesota & Presbytery of the Midwest)  
Green Lake Conference Center, Green Lake, WI  
All members, friends, all ages, July 18–22  
Contact Nathan Strom, [nstrom@oostburgopc.org](mailto:nstrom@oostburgopc.org)  
[pwmopc.org/camp-westminster/](http://pwmopc.org/camp-westminster/)

 **WISCONSIN: KEPT PURE IN ALL AGES CONFERENCE**  
Five Solas OPC, Reedsburg, WI  
Family/all ages: July 22–23, 2022  
Theme: Received Text Apologetics  
Speaker: Dr. Jeffrey T. Riddle  
Contact Christian McShaffrey, 608-524-5856  
[keptpure.com](http://keptpure.com)

 **OTHER RETREATS**  
Retreats for women, men, singles, and youth are spon-

## Favorite Psalms and Hymns *Trinity Psalter Hymnal no. 476* “It Is Well with My Soul”

*James W. Scott*

On the internet one can find various conflicting stories about the origin of the famous hymn “It Is Well with My Soul.” What is clear is that Horatio G. Spafford, a Chicago lawyer and Presbyterian elder, wrote this hymn in reflection upon his great personal (and financial) losses, especially the death of his four young daughters aboard a transatlantic liner that collided with another ship and sank in 1873. In 1876, Philip P. Bliss composed a deeply moving tune for the hymn, *VILLE DE HAVRE*—named after the sunken vessel.

This hymn is a meditation on the vicissitudes, trials, sins, and hope of the Christian life. “Whatever my lot” may be, stanza 1 says, the Lord has “taught me to say, ‘It is well, it is well with my soul.’” Every believer, trusting in Jesus for salvation, can experience and express profound comfort and assurance by singing this hymn.

We will experience both peace and turbulence in this world, but we know that our soul is safe with the Lord (st. 1). Trials will surely come, but we have the “blest assurance” that in our “helpless estate” Christ has “shed his own blood” for us (st. 2). Indeed, our sin, “not in part, but the whole” is “nailed to the cross”—“praise the Lord, O my soul!” (st. 3). We look forward to the day when “faith shall be sight,” when “the trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend;” “even so” come, Lord Jesus (st. 4, referencing Rev. 22:20). And at the end of each stanza the refrain reiterates, “It is well with my soul; it is well, it is well with my soul.”

sored by presbyteries and local congregations and are held at various times during the year—not just in the summer! Check out the listing at [OPC.org/cce/camps](http://OPC.org/cce/camps).



*Hiking in the Black Hills, South Dakota, at the OPC-PCA Bible Camp*

# MUWOYA DAVID: A STORY OF FAITH

// L. CHARLES JACKSON



*Pastor, church planter, and librarian Muwoya David with wife, Beatrice, and their four daughters*

**M**uwoya David was a boy from the village, apparently like any other little boy. He ran around with bare feet and chased homemade tire toys. Muwoya David, however, worshiped in a village church called Kachonga Presbyterian Church. This little church is on a dirt road nestled between miles of swampy rice fields outside the city of Mbale. This church is also one that OPC missionaries planted almost twenty years ago.

Kachonga Presbyterian Church was founded with the help of OPC missionaries Tony Curto, Brian Wingard, and Jonathan Falk. While they hoped their work would make a difference, they could not have known for sure that David, running around like any other little barefoot kid, would grow up to become a man who is a faithful Christian husband and a loving father. They couldn't have known that Muwoya David would attend Knox School of Theology's first accredited program through a local university, and from there become a pastor, a church planter, and even Knox's newest librarian.

"God is doing powerful things through the OPC," says Muwoya David. "God is doing powerful things even in my own life. I praise God for the OPC and their work here in Mbale."

## From Student to Librarian

When I drive into Knox's parking lot and look over to our newly relocated library, I am so encouraged to see David's irrepressible smile greeting me every time. David has always been known by his happy demeanor and big smile.

It's a joy that has persevered through sorrow. David is married to a lovely woman, Beatrice, who teaches at one of our two

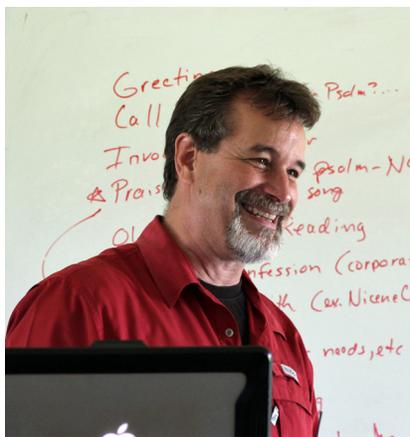
Christian schools in the villages. David and Beatrice have four girls. A few years ago, they lost their newborn son when he was only one day old.

I stood with him and watched David weather this storm of grief with faithfulness and steadiness, and I praised God that he was my student. He has not only been faithful as a husband and father, but he has been one of my best students at Knox. He is smart and hard working.

That determination and hard work took him from the village to the city of Mbale, through secondary school studies (which is roughly equivalent to middle school and high school), and on to university. He did not have enough money to finish university studies in business, but, thanks to the generosity of folks from OP churches, David was awarded a scholarship to Knox where he recently completed a bachelor's degree, which is presently accredited through a local university—Living Stone International University. Sponsorships from OP churches helped to complete the circle of work begun by OP missionaries in the past and continued by Knox in the present. God has blessed Muwoya David's faithfulness and the faithfulness of the OP missionaries here in Mbale.

## Church Planter and Pastor in Kakoli

As a student at Knox, David left Kachonga with a burden to help a struggling little group in a village near a place called Kakoli. This group of folks had been forced to break away from a church and were divided by a terrible church split that even involved violence and the local police. They pleaded with their presbytery to send them a pastor, and David answered their call. He began to teach them in a front room of a widow's house. After only a few months, they outgrew



*Charles Jackson teaching at Knox School of Theology*

the room, and another widow nearby offered them a large space under a huge mango tree. So the mango tree became the new home of this fledgling group.

I remember preaching there once, hoping that the service would beat the coming rains in the early afternoon. Where we live, it is a huge embarrassment to be without a church building, but the church's commitment to their mission was strong. They were offered a decent piece of land not too far from the mango tree, and they bought it. They slowly started gathering resources for a building, and the OP Uganda Mission helped them with iron sheets for their roof. David was ordained to be their pastor, and he ministered to the church, faithfully teaching God's Word.

The church served as a conduit between the OPC Committee on Diaconal Ministries and the village. One thing the committee has done in needy areas is drill much-needed wells. As we looked for places to drill a well, Kakoli was a great candidate. They had enough people nearby, and they were very far from any other water sources. This meant that the community would be coming to the church for physical water and, as they came, they could also receive the spiritual water of life in the person of Jesus.

After the well was drilled, the church welcomed the community to it, and we all celebrated together at its opening. We sang and danced and praised the Lord.

### The Life-Changing Work of the Gospel

Pastor David is a testimony of the life-changing work that churches are doing in the name of our Savior. He believes that the gospel of Jesus Christ changes your life, and he is so excited to be a part of the work of preaching and teaching the gospel. His own life is also testimony that the OPC has done life-changing work here in Africa. It is so encouraging to see our work come full circle in the life of Pastor Muwoya David.

It's also fun to think of the irony that a small boy from a largely illiterate village is now surrounded by books during



*Charles Jackson presiding at the funeral of the infant son of Muwoya David (seated) and Beatrice, under the mango tree*

the week as a librarian. Yet, in humility, he goes back to the village every Lord's Day to faithfully open the greater riches of God's Word to people still living in these villages. What is different about Muwoya David is of course not just a matter of literacy but a matter of gospel preaching. As the gospel was preached to him, so he is now preaching at the small church in Kakoli so that the gospel might be taken to shine in other villages where it might be heard by other little Davids, who will grow up and take the gospel to still other villages.

### Supporting the Work in Prayer

Please pray for Pastor David. Now that our program at Knox is seeking independent accreditation, David will need library science training as our librarian. Please pray that we would find a suitable program to prepare him for this work and to support this young man's efforts for the kingdom of God.

As I stand with David, who is part of our newly minted program at Knox School of Theology, I am so proud of him, and I'm so thankful for the work of the OPC here in Uganda for many years.

Please pray that God will raise up many Muwoya Davids for Uganda and for the churches here in Mbale.

*The author is an Orthodox Presbyterian missionary in Mbale, Uganda.*



*Muwoya David in the newly relocated library of Knox School of Theology*

## What's New

### // Appointments

**Miss Joanna R. Grove** was appointed as a tentmaker missionary (Grace OPC, Vienna, VA) in Nakaale, Karamoja, Uganda, beginning in March 2022.

[Continued from page 9]

after Thole sent his in, a Ronald Blue representative set up a meeting.

“It was about two hours—a fairly extensive meeting” over Zoom, Thole said. It began with a presentation on a Christian worldview of finance. “They worked with the idea that retirement is not really a biblical idea—that we want to be able to work less because we probably aren’t going to be able to work as much as we once did, but that work is good. We should always be doing something.”

Then, the representative is ready to respond specifically to previously mentioned areas of concern—such as retirement, saving for children’s college expenses, or budgeting. Finally, out come the charts and graphs “summarizing your income, your investments, what you can expect in fifteen years,” and further practical suggestions.

Although viewing the documents onscreen was somewhat clumsy, Thole said, digital copies were soon after sent to his email.

The CMC is offering OP ministers one meeting with Ronald Blue Trust, with a potential for a follow-up. For Thole, his questions after the meeting were easily answered through email.

This third-party assessment will likely be a welcome source of private advice for ministers, Thole reflected.

“I think everybody wants to be a good steward. Ministers understand that the goal isn’t to get rich . . . the goal is to be free of worldly cares and concerns.” Yet, despite that desire to be a good steward, when the pastor is trying to make ends meet, retirement funds are often the first thing to feel it. “We’re concerned about that in the CMC,” Thole explained.

Although the committee is currently covering the cost of Ronald Blue’s financial planning services only for active OP ministers over fifty years old, it hopes in the future to offer this to all active OP ministers. The CMC does, however, assist all OP ministers with basic inquiries and through a Volunteer Financial Planning Team.

### Basic Inquiry Response and the Volunteer Financial Planning Team

If ministers or church sessions have a basic question—about housing allowance, perhaps, or taxes—and the question can be answered in a ten-minute phone call, the CMC encourages getting in touch via their “contact” page on [opccmc.org](http://opccmc.org). Fikkert or a member of the committee will happily and readily respond.

If the question is more involved, the Volunteer Financial Planning Team steps in. Manned by four OP elders with backgrounds in the field—Greg De Jong, John Hearn, Bryan Holstrom, and Ken Vander Molen—the team “provides advice in areas that really call for judgment and synthesizing different aspects of personal finance,” De Jong said.

On the CMC’s website, under “Financial Planning



OP pastor Darren Thole, here with his family, received a financial and retirement evaluation through Ronald Blue Trust.

Assistance,” is a simple [one-page form](#) to request the team’s help. This form guides the team’s response: “we’re just trying to figure out what’s the main issue . . . and which of the four guys would be best suited to help,” De Jong explained.

The team has helped ministers consider how long to maintain life insurance, for example, and whether to use a manse or buy a home. It frequently talks to pastors who are in the first half of their career, “trying to figure out how to prioritize setting aside for their own retirement, versus getting college savings accounts established for their kids, versus maybe continuing to try to whittle down debts from college and seminary,” De Jong said.

The insight that the Volunteer Financial Planning Team provides often includes a careful understanding of the unique aspects of a minister’s personal finances.

De Jong gave an example. When you’re saving for retirement, you have the option of doing either a pre-tax or an after-tax contribution. And almost every pastor is aware that one can use the ministerial housing allowance to reduce taxable income. How are those two aspects synthesized?

“It might appear at first blush that if you’re putting money into a retirement plan, you should do a pre-tax contribution, to lower your income tax bill. But if you also take into account that you might be able to put a significant amount of your salary into housing allowance, that might allow you to get into a very low tax bracket, in which case a pre-tax retirement contribution doesn’t really make sense after all,” De Jong explained.

### Three Levels of Care

However, in helping ministers, one vital area in which the Volunteer Financial Planning Team recognized their limitations has been retirement preparedness. That is why the committee is so pleased to now have a partnership with Ronald Blue Trust, as a “level three” of their financial care for ministers, after the Volunteer Financial Planning Team and the basic inquiry.

“If pastors or sessions or church treasurers have questions that bear on the pastor’s finances, we would encourage them to reach out to CMC,” De Jong concluded.

*The author is managing editor of New Horizons.*

# APRIL



The Ansell's (day 4)



The Biggs (day 14)

**1** Pray for **RETIRED MISSIONARIES** Cal & Edie Cummings, Brian & Dorothy Wingard, Greet Rietkerk, and Young & Mary Lou Son. / **STEPHEN PRIBBLE**, senior technical associate for OPC.org.

**2** **JEREMY & GWEN BAKER**, Yuma, AZ. Pray the Lord would lead permanent Yuma residents to Yuma OPC. / Yearlong intern **BEN (VICTORIA) CIAVOLELLA** at Delta Oaks Presbyterian in Pittsburg, CA.

**3** **HEERO & ANYA HACQUEBORD**, L'viv, Ukraine. Pray that the Lord would grant wisdom as they care for their church and family in uncertain times. / Yearlong intern **KELLE (ALEX) CRAFT** at Redeemer OPC in Beavercreek, OH.

**4** **MILLER & STEPHANIE ANSELL**, Waco, TX. Pray for officer training at Trinity, and for the church's young families. / Pray for **BEN & MELANIE WESTERVELD**, Quebec, Canada.

**5** **MICAH & EILEEN BICKFORD**, Farmington, ME. Pray that God would provide new outreach opportunities. / Active duty military chaplains **JOHN (LINDA) CARTER**, US Navy, and **DAVID (JENNA) DERIENZO**, US Army.

**6** Pray for affiliated missionaries **DR. MARK & LAURA AMBROSE**, Cambodia, and their younger sons as they adjust to living in Cambodia again. / Pray for the diaconal podcast, **THE RE-FORMED DEACON**, that it would encourage and equip deacons.

**7** **MARK & JENI RICHLINE**, Montevideo, Uruguay. Pray for Salvos Por Gracia to grow spiritually and numerically. / Pray for the **COMMITTEE ON DIACONAL MINISTRIES**, meeting April 7-8. It will tour the OPC's mercy ministry to refugees in Clarkston, GA.

**8** **ISAAC (ESTHER) ZHOU**, church-planting intern at Pasadena OPC in Pasadena, CA. / Yearlong intern **JEREMIAH (ANNA) MOONEY** at Covenant Community in Taylors, SC. / Home Missions associate general secretary **AL TRICARICO**.

**9** Associate missionaries **OCTAVIUS & MARIE DELFILS**, Haiti. Pray that the Lord would raise up faithful elders and deacons for the Port-au-Prince church. / Yearlong intern **BEN (JOELLE) CAMPBELL** at Presbyterian Church of Cape Cod in West Barnstable, MA.

**10** **MARK & LORIE WHEAT**, Houston, TX. Pray for unity and growth in the congregation of Good Shepherd OPC. / **BEN & HEATHER HOPP**, Haiti (on furlough). Pray that church members might be able to worship and do their daily tasks without threat of violence.

**11** **JOHN & KATIE TERRELL**, Moline, MI. Pray God would raise qualified and willing officers to serve. / Pray for coordinator **JUDY ALEXANDER** and speakers preparing for next week's Timothy Conference in Escondido, CA.

**12** **MR. AND MRS. M.**, Asia. Pray for more new contacts and Bible study attenders from central Ohio. / **JOHN FIKKERT**, director for the Committee on Ministerial Care, and **CHARLENE TIPTON**, database administrator.

**13** **MR. AND MRS. F.**, Asia. Pray for safety and well-being of believers, including a pastoral intern's wife who has health struggles. / **LACY (DEBBIE) ANDREWS**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of the Southeast.

**14** **CHARLES (MARGARET) BIGGS**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic. / Pray for **DAVID NAKHLA**, Diaconal Ministries administrator, and others preparing for the National Diaconal Summit, June 2-4.

**15** Pray for affil. missionaries **JERRY AND MARILYN FARNIK**, Czech Republic, as they travel to teach on biblical counseling and Christian foundations. / Yearlong intern **GRANT (STORMIE) ALLARD** at Christ Covenant in Amarillo, TX.

APRIL



The Folkerts (day 22)



The Van Essendelfts (day 21)

**21** **MARK & CARLA VAN ESSENDELFT**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for their family as they fly back to the US this month for furlough. / Yearlong intern **TAYLOR (SOPHIA) SEXTON** at Heritage Presbyterian in Royston, GA.

**22** **BRAD (CINNAMON) PEPP**, regional home missionary of the Miami Valley for the Presbytery of Ohio. / Assoc. missionaries **JAMES & ESTHER FOLKERTS**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for the health and safety of the church and missionaries.

**23** **ANDREW & REBEKAH CANAVAN**, Corona, CA. Pray for God to send new families to Corona Presbyterian. / Pray for **MELISA MCGINNIS**, financial controller, and **MARK STUMPF**, OPC Loan Fund manager.

**24** Associate missionaries **CHRISTOPHER & CHLOE VERDICK**. Pray for the construction work on the new clinic staff housing. / **CHRIS BYRD**, Westfield, NJ. Pray for wisdom and that his contacts would come to know Christ.

**25** Home Missions general secretary **JOHN SHAW**. / Pray for Committee on Christian Education general secretary **DANNY OLINGER** and others attending a **GREAT COMMISSION PUBLICATIONS** board meeting today.

**26** Pray for staff of **NEW HORIZONS** and **ORDAINED SERVANT**. / Associate missionaries **ANGELA VOSKUIL** and **LEAH HOPP**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for their work among the Karimojong women.

**27** Tentmaking missionary **TINA DEJONG**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for quality time with the Lord and with each child she teaches. / Yearlong intern **A. J. (CHELSEA) MILLSAPS** at Sandy Springs Presbyterian in Maryville, TN.

**28** Pray for **CHRIS (MEGAN) HARTSHORN**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of Southern California. / Pray for the persecuted church in **EAST AFRICA** that the Lord would continue to protect and strengthen its faith.

**29** **CALVIN & CONNIE KELLER**, Winston-Salem, NC. Pray that the Lord would lead Harvest OPC to find a larger worship facility. / Pray for **OPC DISASTER RESPONSE** as they recruit volunteers and prayerfully distribute funds.

**30** Pray for affiliated missionaries **CRAIG AND REE COULBOURNE**, and **LINDA KARNER**, Japan. / Pray for stated clerk **HANK BELFIELD** and others preparing for the 88<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, June 8-14. / **MARKUS (SHARON) JEROMIN**, gathering-minister in Battle Creek, MI. Pray for fruit in evangelism, Bible study growth, and an upcoming conference.

**16** Home Missions administrative assistant **KATHARINE OLINGER**. / **CHARLES & CONNIE JACKSON**, Mbale, Uganda. Pray for a missionary evangelist who can also teach at Knox School of Theology.

**17** **JOHN PAUL & CORINNE HOLLOWAY**, Manassas, VA. Pray for God's Spirit to direct and empower the witness of Acacia Reformed. / **SHORT-TERM MISSIONS**. Pray for opportunities this summer, in the US and abroad.

**18** Pray for missionary associates **DR. JIM & JENNY KNOX**, Nakaale, Uganda, as they adjust to the clinic work and community in Karamoja. / Yearlong intern **MARC (RUTHIE) SCATURRO** at Harvest OPC in Wyoming, MI.

**19** Missionary associate **JOANNA GROVE**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for a smooth process for her Ugandan work permit renewal. / **TYLER & NATALIE DETRICK**, Dayton, OH. Pray that Light of the Nations would be a loving witness.

**20** **JAMES (DANA) STAFFORD**, church-planting intern in Columbus, OH. / Pray for the young men attending the **TIMOTHY CONFERENCE**, beginning today in Escondido, CA, as they learn about pastoral ministry in the OPC.

# YOU ONLY LIVE ONCE

// BENJAMIN A. STAHL

**Y**OLO! This phrase has been overused of late by speculators in underperforming stocks. Why would someone risk quickly losing more than 100 percent of an investment to buy “Gamestonk” or AMC? You only live once, so go for it!

While we might be quick to dismiss such an approach to life and wealth as foolishness and out of line with the teachings and warnings of Scripture regarding wealth (which are many), perhaps “YOLO” should be a call to the Christian to examine his or her life—not in the light of speculation but in the light of the Word of God.

How much time do we spend contemplating the future of our resources while forgetting to live for the Lord in the present day that the Lord has given us? The world teaches us always to look toward the next great thing. But the Lord tells us, “This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it” (Psalm 118:24).

Consider two widows in Scripture whom the Lord used to teach us about our resources. Both widows gave all that they had to the kingdom (1 Kings 17:8–16; Mark 12:41–44). The widow of Zarephath and her son were near to death by starvation with only one meal remaining. Nevertheless, when Elijah the prophet requested a meal from her, she gave all she had to him, trusting that the Lord would do as he had promised and provide for her family’s needs. In Mark 12, the widow with just two mites gave 100 percent of her wealth to the Lord. Meanwhile, the wealthy gave only small percentages of their riches to the Lord. Those widows who needed much from God gave all to God.

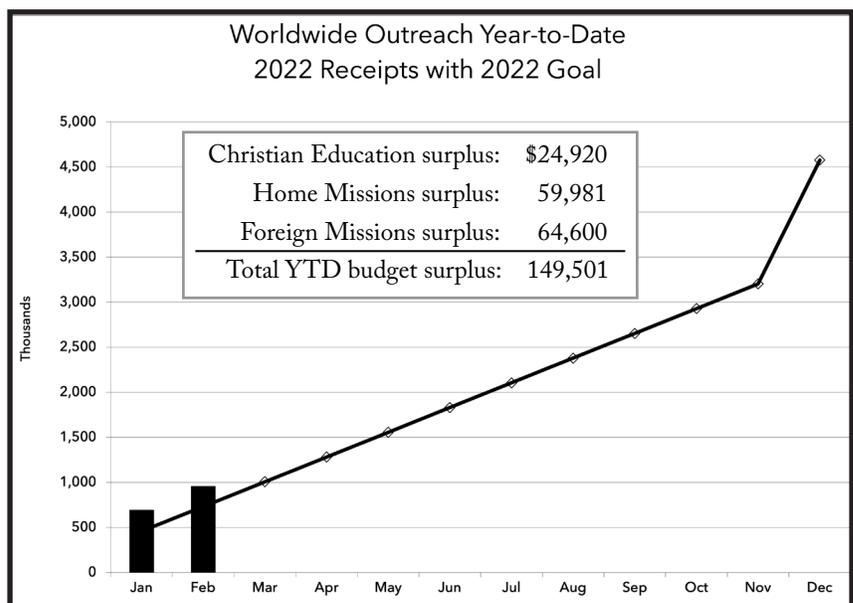
How often do we give like these widows? I am sure that I have never given like that. I

tend to give only what is necessary, planning to sustain myself for a very long time. But Scripture tells us to redeem the time for the days are evil (Eph. 5:16) and to number our days for they will soon be cut off and we will fly away (Psalm 90:10–12). In other words, the Lord is reminding us: you only live once, so serve the Lord while it is still today.

With these rallying calls to give to the Lord, come warnings to church officers tasked with using these gifts. The wealth of God’s people given to God for work in God’s kingdom must be used for God’s glory. Whether it was the priests in Jehoash’s reign (2 Kings 12:4–16), Eli’s sons (1 Sam. 2:12–17), the whole temple system in Jesus’s day (John 2:13–17), or the board of Foreign Missions of the PCUSA in the early twentieth century, history is filled with examples of church leaders abusing the gifts of God’s people for purposes contrary to the promotion, protection, and proclamation of God’s truth. The rallying cry for sacrificial giving on behalf of God’s people must be followed by the rallying cry for sacrificial and obedient service by God’s officers with those gifts.

How will you use the resources God has given you in the time he has given you to use them? Will you hoard them, planning always for the future, or will you give freely today for the glory of the Lord today? One day all that we have will sprout wings and fly away from us or we will fly away from it. While we still live, let us use our resources first and foremost for the promotion, protection, and proclamation of the Word of the Lord. After all, on this side of eternity, you only live once!

*The author is a ruling elder at Redeemer Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Atlanta, Georgia.*



# NEWS, VIEWS, & REVIEWS



Jackie and George MacKenzie

## IN MEMORIAM: GEORGE MACKENZIE

Michael D. Dengerink

George MacKenzie was born in Nova Scotia, Canada, in 1925. He was called to his heavenly home and the presence of his Lord on January 22, 2022.

George lost his father at age ten, shortly after moving to the United States. To support his family, George sold newspapers on the streets of San Francisco. He later served in the Navy from 1943–1946, in the South Pacific. In 1948, he married his dear Jackie, whom he had known since childhood, and who went home to the Lord three months before George. They are survived by their daughters, Janet and Lynn.

George worked in the grocery business for forty-two years. Starting as a clerk, George was later denied a store management position because he refused to work on the Lord's Day. Undeterred, he would eventually become a West Coast senior buyer for Safeway.

George loved Christ's church. He was an elder for over sixty years, serving the OPC in San Francisco, Berkeley, and Pittsburg, California—and attending over twenty general assembly meetings! George had a passion to see churches be planted, grow, and own buildings, a passion evidenced by his generosity with his time and financial resources.

We thank the Lord for the MacKenzies, and ask only for more churchmen like George.

## IN MEMORIAM: NORMAN DE JONG

Brian L. De Jong

Dr. Norman De Jong was well known as a proponent of Christian Education prior to entering the ministry. He spent his career teaching teachers, serving at Dordt College and Trinity Christian College. His 1968 book, *Education in the Truth*, was groundbreaking for those seeking a distinctively Christian approach. At age fifty-seven, he spent a year at Mid-America Reformed Seminary in Orange City, Iowa. In 1994, he was ordained as the pastor of Covenant OPC in Orland Park, Illinois. In retirement, De Jong con-



Norman De Jong

tinued to be active in ministry, serving the Mill Creek congregation in Grand Rapids, Michigan, from 2001–2003. He later served as the organizing pastor for Bethel Reformed OPC in Fremont, Michigan. He also helped as an interim pastor at OP congregations in Sonora, California; New Town, Connecticut; and Natchitoches and Pineville, Louisiana. With his wife, Wilma, he engaged in short-term mission work in the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Costa Rica, Cyprus, and Kenya, as well as short-term ministries in Australia and New Zealand (twice). After battling cancer, Dr. De Jong passed into glory on Monday, February 22, 2022.

## UPDATE

### MILESTONES

- **George MacKenzie**, 96, died January 22. He was a longtime elder at Delta Oaks Presbyterian, Pittsburg, CA.
- Former OP missionary **David M. Moore**, 83, died January 28. He was the son of OP minister James Moore and the brother of OP missionary Katie Yaegashi. With his wife, Grace, he served in Japan with the OPC Mission for thirty-two years (1968–2000).
- **Herbert C. Bone**, 79, a retired OP minister, died February 2, 2022. After coming into the OPC in 2007, he served a church in Dunlap, TN.
- Retired OP minister **Norman De Jong**, 86, died February 22. He served congregations in IL and MI. His son Brian is an OP minister, and his son Gregory is an OP elder.
- **Carl N. Smith**, 66, an evangelist of the Presbytery of Connecticut and Southern New York, died March 3.

## LETTERS

Editor:

Dr. Master's article on the "[Ordinary Means](#)" (February) was very helpful in many respects, and I am grateful. One potential qualifier may be helpful. In the seventeenth century, the meaning of "ordinary" as "typical, not special" was just coming into the English language, though that is virtually the only meaning now in common use. By far the more common usage at the time was "Conformable to order or rule; regular; orderly; methodical" (Oxford English Dictionary). I believe this is the way in which the Westminster Divines meant it in our standards with respect to "ordinary means," though they also seem to use it in our contemporary sense (WCF 25.2, WLC 47, etc.). It is not that there is nothing special about the ordinary means, as we may say "that's quite an ordinary shirt," though such a meaning is, theologically, unobjectionable. Instead, I believe it means that these are the practices (Word, sacraments, prayer) that produce order within us and have been set in order and proper sequence by the Holy Spirit. This

is reflective of Paul's comment in 1 Corinthians 14:40.

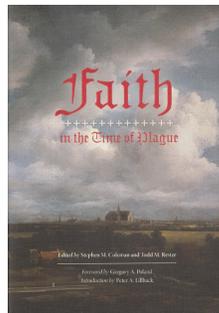
David Noe  
Grand Rapids, MI

## REVIEWS

***Faith in the Time of Plague: Selected Writings from the Reformation and Post-Reformation*, edited by Stephen M. Coleman and Todd M. Rester. Westminster Seminary Press, 2021. Hardcover, 400 pages, \$19.49. Reviewed by OP member Jeffrey Sodergren, MD.**

The Word of God is a sure comfort in the midst of trials. Yet, we should not neglect church history as another source of encouragement, as we consider how our Christian forebears persevered through trials similar to those we currently face. *Faith in the Time of Plague: Selected Writings from the Reformation and Post-Reformation* provides a reminder from church history that is greatly helpful at the present time. Just as our faithful predecessors persevered despite multiple bubonic plague outbreaks during and after the time of the Reformation, we can be confident that our God will also sustain us during COVID-19.

The articles included by editors Stephen Coleman and Todd Rester, both professors at Westminster Theological Seminary, are richly steeped in the Word of God. Their authors advocate a continued love of God and neighbor during catastrophic circumstances. And what a treasury of biblical wisdom is here! Theodore Beza, Calvin's successor in Geneva, having himself survived the plague, navigates the question whether it is permissible to flee an area infested by plague. In "Pestilied" (Plague Hymn), Ulrich Zwingli gives an account of his reliance on God while almost dying from plague during a 1519 outbreak in Zurich. Martin Luther wrote his article while he remained in Wittenberg to care for plague victims. Zacharias Ursinus provides the thorough analysis in his *Godly Meditation on Death* that one would expect from



the author of the Heidelberg Catechism.

Other authors, many of whom are translated here into English for the first time, despite being less familiar to current audiences, prove themselves worthy to stand alongside their more illustrious contemporaries. Dutch reformer Gisbertus Voetius provides a comprehensive review of contemporary plague theology and practice in his *Treatise on the Plague*, citing a list of resources impressive even by modern standards. Johannes Hoornbeeck, another Dutch Reformer, emphasizes the Christian's response in heart and mind during a plague outbreak, appropriate actions to care for the sick, and to properly respect the dead. I would challenge anyone not to be moved while reading John Rawlet's "Letter to My Mother," written to encourage his mother's faith after his expected death in the 1665 Great Plague of London.

The preface written by editors Coleman and Rester includes a historical overview of the plague in early modern Europe and briefly summarizes the relevant theological and ethical issues. In his foreword, Mayo Clinic vaccine researcher Gregory Poland describes many parallels between Reformation plague and the present-day pandemic. Peter Lillback's introduction observes that Christian compassion to those suffering and dying during prior epidemics has drawn many to the church, and includes a list of additional Reformation-era plague writings. Many of the Reformation-era authors referenced *On Mortality*, written during a third-century plague by church father Cyprian of Carthage as a guide to the correct Christian response, and the decision to include it here as an appendix is an excellent one. I have only one minor criticism: some words and phrases are rendered only in their

**Women's  
Spring Forum  
on Zoom**

Saturday April 2, 2022  
8 a.m. PDT 10 a.m. CDT  
9 a.m. MDT 11 a.m. EDT

DOMESTIC ABUSE:  
RECOGNIZING AND AIDING THOSE  
WHO ARE SUFFERING

Join us for a two hour presentation and discussion with Darby Strickland, a counselor and instructor with the Christian Counseling and Educational Foundation (Glenside, PA). She has written on counseling abusive marriages and speaks to churches about caring for those domestically abused. She will speak about her recent book, *Is It Abuse?* No charge for the event. Please register here to receive a Zoom link: <https://forms.gle/Gw8tazHn2bACnueH9>

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original Hebrew and Greek. I would have preferred the editors to provide a translation, either as a footnote or parenthetically.

I recommend this book without reservation. As the world enters its third year of COVID-19, both individual Christians and the church as a whole will benefit from the biblical wisdom and applications contained in these articles. My prayer is that the church, despite the circumstances of our current trial, would follow the example of our Reformation-era predecessors and continue to persevere in faith and to increase in love for both God and neighbor.

***Matthew, Reformation Commentary on Scripture*, edited by Jason K. Lee and William M. Marsh. IVP, 2021. Hardcover, 400 pages, \$44.88. Reviewed by OP pastor Daniel J. Doleys.**

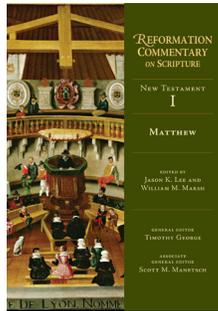
The Reformation Commentary on Scripture brings together sixteenth- and seventeenth-century exegetes, theologians, and pastors in one volume. It does for the Reformers what the Ancient Christian Commentary Series did for the Church Fathers.

The body of the commentary divides the biblical text into major sections of a few paragraphs and includes an introduction to its main interpretive issues. The

text is further broken down by paragraph, and the commentary of several authors is given. Each quotation is neatly set off by the author's name, so it is easy to identify where one author's words end and another's begin. The source of each quotation is included to aid further study. The quotations of the Reformers are taken from standard editions and new translations by the editors, Jason Lee and William Marsh, both of Cedarville University. After working through all of Matthew, short biographies for each interpreter are provided. This section is especially helpful for many of the lesser-known commentators cited.

While a few Roman Catholic interpreters are included, such as Erasmus and Cardinal Cajetan, the focus is on Protestantism and its distinct tradition of interpretation. There is a wide variety of interpreters from different communions. In the Matthew volume, it is not surprising to find the leading men of the magisterial Reformations cited most often. From the Lutheran tradition, Martin Luther himself is most common, but Philip Melancthon and Martin Chemnitz are also regularly included. From the broader Reformed tradition, John Calvin is ubiquitous, while Theodore Beza, Martin Bucer, Heinrich Bullinger, and Ulrich Zwingli repeatedly appear. It was also thrilling to see many citations from Wolfgang Musculus and Johannes Oecolampadius. There are also worthy inclusions from the English Reformers including Thomas Cranmer, Hugh Latimer, William Perkins, and Thomas Watson, as well as several early Baptists. Menno Simons appears as the primary representative of the Anabaptists. Several women interpreters are also included. Another strength is the inclusion of passages not just from commentaries, but also from sermons of the period.

It is hard to offer a substantial critique of an edited commentary in such a short review, but it should be noted that on debated passages in Matthew, the editors intended more to guide the reader toward what is, in their view, a faithful interpretation than to represent the full variety of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century read-



ings. The variety of positions on the continual virginity of Mary are not present in the commentary on Matthew 1:22–23 or 13:55. The controversy over the identity of “this rock” in Matthew 16:18 is better covered, yet it still lacks the full spectrum of Protestant and non-Protestant views to fully grasp the nature of this important debate during the Reformation period.

Overall, this is an excellent volume and can serve a minister or lay reader of Matthew in three ways. First, as an important complement to modern commentaries; both as a window into the interpretive patterns of our Reformed fathers and as a balance to the technical nature of today's commentaries. Second, this volume will save you time and much money by presenting the best the Reformation had to offer without needing to purchase an author's complete works. And third, it will whet your appetite for Protestant interpreters beyond the standard Luther and Calvin and drive you to dig deeper into the riches of the Re-

***David Hume: A Skeptic for Conservative Evangelicals*, by Robert Case. Wipf and Stock, 2021. Paperback, 206 pages, \$25.00 (Amazon). Reviewed by PCA minister Robert Drake.**

This is not an easy book to read, not because of any deficiency in Dr. Case's ability to communicate complex philosophical ideas, but because they are complex philosophical ideas he is communicating. As I read the book, having studied philosophy some myself, I still felt like a classroom eavesdropper on a discussion between two professors who were above him.



## New Outreach in Virginia

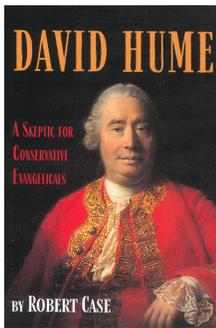
Windsor VA Reformed Fellowship is an outreach ministry of Reformation Presbyterian Church in Virginia Beach, Virginia. We exist to glorify our great triune God through biblical evangelism in the Southampton County area. We gather the first and third Sundays of each month. If you or someone you know may be interested, please contact Doug Hoven ([hovendouglas@gmail.com](mailto:hovendouglas@gmail.com)) or Daniel Cooke ([danielcooke2@gmail.com](mailto:danielcooke2@gmail.com)).

If a fellow student asked me after class what I made of what I heard, I'd first say that I came away understanding why Case has seen value in David Hume for present day evangelicals. In many ways, Hume's thought aligns with many conservative social theories. However, to appreciate Hume as Case does, one simply has to identify the proper order of the “cart and the horse” and realize that Hume has correctly identified both but couldn't tell (without the biblical revelation he rejected) which came first. For example, with morality Hume thought the “horse” was the development of actions that were found to be beneficial for an individual and groups. He thinks the “cart” came later as some attributed such morality to God. We know that the “horse” is that God in himself is the source of morality, and we are image-bearers of him. That morality of the image-bearer was later restated in God's revealed commandments. The “cart” is that doing what God says is beneficial for ourselves and others. Revelation is good for us, not what's good for us must have been from revelation.

Second, Case suggests that Hume was influenced by his Scottish Presbyterian upbringing more than the man realized. Hume's background helped him see reality as it is, even though he denied the One who authored that reality. Hume saw what philosophers, who claimed to be more sophisticated than he was, couldn't see: the fundamental reality is our “common life” which has a history in which institutions such as marriage and the workplace have proved themselves workable. You might say, with Alexander Pope, that they are “classics,” in the sense of being “that which pleases best longest.” Philosophers who do not start with our obvious “common life”

end up inventing pseudo-realities. They claim to be rationalists, but they are really just dreamers. Dreams, however, may please while asleep but disappear when one awakes. Much of the so-called Enlightenment (wokeness) was actually in the dark realm of dreams.

At this point, I can't help seeing a resemblance between Hume's "common life" and Dooyeweerd's "naive experience." Maybe "obvious life" would have been better. It refers to the realm of subject-object relationships which no one who buys houses and raises children can doubt. It's the philosophical rationalists who keep trying to turn that realm, and the order inherent in it, into theory instead of acknowledging it as the given from which we make abstractions and theories. For Hume order just is. For Dooyeweerd, order leads to God.



Third, I must, like every student, question at least something. If the way things actually are in the reality of common life, with its institutions that have proven themselves over time, is to provide a point of contact with unbelievers, apart from mentioning God, how would that work out in a society that now claims that the institutions of the past, such as marriage and now even law enforcement don't, in fact, work? And what if unbelievers are now so existential that they don't trust or even bother with history?

Case thinks we can still meet (many?) unbelievers on the common ground of reality. After all, if Hume and Robert Case can agree on some things, maybe there is hope yet for a reality-based consensus.

***Why Did Jesus Live a Perfect Life?: The Necessity of Christ's Obedience for Our Salvation*, by Brandon D. Crowe. Baker Academic, 2021. Paperback, 224 pages, \$14.60 (Amazon). Reviewed by OP pastor Robert T. Holda.**

As a child, I enjoyed David MacCaulay's *The Way Things Work*, a children's reference book, explaining how various technologies

work from microwave ovens to jet engines, with detailed cross sections and diagrams. In my opinion, Brandon Crowe's *Why Did Jesus Live a Perfect Life?* does for the obedience of Christ what MacCaulay did for can openers and the like. Crowe's intent is to defend and explain the historic Christian position that Christ's perfect obedience is necessary for our salvation, but what he achieves is much broader. Although there are no cross sections or diagrams and few illustrations, Crowe takes his readers on a deep theological dive into the inner workings of the gospel, logically unpacking the details of Christ's redemptive work.

The book begins with two chapters devoted to definitions, continues with five chapters exegeting the most relevant New Testament passages, and concludes with three chapters of implications. Although Crowe didn't write this book with the primary intent of refuting error, his thesis directly opposes the New Perspective on Paul and the recent, erroneous claim, that saving faith is best understood as allegiance (5). Crowe's motivation in writing was to clarify the complex realities involved in our salvation in the light of God's requirement of perfect obedience for eternal life (6). This position puts eternal life out of the reach of sinners, preserving the uniqueness of Christ's claim to have earned it by his obedience.

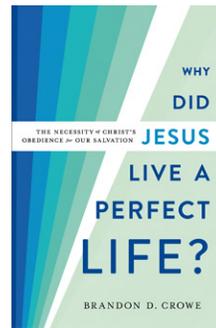
Crowe doesn't start defining the obedience God requires with the obedience set forth in the Mosaic law code, but with the obedience required of Adam in the beginning (36). In every section and from every passage and every imaginable angle, Crowe convincingly makes his case, however redundant his conclusions may be. I

## Ukraine Crisis Fund

A fund has been established by the OPC Committee on Diaconal Ministries in order to aid our missionaries in Ukraine and others as they minister to displaced citizens fleeing their homes as a result of the war with Russia. Donations may be made by going to [give.OPC.org](http://give.OPC.org). Updates at [OPCDisasterResponse.org](http://OPCDisasterResponse.org).

found his exegesis of Galatians 3:10-14 (65-77) and of Luke's genealogy (91), as well as the connection he makes between Christ's perfect obedience and his resurrection (121-143) to be some of his most helpful insights.

Without turning away from his primary argument, Crowe provides his readers with equally clear, if less expansive, explanations of a surprising number of related theological concepts, including God's moral law, the union of Christ's divine and human natures, faith, justification, the difference between imputation and infusion, sanctification, good works, and Christ's resurrection as vindication. At the outset, Crowe advocates for a combined use of biblical, historical, and sys-



tematic theologies (10-13) and the use of technical theological language (30-31), which he regularly uses, but always defines. I found Crowe's writing to be very readable, but readers should understand that just as anyone who wants to understand how their car works must learn new terms, those who desire clarity about the gospel will likewise need to expand their vocabulary. Crowe helpfully uses illustrations at chapter openings in order to orient his readers to the flow of his upcoming argumentation. Although his writing is exceedingly clear, this book would be better-suited for an even wider audience if illustrations were also used to aid his readers' comprehension of the theological concepts being treated. Direct application is also present, but slim. Although seminary grads or experienced theology readers may not learn much new in this book, I still recommend it to all who desire increased clarity about the necessity of Christ's perfect obedience.

# Teens have QUESTIONS.

# so what?

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