

# NEW HORIZONS

— *in the* ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH —

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Controversial and Creative  
*// by John R. Muether*

OCTOBER 2022

**10** Robert B. Strimple on  
the Image of God  
*// by Lane G. Tipton*

THEOLOGIAN  
AND CHURCHMAN



RICHARD B. GAFFIN JR.

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On May 27, Kevin Olivier was ordained and installed as pastor of Pineville Presbyterian in Pineville, Louisiana. He is pictured here, in a yellow tie, with members of the presbytery: Elder Bill Montgomery, Pastor Joel Fick, Regional Home Missionary David Chilton, Elder Joe Screpetis, and Pastor Warren Bennett III.



# THEOLOGIAN AND CHURCHMAN RICHARD B. GAFFIN JR.



DANNY E. OLINGER // **Richard B. Gaffin Jr., arguably the preeminent Reformed biblical theologian of the last half century, not only grew up in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, but providentially has been involved in its life in remarkable ways. The son of missionaries Richard and Pauline Gaffin, he may have been the**

first covenant child born—on July 7, 1936, in Peiping, China—in the then twenty-six-day-old Presbyterian Church that J. Gresham Machen and others founded. When World War II broke out and the Gaffin family had to relocate to America, the entire family, including Richard Jr.’s grandparents, Harold and Jesse, poured themselves into Grace OPC in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Richard Sr. pastored, Harold served on the session as a ruling elder, and Pauline gave herself endlessly in teaching youth. For Richard Jr., it was an education both in trusting Christ as the one who builds the church and in servant-leadership as modeled by his family members.

In November 1947, Richard Sr. returned to China on behalf of the Committee on Foreign Missions (CFM) to explore the possibility of reestablishing a mission there. Pauline and the children—Margaret, Richard Jr., Harold, and John—went to live in Wildwood, New Jersey, where the Boardwalk Chapel had just opened. Here Richard Jr. was exposed to evangelism and outreach

in the OPC. Then in 1950, he participated in the inaugural French Creek Bible Conference and there met fellow camper Jean Young.

When the door to service in China closed, the CFM asked the Gaffins to consider service in Taiwan. Richard Sr. left for Taiwan in 1951, and Pauline and the three boys moved to Wyncote, Pennsylvania. There they joined nearby Calvary OPC in Glenside. Fourteen-year-old Richard Jr. made public profession of faith and became a communicant



*Jean and Richard Gaffin Jr.  
on their wedding day in 1958*

member in April 1951. Even after his high school graduation from the William Penn Charter School when he left to attend the University of Southern California in 1954, his ties to the OPC were evident as he worshiped at Faith OPC in Long Beach, and even lived with Pastor Glenn Coie and family for two summers.

In 1956, Richard Jr. transferred to Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan. This was due to the strong encouragement of Robert Atwell, his pastor at Calvary OPC, and the presence at Calvin of many of his friends, including Bernard “Chip” Stonehouse, Peter Steen, Donald Duff, and especially Jean Young. Two years later, on August 23, 1958, Richard Jr. married Jean. Soon after, he enrolled at Westminster Theological Seminary (WTS), a school whose faculty included OP ministers Cornelius Van Til, John Murray, Ned Stonehouse, Edmund Clowney, Meredith Kline, John Skilton, Paul Woolley, and Richard Jr.’s new father-in-law, Edward Young.

## Working Hard at WTS

For his master's dissertation at WTS under Murray, Gaffin chose to study John Calvin's doctrine of the Sabbath. The topic of the Sabbath held interest for Gaffin because the members of the OPC in the main, and more specifically his parents, were Sabbatharians who embraced the teaching of the Westminster Standards on religious worship and the Sabbath. He sought to know whether the Bible supported such Sabbath-keeping. Gaffin's answer after researching the topic was yes, that a weekly Sabbath continues in force until Christ returns to make the promised consummation rest a reality for believers.

It was in arriving at this conclusion that the theological genius of Princeton theologian Geerhardus Vos began to dawn on Gaffin. Vos argued that the Sabbath's main significance rested in its pointing forward to the eternal issues of life and history. In Genesis 2:2–3, eschatological Sabbath rest is in view prior to the fall into sin and its consequences. As Gaffin would later point out in his article "A Sabbath-Rest Still Awaits the People of God," a difference existed, however, between Creator and image-bearing creature. The creating work of God is finished and his rest begun (Heb. 4:3b–4); Adam's task had yet to be performed, his rest being still future (Heb. 4:9). Gaffin further gleaned that the shift in observance from the seventh day in the old covenant to the first day in the new covenant is an index of hope realized, that is, of the new creation rest inaugurated by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Christians begin each week gathering in the presence of the risen Christ on the Lord's Day. This Sabbath-rest is a sign that salvation is not just a future hope but a present possession. For Christians to keep the Sabbath is an act of confession that witnesses to the reality that God is the Lord over our time and that our time is really his time.

Awarded the WTS faculty stipend for graduate study, with the provision that it must be used for study abroad, Gaffin attended the Georg-August-



At the site of Van Til Hall in 1974

Universität in Göttingen, Germany, in 1962–1963. He then returned to Philadelphia and took a job working as a statistician to support his growing family, Richard III having been born in 1962 (Steven would be born in 1964 and Lisl in 1967). In 1964, WTS hired Gaffin as a teaching fellow and the next year promoted him to the faculty as an instructor in New Testament. He was ordained on June 15, 1965, as an OP minister. His ordination service was a family affair: his father read Scripture and prayed, and his father-in-law preached. Later that summer, he and his father drove to Portland, Oregon, where they both served as commissioners to the Thirty-Second (1965) General Assembly.

Teaching at WTS, Gaffin sought to promote Machen's Reformed orthodoxy, Van Til's presuppositional apologetic, and Vos's biblical theology. He taught that the method of the theological enterprise is found in Scripture itself. Further, believers share a common redemptive historical horizon with the Apostle Paul—together, they look back to the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ, while they await his return from heaven. Believers "already" are new creation and experience resurrection-life through faith-union with Christ, although that resurrection life is "not yet" bodily existence in heaven with Christ. A basic interest of theology, then, should

be the expounding of "already, not yet" as it relates to the mystery that has been kept secret for ages but now is manifested with the coming of Christ.

## Resurrection and Redemption

In 1969, Gaffin finished his PhD dissertation, *Resurrection and Redemption: A Study in Pauline Soteriology*. Building again upon Vos, Gaffin sought to show the centrality of the believer's union with the now-exalted Christ. A key passage was 1 Corinthians 15:42–49. In verses 42–44a, Paul contrasts the dead body of the believer with his resurrection body. The one body is characterized by perishability, dishonor, and weakness. The other body is characterized by imperishability, glory, and power. But, as Gaffin points out, Paul then makes a new argument in verse 44b ("if there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body") while still preserving the parallelism and contrast of verses 42–44a. Paul's new argument is this—Adam by virtue of creation and not by virtue of the fall into sin anticipated a Spiritual hope of bodily life in heaven with God in full. This higher hope was lost through the sin of Adam, but it was regained and realized through the resurrection of the second Adam, Jesus Christ ("Thus, it is written, 'the first man Adam became a living being; the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit,'" [v. 45]). In Gaffin's judgment, the perspective from which then Paul views the believer's resurrection is nothing less than cosmic. Resurrection life in Christ brings to completion the goal of heavenly life in a different body suited for full communion with God, which was set before Adam from the beginning.

## Laboring for the Church

The same year that Gaffin finished his dissertation, his involvement in service to the OPC increased. He was elected by the Thirty-Sixth (1969) General Assembly to serve on the Committee on Foreign Missions (CFM). That assembly also elected him to a Special Committee on Sabbath Matters and a Special Committee on Scripture and

Inspiration. Then, the Thirty-Eighth (1971) General Assembly elected him to serve on the Committee on Proof Texts for the Shorter Catechism. This was followed that summer by the CFM elevating him to president.

WTS promoted Gaffin in 1978 to professor of New Testament. In his inaugural address, “The Usefulness of the Cross,” Gaffin focused on what it means for believers to be citizens of the kingdom of heaven, which has dawned with the resurrection of Christ. He appealed to Philippians 3:10, “that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,” to show that the believer’s transformation from glory to glory is conformity to Christ’s death and suffering. Gaffin concluded that where the church is not conformed to its Savior in suffering, it ceases to be true to itself as the church. It is without glory and will not inherit glory.

In 1979, Gaffin published *Perspectives on Pentecost*, which defended the cessationist view of revelatory gifts of the Spirit. Gaffin argued that the teaching of the New Testament about the Spirit’s work was focused on Christ’s work at Pentecost. At Pentecost, Christ comes as life-giving Spirit to the church. The gift of the Spirit is not a post-conversion, second-blessing experience that some believers possess and other believers do not. All believers joined by faith to Christ share in the gift of the Spirit.

### OPC and the 1980s and 1990s

Recognizing both his outstanding theological contributions to the Reformed world and his servant-leadership as president of CFM, the Fifty-First (1984) General Assembly elected Gaffin as moderator. But it was not just on the general assembly level that Gaffin was giving himself to the church. The same year he served as moderator, he also volunteered with his wife Jean to serve as part of the kitchen staff at the French Creek Bible Conference, something the two of them did for fifteen years.

The 1980s also marked a transition

to glory of many of the first generation of Orthodox Presbyterians whom Gaffin had known since childhood, including Cornelius Van Til. Much like Van Til had the solemn honor of preaching at Vos’s memorial service, Gaffin preached from 1 Corinthians 1:18–25, “The Scandal of the Cross,” at Van Til’s memorial service at WTS. God gives to believers wisdom—Christ-centered, age-to-come wisdom—that the rulers of this age view as foolishness, he reflected.

In 1993, Gaffin helped to start a new mission work, Gwynedd Valley OPC (since 2007 Cornerstone in Ambler, Pennsylvania). For the next



twenty-five years, he would be involved (and Jean also) in nearly every part of that congregation’s life, including many years on the session. He continued his active participation in the Presbytery of Philadelphia, administering the Greek examination for men under care, and at the general assembly level with membership not only on the CFM, but also on the Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations (1989–2004), the Special Committee to Study Admission to the Lord’s Supper (1991–1993), and the Special Committee on the Doctrine of Justification (2004–2006). The respect that the general assembly of the OPC has shown for Gaffin is seen in the fact that no individual in the history of the OPC has been elected or appointed to serve on more special committees than the fourteen that he has served on over the span of six decades.

### Resting Well

In 2008 at the age of seventy-two, Gaffin retired as full-time professor at WTS. During his forty-three years teaching there, over 350 future ministers in the OPC sat under his ministry. No other teacher in the history of the OPC has approached such personal engagement with so many men aspiring to gospel ministry. This number does not include the many other pastors and ruling elders who sat under Gaffin’s teaching ministry at countless camps and conferences where he served as a speaker, nor the many who have read his books and articles.

At the Seventy-Ninth (2012) General Assembly, he had the privilege once more of being part of a father-son duo at the assembly, as both he and his son, Richard III, served as commissioners. Throughout the decade, Gaffin continued as president of the CFM.

In 2019, Jean, his beloved wife of sixty years, died and went to be with the Lord. At that time, Gaffin also transferred to the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic as he had moved with Jean in 2016 to the Washington, DC, area and begun worshiping at Grace Presbyterian in Vienna, Virginia, where Richard III serves as a ruling elder. In 2021, after fifty-two years of service on the Committee on Foreign Missions, Gaffin retired from committee service.

Still, his service to the church and to his Lord continues, as seen with the publication this year of *In the Fullness of Time: An Introduction to the Biblical Theology of Acts and Paul*. In the preface to the book, Gaffin stated that during his ministry he has seen himself as involved, in large part, in building upon Vos’s redemptive-historical insights into the wonderful riches of God’s Word, a labor which Gaffin was deeply grateful to have had the opportunity to do.

We who have benefitted from the teaching of Gaffin are also deeply grateful. □

*The author is editor of New Horizons.*

# STONEHOUSE'S CHARITABLE CONFESSIONALISM



CAMDEN M. BUCEY// Although he is undoubtedly a foundational figure of OPC history, details of Ned B. Stonehouse's life remain vague, his theological contributions are often unrecognized, and the positions he took in ecclesiastical debates are sometimes surprising and even perplexing.

Ned B. Stonehouse (March 19, 1902–November 18, 1962) was a minister in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and professor of New Testament at Westminster Theological Seminary. He was a founding member both of the faculty of Westminster in 1929 and the Presbyterian Church of America (later OPC) in 1936. He married Winigrace (1904–1958; née Bylsma) on August 30, 1927, in Grand Rapids. They had one child, Bernard John (Chip) Stonehouse (1937–1999). After Winigrace died in 1958, Stonehouse married Margaret Robinson in 1959.

Stonehouse was an internationally recognized biblical scholar and wrote several books and articles mostly addressing the Gospels and the New Testament canon. He was editor of the *Westminster Theological Journal* and the *Presbyterian Guardian*, in which he wrote many articles on theological and ecclesiastical matters. He also served as editor of the *New International Commentary on the New Testament* and as

president of the Evangelical Theological Society for one year, in 1957.

But he is perhaps best known as the biographer of J. Gresham Machen, a book on which he labored for seven years. John R. Muether notes how at times Dr. Stonehouse thought the biography might be the end of him. But when finally published in 1954, it proved to be a great blessing to him and others.

Stonehouse was particularly suited to write Machen's biography. He had worked closely with Machen as a junior colleague in Westminster's New Testament department for seven years and, among those both at the seminary and in the church, likely knew Machen the best. His bond is evident in the memorial he published in the *Presbyterian Guardian* upon Machen's death in 1937:

Our hearts are deeply wounded but not unto despair. . . . to us he was a dearly beloved Christian brother

whose life touched ours for good at a thousand points. Indeed, he was far more than a brother to many of us. He was a father in Israel and we have become orphans.

Stonehouse filled the void left by Machen in many areas. He fought the fight for the young church, yet he did so, in the words of Charles G. Dennison, as the "consummate gentleman" and "diplomat." Stonehouse was unique in that he was neither indifferent to doctrinal disagreements nor quick to pursue separation. His default posture was to make room for as many as possible within the church without ultimately compromising the church's confession. On more than one occasion, he took stands within the courts of the church that differed from those of his colleagues at Westminster. Three notable cases demonstrate this posture, serving as useful examples of how Stonehouse sought to follow Christ by maintaining the peace, purity, and unity of the church.

## Premillennialism

Having left the PCUSA to form a distinct body in 1936, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (as it was renamed in 1939) was struggling to find its distinct identity. Members of the new church debated several cultural and doctrinal issues, including dispensational premillennialism. Stonehouse and John Murray had written several articles in the *Presbyterian Guardian* on the subject, and some had taken these criticisms of dispensationalism to be criticisms of premillennialism in general, including historic premillennialism, which was a position held by several ministerial members of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Stonehouse clarified, “Our criticism of Modern Dispensationalism is not concerned with an attack upon the belief that Christ’s return will be followed by a dispensation lasting a thousand years.”<sup>1</sup> He readily admitted that the presence of historical dispensations in Scripture were not an issue *per se*. It was the specific content of dispensationalism,

where *one dispensation is set so sharply against another that the Bible is regarded as setting forth more than one religion*. The result is that the Bible no longer is received as giving a unified testimony to the one way of salvation, and the doctrine that under every dispensation man is saved solely through God’s grace is greatly obscured.<sup>2</sup>

On this doctrinal point, Machen and Stonehouse sought to keep the Orthodox Presbyterian Church broad enough to include historical premillennialists, such as their friend and colleague Paul Woolley, provided it did not come packaged with dispensationalism. But here they differed from others, such as Cornelius Van Til, who were convinced that all forms of premillennialism were out of accord with the Westminster Standards.<sup>3</sup>

Nearly forty years later, the OPC general assembly voted to amend its constitution to remove language in the Standards that stood as an obstacle to premillennialists. The proposed changes

regarded Larger Catechism Questions and Answers 86–89, which speak of the resurrection and the day of judgment. This was part of the proposed Plan of Union with the Reformed Presbyterian Church Evangelical Synod (RPCES) in 1975. Only fifty-seven percent of the RPCES assembly voted for this Plan of Union, however, falling short of the required two-thirds majority, and our Larger Catechism remained unchanged.<sup>4</sup>

We can only speculate whether Stonehouse would have supported these changes, but it seems clear from his earlier writings that he felt the church should have included historic premillennialists from its beginning.



This event provides a glimpse into Stonehouse’s thinking regarding the breadth of a particular denomination, but how did he view the relationship of denominations with one another? We learn of his position in Stonehouse’s work on ecumenicity.

## Ecumenicity

While he was opposed to the Federal Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches that would seek church union through a lowest-common-denominator approach, Stonehouse nevertheless advocated for advancing ecumenical relations, provided they did not compromise the OPC’s confessional fidelity. The most notable cases were the prospect of joining the American Council of Christian

Churches (ACCC) and the International Council of Christian Churches (ICCC), both led by Carl McIntire. McIntire had been instrumental in the division of 1937, which led to the formation of the Bible Presbyterian Synod. If Stonehouse had any hard feelings regarding this separation, they appear to have completely dissipated a decade later.

Stonehouse corresponded with Carl McIntire for several years on this matter. More than offering polite and official commentary regarding these ecumenical efforts, Stonehouse repeatedly expressed to McIntire his desire for the OPC to join these institutions. Even after membership in the ACCC was rejected by the general assembly in 1949,<sup>5</sup> he advocated for joining its international counterpart.

After much deliberation, the general assembly determined to apply for membership in the ICCC provided that the organization would emend its constitution to clarify its doctrinal position as being in alignment with the OPC’s. But after the ICCC was unwilling to make all the requested concessions, it became clear to many that the ICCC was not interested in the OPC’s doctrinal concerns. In 1952, the general assembly terminated its membership in the ICCC. Stonehouse labored intensively to establish and maintain these ecumenical ties, but he found himself opposed to many of his Westminster colleagues, including R. B. Kuiper, John Murray, Cornelius Van Til, and John Skilton, who viewed these efforts as compromising the church’s distinctly Reformed witness to the world. This would not be the last time he would find himself on the other side of an issue. While the circumstances were different, Stonehouse’s Christian charity would place him at odds with his colleagues within the Presbytery of Philadelphia once again.

## The Peniel Bible Conference

In the late 1940s, a dispute arose

[Continued on page 18]

# MEREDITH G. KLINE: CONTROVERSIAL AND CREATIVE



**JOHN R. MUETHER // Meredith G. Kline was born a century ago, on December 15, 1922, in Coplay, Pennsylvania. When he was four, his family moved to the Dorchester neighborhood in Boston, where they joined Central Congregational Church. Upon graduation from Gordon College in 1944, his inclination was ministerial**

preparation at Dallas Theological Seminary. Kline's mind changed when his mother grieved at the prospect of his moving so far from home, and instead, after their wedding that summer, he and his wife, Grace, moved to Philadelphia where he enrolled at Westminster Theological Seminary.

Though Kline had not come from a Calvinistic background, he quickly settled into Reformed convictions at Westminster, especially under the influence of Professor Ned Stonehouse. Particularly helpful in grounding him in amillennialism was his ThM paper on the structure of the book of Revelation. While completing two degrees in three years and raising a family with Grace (two of their three sons were born during his student years), he also preached on nearly one hundred occasions.

He then took a call at Calvary Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Ringoes, New Jersey, while enrolling in a PhD program in Assyriology at Dropsie College in Philadelphia. He would also begin to teach Old Testament part-time at Westminster, joining the faculty full-time in 1950.

## The Relevance of the Theocracy

In 1953, Kline published his first article in the *Presbyterian Guardian* (a monthly magazine that was a predecessor, of sorts, for *New Horizons*). In "The Relevance of the Theocracy," Kline took issue with two articles whose authors failed to understand the uniqueness of the Mosaic covenant, thus exposing them to errors in applying Israel to modern politics. In making his case, he quoted Geerhardus Vos's *Biblical Theology*: "The significance of the unique organization of Israel can be rightly measured only by remembering that the theocracy typified nothing short of the perfected kingdom of God, the consummate state of Heaven." The article itself is dated, and Kline would go on to write more memorable articles and books. But what stands out in this article is this quote. Kline shows at the very start of his publishing efforts an eagerness to approach biblical theology in the tradition of one whom he later called "the prince of exegetes." It is no exaggeration to say that Kline would devote the next half century to expanding and refining

the consequences of Vos's claim.

The uniqueness of Israel carried consequences, political and ecclesiastical, that prompted Kline to embrace unpopular opinions. In 1963, when Kline's sons were enrolled in the Abington township public schools, the Supreme Court's landmark decision in *Abington v. Schempp* ruled that mandatory prayer in public schools was a violation of the First Amendment. Kline supported the ruling, to the dismay of some in the OPC. But his logic was the same as J. Gresham Machen's, seen in the latter's unwillingness to entrust religious exercises to the hands of public education.

In the following year, Kline submitted a minority report (along with WTS colleague Paul Woolley) at the OPC general assembly on a proposal to establish a medical hospital in the mission in Eritrea. Kline did not dispute the importance of Christians sponsoring hospitals. But he challenged whether medicine could come under the authority and oversight of the church, because the standards for judging the competence of doctors and nurses are not provided in the church's only rule of faith and practice,



the Word of God. Kline was disappointed in failing to prevail at general assembly, but many ministers wrote to him expressing appreciation for his efforts.

### Leaving Westminster

Kline's gifts seemed to fit well with his senior colleague in Old Testament, E. J. Young. While they differed in their interpretation of the nature of the creation days, their disagreement was cordial, and their families were close. Kline purchased land from Young and built a home in Willow Grove where they became next-door neighbors. Kline's respect for Young was best expressed in his review of Young's commentary on Isaiah in the *Gordon Review*. While it may have lacked "imagination and excitement," he wrote, it "breathes the spirit of humble adoration of the Word of God" and it was "solid, reliable, thorough in its soundly Reformed exegesis."

Still, Young was the chairman of the department, and he was teaching the classes that Kline yearned to teach. So Kline could not resist the opportunity, after sixteen years at Westminster, to move to South Hamilton, Massachusetts, and chair the Old Testament department of Gordon Divinity School (now Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary) in 1965. Kline imagined an enlarged platform at Gordon, and it was certainly that. But it was a serious blow for Westminster, and a challenging adjustment for him. Two years into his Gordon teaching experience, Kline candidly expressed to a friend: "Some days, I admit, the environment seems discouraging and I could wish to be in my theological home."

The prospect of returning increased with the sudden and unexpected death of Young on February 14, 1968. Many faculty—especially Cornelius Van Til—urged him to return. There is evidence that Kline weighed this very seriously, though he declined largely for family reasons. Yet he never lost his love for Westminster. He would serve as a visiting professor in Philadelphia in the 1970s, and for two decades, beginning in 1981, Kline taught the spring semester classes Pentateuch and Old Testament

Prophets at Westminster Seminary California in Escondido, during which he produced his most fruitful work.

### Refining the Theology of the Covenants

It is common to hear analysts of Kline refer to an "early Kline" and a "later Kline." For example, in the 1970s, Kline was given to say that the Mosaic covenant was an administration of the covenant of grace embedded with a "typological works principle." By the 1980s, he would put that differently: the Mosaic covenant was "a republication of the covenant of works." Rather than contradictory, these expressions are harmonizable, though it is clear that his emphasis was shifting. Two theological controversies that refined his thinking were the theonomy movement and Norman Shepherd's novel views on justification.

Kline's criticism of theonomy appeared in his 1979 *Westminster Theological Journal* review of Greg Bahnsen's book *Theonomy in Christian Ethics*. The "tragedy of Chalcedon" in failing properly to apprehend the theocracy of Israel extended to its "delusive and grotesque perversion of the teaching of Scripture." Along the way, Kline also took on post-millennialism. By its "premature eclipse of the order of common grace" it denied the faithfulness of God, who under the terms of the Noahic covenant has committed to preserving common grace.

Debate over the teaching of Norman Shepherd began at Westminster in 1975. For Kline, the root of Shepherd's error was his covenant confusion: where works and grace are mixed in the old covenant the same problem ensues in the new covenant. For Kline, the heart of the gospel—the merit and mediation of Christ as the second Adam—was at stake. His involvement sharpened especially his thinking on the works principle in the garden of Eden and its typological replication in the Mosaic covenant. Here he continued to elaborate on the

biblical theology of Geerhardus Vos. "For Vos," Kline explained in *Kingdom Prologue*, "delineating the progress of special revelation is broadly the same as expounding the contents of the several divine covenants."

### Controversial and Creative

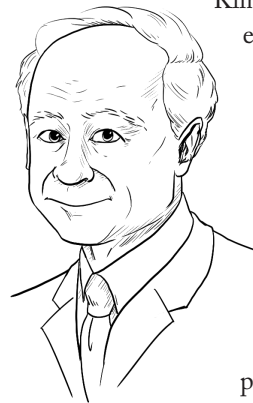
Kline's pastor at First Presbyterian Church in Ipswich, Massachusetts, David O'Leary, observed at the time of

Kline's death in 2007 that "Meredith Kline was probably the most controversial and creative man I knew. His insight and ability were far beyond the rest of us. Yet when we reflected on it, we often admitted that he was correct." This was certainly the experience of his students in Philadelphia, South Hamilton, and

Escondido. It is difficult to capture the dazzling character of Kline's classroom lectures. They began with the rich devotional theology of his heartfelt prayers, offered in the poetic cadence of the King James Version. Early students saw the dust around the chalkboard create the impression of the glory-cloud he described through brilliant exegesis. Later students learned of the "typological legibility" of the biblical covenants through his barely decipherable scrawling on overhead projectors or whiteboards.

Kline once outlined the goals in his seminary calling as threefold: he sought to contribute toward the students' "acquisition of a sound and scholarly hermeneutical approach to the Old Testament," their "formulation of a comprehensive theology of the OT," and their "confidence in the OT as infallible." His students were in the habit of describing his influence in simpler terms. It was the recurring testimony of more than five decades of seminarians that "Kline taught me how to read the Bible." □

*The author, an OP elder, is professor of church history at Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando, Florida.*



# ROBERT B. STRIMPLE ON THE IMAGE OF GOD



LANE G. TIPTON // Robert Strimple stands out as quite likely the finest dogmatic theologian to have served the OPC in training men for pastoral ministry. As a teenager in Wilmington, Delaware, he was planning on going to trade school until a high school guidance counselor encouraged his parents to send him to college.

The first member of his family to attend college, he graduated as valedictorian from the University of Delaware in 1956. The previous year he had married Alice Simon, whom he met at InterVarsity Christian Fellowship. He then attended Westminster Theological Seminary, where his chief influences were John Murray and Cornelius Van Til. They helped him to embrace an exegetically rigorous approach to systematic theology, appreciate the deep structures of theological systems, and, in time, migrate into firm convictions regarding paedobaptism.

After earning his PhD at the University of Toronto, Strimple taught at the Toronto Bible College before accepting a position at Westminster Theological Seminary. For the next thirty-one years at Westminster (1970–1980) and Westminster Seminary in California (1980–2001), he faithfully taught hundreds of aspiring OPC ministers. He also gave himself to service in the presbyteries of Philadelphia and Southern California and was elected as moderator of the Fifty-Third (1986) General Assembly.

His classroom teaching on the image of God in traditional Roman Catholic theology and the theology of Karl

Barth in his course entitled God's Created Image<sup>1</sup> supplies just one example to support the contention that he remains the most insightful yet underappreciated dogmatic theologian in OPC history.

In a *tour de force* survey, Strimple argued that traditional Roman Catholic theology and modern Barthian theology share striking similarities in their doctrinal conceptions of the image of God and in their theologies of participation in the being of God. For Roman Catholic theology, Adam, as the image of God, came from God with an inherent defect that required the infusion of supernatural grace that would repropotion and elevate him above his created nature to participate in the essence of God. For modern Barthian theology, Adam (a symbol for every man) came from God as inherently sinful and in need of participation in Jesus's own participation in the being of God in the reconciling grace of the Christ-Event in *Geschichte* (a supratemporal time dimension inaccessible from calendar time *historie*).

## The Image of God in Traditional Roman Catholic Conception

Strimple in his class expounds the Roman Catholic doctrine of the natural

image of God and its teaching regarding the supernatural gift of the grace (*donum superadditum*) that Adam *needed before the fall* to enable him to desire and to attain his supernatural end of intellectual participation in the essence of God. Roman Catholic theology teaches “the bestowal of the *donum superadditum*” by which Adam's created nature as the image of God would be, in the words of the counter-reformation Roman Catholic theologian Bellarmine, “exalted above human nature and made participant in the nature of God.” Bellarmine followed Aquinas who taught the same doctrine—that grace was added to Adam's nature so that he might attain an unmediated intellectual participation in the essence of God in the beatific vision.

Strimple also makes explicit that the need for the supernatural gift of the *donum superadditum* in Roman Catholic theology rests in an inherent ethical defect in Adam's created nature. Apart from the infusion of supernatural grace, Adam possessed a “languor” that “needed a remedy” entirely apart from sin. It was “difficult” for Adam to “do good” on account of an inherent propensity to sin—what Bellarmine termed concupiscence, the propensity to gratify

lower carnal desires instead of higher intellectual desires. The *donum superadditum* therefore also served as an ethical supplement to make Adam desire properly his supernatural end of intellectual participation in the essence of God.

### The Image of God in Modern Barthian Conception

As penetrating as his analysis of Roman Catholic theology might be on its own terms, the true brilliance of Strimple's teaching on the image of God emerges in his presentation of the view of Barth, whose dialectical conception of the image of God shares stunning similarities to the Roman Catholic conception. For Barth, Jesus Christ, the true image of God, participates in God's being in the Christ-Event, a supratemporal event where God and man participate in the "third time" of "God's time for us." The humanity of Jesus participates in the being of God in the redemptive event of reconciliation between God and man. Barth calls this the "Christ-Event"—the event where divine and human being are submerged in and conditioned by a common time and a mutual becoming. God's decision in the covenant of grace generates in Jesus's humanity that which is "distinct from himself ordained for salvation, for perfect being, for participation in his own being."<sup>2</sup> Barth insisted that the humanity of Jesus participates in "God's time for us," a shared transcendent sphere in which the Creator and the creature are mutually interdependent.

But when it comes to "Adam" in *historie* (or calendar time), the situation is different. Strimple reminds that "Barth does not view the fall as an historical event, by which man passed from a *status integritatis*, a state of integrity, to a *status corruptionis*, a state of corruption of fall and depravity. Barth doesn't view the fall as an historical event that marked, historically, that kind of a transition—to man as originally created righteous and holy and good and upright and now depraved." Strimple then cites Barth (*Church Dogmatics*, vol. 4.1) to demonstrate this observation:

In the matter of human disobedi-

ence and depravity there is no "earlier" [time] in which man was not yet a transgressor and as such innocent. . . . [Human history] constantly re-enacts the little scene in the garden of Eden. There never was a golden age. There is no point in looking back to one. The first man was immediately the first sinner. . . . It is the Word of God which forbids us to dream of any golden age in the past or any real progress within Adamic mankind and history or any future state of historical perfection.

Thus, from the outset, Adam and Eve (and "every man") in *historie* needed the reconciling grace of God in the Christ-Event. Barth's view of Adam as "immediately the first sinner" radicalizes the Roman Catholic doctrine of concupiscence. Adam (or every man in *historie*) not only has a propensity to sin as a creature but by virtue of creation is "immediately" the first sinner so that "there never was a golden age" of original righteousness for Adam in *historie*.

Yet, according to Barth, Adam and Eve participated in the Christ-Event even before they knew of Jesus or were called to belong to his church. Strimple cites Barth,

When man and woman beget and bear children by the divine permission and promise. . . . male and female necessarily point beyond themselves in this activity . . . in realizing this sign they participate in that to which they themselves point—in Jesus Christ and His Church, in the being of this man corresponding to His creation [e.g., with reference to Jesus in *Geschichte* as true image bearing man]—even before they know him, even before they believe in Jesus Christ, even before they are called to His Church.<sup>3</sup>

Here Strimple observes that Barth is "very clear. You just have to read it." Strimple amplifies, "They are participating in Jesus Christ, even before they

know him, even before they believe in Jesus Christ, even before they are called to his church." When we put Barth's argument together, Jesus participates in the being of God and Adam and Eve participate in the Christ-Event without even knowing him, which leads Strimple to note Barth's inevitable trajectory toward universalism.

The parallels that Strimple's work unveils prove astonishing.

For Roman Catholic theology, Adam as the created image of God stood in need of grace (*donum superadditum*). For Barth, humanity, as created in *historie*, is fallen flesh and stands in need of reconciling grace (Christ-Event). For Roman Catholic theology, the supernatural gift of grace initiates an ascending participation

in the essence of God. For Barth, God gives grace in a shared transcendent event in which both God and man participate in Jesus Christ, whose humanity by grace is the humanity of all men.

Strimple's work has at least two helpful implications. First, it reminds us that recent attempts to retrieve Roman Catholic theology in the development of Reformed theology carry within them a theological alliance with Barth on the foundational doctrines of nature and grace that touch on every *locus* in a theological system. Second, Strimple's insights enable us to understand, in contrast to Roman Catholic and Barthian errors, the Reformed doctrine of the image of God—the truth and beauty of what Vos termed the "deeper Protestant conception" of the image of God and the covenant of works. □

*The author is pastor of Trinity OPC in Easton, PA, and a fellow at Reformed Forum.*

### Endnotes

1. All quotations from Strimple derive from my transcription of his 2000 course.
2. Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, vol. 4.1 (Hendrickson, 2010), 9.
3. Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, vol. 3.1 (T & T Clark, 1958), 190–191.



# THE NICKEL THAT WROTE A SONG

// BY BRUCE H. HUNT

*On October 22, 1941, Orthodox Presbyterian missionary Bruce Hunt was removed from his home in Harbin, Manchuria, and placed under arrest. Hunt's crime had been his teaching against the Japanese government's attempt to control the church and force emperor-worship on Korean-speaking Christians among whom he labored. Hunt's imprisonment included torture, solitary confinement, scarcity of food and water, and sleeping on a hard floor in freezing cold. Still, he would not recant the faith. He was released on December 5, only to be picked up again two days later in the wake of the Pearl Harbor attack. He was then sent to a concentration camp, where he grew sick from semi-starvation. On June 1, 1942, he was released from the concentration camp as part of a prisoner exchange with the United States government. There, at the concentration camp, his wife, Kathy, and their five young children—the oldest being eight years old when he was imprisoned—were able to see him after being apart for over six months.*

*Once back in the United States, Hunt would tell stories about his missionary labors in Manchuria to his children at the dinner table. In Hunt's words, "I would try to avoid using the first person, making it as though it were about some other missionary, and yet not really hiding my identity as 'the missionary' of the stories." Telling the stories in the third person, according to Hunt, heightened the suspense for his children, but inevitably Hunt would slip up and use a first person pronoun and his children would cry out—"So, Daddy, you're the missionary. It's you!"*

*At the end of 1946, Hunt returned to Korea alone. As a Christmas present for his family, he wrote out the stories for them, including "The Nickel That Wrote a Song."*

—Danny E. Olinger



ONCE THERE WAS A MISSIONARY who was put in prison. Now this is the way it happened. As you know by now, a missionary is one sent by God and Christian people, sometimes to foreign lands and sometimes to people in his own country, to tell them about God and his love for the world.

Many times he meets people who do not love God and who do not want to hear the good news he has to tell them. This particular missionary, who had a nickel that wrote a song, was put in jail by the Japanese police in Manchuria because he had been teaching folks that there was only one God and that it was wrong to worship the Japanese emperor as a god.

First, they put him in a crowded city jail in a small cell with twenty-four Chinese, Japanese, and Russians. The prisoners did not have any beds or chairs in the cell and had to sit or lie on the floor. They had no blankets to cover them at night, no water to wash with, and so little food that they were hungry all the time. The toilet was broken, and the jail smelled bad.

One day the police put handcuffs on the missionary and took him with two other missionaries and two Korean Christians far away to a big penitentiary with high brick walls. They put the missionary in a tiny cell all by himself. It was very cold in the cell. The police did not let him have his Bible or anything else to read, and he was very lonely.

On the first morning, he prayed and sang the hymns he could remember and said all the Bible verses he could think of that he had learned when he was a boy. He went through sit-up exercises. He picked the insects out of his clothes, for in the crowded cell the insects from the beggars' clothes had gotten into his. But even after doing all these things, he had lots of time left to just look out of the window at the blue sky and leafless tree that showed above the prison wall. He thought of home and all the nice things one has when one is free. He thought about his wife and children. He wondered how long he would be in prison, and as he thought of the long empty days that might be ahead of him, he got very much discouraged.

The police had given him a large chunk of steamed corn with a little bit of vegetable for breakfast. For dinner, they gave him some more steamed corn with a bit of watery cabbage soup. In the afternoon, he didn't have anything else to do, so he sang the same songs, said the same Bible verses, did the same exercises, and went hunting for insects in the same clothes, and still had a lot of time left just to look out of the window. Supper came early, at five o'clock, and it was another

chunk of steamed corn with a little bit of cooked vegetable. He ate it, and then the long evening stretched in front of him. Again, not having anything to do, he prayed, sang, said Bible verses, and exercised. It was already getting tiresome. He wondered if he was in the jail alone for a year, doing the same thing every day, if he would go crazy, and it made him feel very blue.

He was sitting on the floor, feeling sorry for himself, when he thought, *A Christian is not supposed to be discouraged and sad, a Christian has much to be thankful for.* With this thought, he jumped up and began walking back and forth, trying to forget his troubles. As he walked, he started to whistle a little tune, and then he began to make up words for it. It took him a little time to work it out, but soon he had words for the first verse of a song.

Give thanks, give thanks unto Jehovah,  
for he of kings is King,  
Let every nation, race, each tongue and  
tribe, unto him praises bring.  
He rules the earth with power and  
righteousness, the waves obey his will.  
Give thanks, give thanks unto Jehovah  
Your work of praise with joy fulfill.

He kept singing the words over and over as he walked, so that he wouldn't forget them. He had a poor memory and was afraid that he'd forget them in the night.

When he was brought to the penitentiary, the guards had taken everything out of his pockets: his pencils, knife, money, and everything they thought he might be able to hurt himself with. Now he was desperate for something with which to write. As he felt through his overcoat pocket, he discovered a Chinese nickel, with a hole in it, that the guards had not found when they searched him. He seized it quickly and scribbled or scratched the words of the song on the wall, using the nickel as his pencil. The walls were hard and the nickel did not make much of an impression, but by looking at it from the right direction he could make out the writing, so he went to bed on the hard floor, knowing that even if he forgot, the words would be there in the morning.

In the morning, as soon as it was light, he got up and looked at the words. They were not easy to read but they were clear enough for him to make them out, and the missionary started pacing the floor and saying the words over and over to fix them more firmly in his mind.

After a while, a Chinese guard looked through the tiny opening in the door to see how the missionary had gotten through the night. His interest suddenly turned to one of worry when he saw the writing on the wall.

"What's that you've written?" he asked.

The missionary was surprised that he could see it, but the metal coin had made shiny marks which the light from the window caused to stand out like neon lights.

Then the missionary began to explain what the song

meant, that he was able to give thanks even in prison because God was King over all kings, even over the emperor of Japan, and stronger than the president of the United States. He showed how Jehovah means, "I am," that God is the God who always just "was" the "I am" god. He pointed out how other gods are made out of wood or stone and how people worship things that were created by God, like mountains and trees. Some make up gods in their minds. The true God, however, is not made by men or made up by them, but always "is" and always just "was."

Then he pointed to the words of the song, "Let every nation, race, each tongue and tribe unto him praises bring," and showed how because God made all of us and takes care of all of us, that everybody ought to love God and thank God for all that he has done.

"Do you thank God for what he's done for you?" the missionary asked the guard.

"No," he replied.

"Then you are being ungrateful, and ungratefulness to God is the biggest sin one can commit. It is the beginning of all other sins," the missionary said.

"But though you've committed the biggest sin," he continued, "God loves you and sent his Son Jesus to die for you. If you believe that Jesus died to take your sins away, God will forgive you and give you a new heart and you will live forever."

The guard seemed interested and asked some questions about Jesus, and the missionary answered them all, the best he could. After a while, the first guard went and another guard came. When he saw the writing on the wall, he, too, wanted to know what it meant. So the missionary had to explain it all over again. Whenever new guards came, they all wanted to know the meaning of the song.

The next day, the first guard looked into the cell in the morning and said, "Are you still giving thanks to Jehovah?"

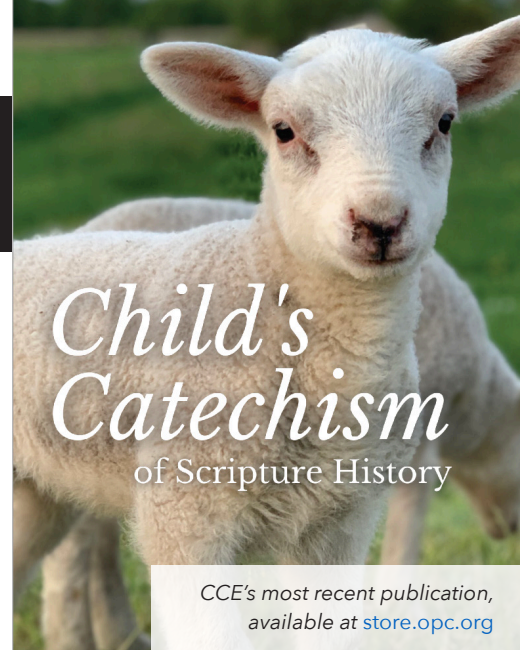
"Surely," the missionary replied with a smile, as he jumped to his feet and went near to the door through which the guard was peering at him. The guard unlocked the door and asked the missionary many things about Jesus. There they stood like two friends, and they had really become friends already, because of Jesus and talking about Jesus.

After that, the missionary was not lonely very much of the time, even in his tiny prison cell, because every day the guards would come and talk with him about Jesus and ask questions. And so, a Chinese nickel wrote a hymn on the wall that started the missionary preaching and helped to keep him from being lonely.

Some of the people he talked to said that they had come to love Jesus through the things the missionary told them. The missionary does not know whether he'll ever get to meet those guards again on this earth, but he knows that if their names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life, some day he will meet them in heaven, and how happy they will be together, talking again about the Jesus who loves them and gave himself for them.

# CHILD'S CATECHISM OF SCRIPTURE HISTORY

// STEPHEN TRACEY



To help with the training of our children in the ways of the Lord, the Committee on Christian Education has recently published a little catechism entitled *Child's Catechism of Scripture History*.

Catechesis involves more than learning doctrine. It also involves learning Scripture history. Deuteronomy clearly directs parents “to instruct their children about God’s redemptive deeds and holy commands” (J. I. Packer and G. A. Parrett, *Grounded in the Gospel*, 34). Deuteronomy 6:6–7 states, “And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.” (See also Deut. 11:18–19.)

This instruction clearly involved learning the flow of history from the creation through the fall, the call of Abraham for the sake of “all the families of the earth,” through Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and the Exodus, and so on to the days of Moses and Joshua on the verge of the Promised Land.

In 2 Timothy 3:14–15, Paul encourages Timothy to “continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it.” He goes on to comment on how well Timothy was instructed as a child, “and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.” Timothy’s mother and grandmother did not simply teach him doctrine, they taught him the Scriptures, which clearly includes the flow of Bible history.

Of course, we do not believe that a catechism of Scripture history replaces the memorizing of Scripture; rather it helps in understanding the flow of that history, which is the flow of redemption. J. Gresham Machen understood this. He contributed a chapter on a survey of New Testament history to a book

entitled *Teaching the Teacher, a First Book in Teacher Training* (1921). In the introduction to that book, Harold McA. Robinson wrote, “This book surveys the history of God’s redeeming grace. It reviews Old Testament history, disclosing the stream of God’s redeeming purposes flowing down through the older times. It reviews New Testament history, disclosing the broadening and deepening of that purpose for us men and for mankind in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and his Church.” Replace “This book” with “This catechism” and read that sentence again. That is what the *Child's Catechism of Scripture History* aims to do.

## An Irish Cadence

*Child's Catechism of Scripture History*, which the Committee on Christian Education has reprinted (with minor adaptation), was published by the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. We have not yet established when it was first published, but I learned it as a child over fifty years ago! Such a catechism, however, is not unique to Ireland. In America, Joseph P. Engles produced *The Child's Catechism of Scripture History* (Presbyterian Board of Publication, Philadelphia, 1841). This is the same Joseph P. Engles whose *Catechism for Young Children, Being An Introduction to the Shorter Catechism* (1840) forms the basis for the Great Commission Publications *Catechism for Young Children* (1991) and *The First Catechism* (2003).

Engles followed up his work on the Shorter Catechism with two volumes of a Scripture history in simple catechetical form. These two volumes contain a total of four parts, with questions on Scripture history from Genesis to 1 Samuel. He never completed the work. His catechism is lengthy—2,116 questions, and we only get as far as the end of King Saul!

Perhaps Engles was adapting and expanding the Irish version. Or perhaps someone adapted his work for an Irish Presbyterian version, if so, improving and abbreviating it considerably to 129 questions, covering Genesis to Acts (the CCE version adds a question on the Lord’s prayer for a total of 130).

The style of answer in the original Irish version is also to

be preferred to Engles's. For example, speaking of Adam and Eve's punishment, Engles asks,

Q. 34. What did God say they should suffer?

A. Toil, and sorrow, and death.

Whereas the Irish catechism asks,

Q. 6. How were they punished?

A. They were doomed to sorrow, toil, and death and driven from the garden.

The pithy rhythm of that careful answer never left my mind. Nor has it left the mind of my children. One of my sons would repeat the answer while looking out into our garden, obviously wondering what it was like to be driven from one's garden by angels with flaming swords.

This is followed in the Irish catechism with,

Q. 7 What promise did God give them before driving them from the garden?

A. The promise of a Saviour.

Clearly the catechism does more than teach Scripture history; it interprets it. Before I arrived in a seminary class, I had learned that Genesis 3, though speaking of curse, also speaks the gospel. This little catechism is marked by brevity, but is also pithy, in a good catechetical way. Engles's version is clearly too long for little children.

A good program of catechesis would be to begin, as early as possible, with this *Child's Catechism of Scripture History*, followed by the *Catechism for Younger Children*, then the Shorter Catechism. And is it too much to hope that our youth could go on to memorize the Larger Catechism? It can be done. That program of catechesis will be covenant marrow for the bones of covenant youth!

We recognize this should not replace the reading and learning of Scripture. We must also recognize that "the church of God will never be preserved without a catechism (or modern translations read 'without catechesis')" (John Calvin letter to Edward Seymour in *Letters of John Calvin, vol. 2* [1858], 191).

J. I. Packer and G. A. Garrett lament, "Superficial smatterings of truth, blurry notions about God and godliness, and thoughtlessness about the issues of living—careerwise, communitywise, familywise, and churchwise—are all too often the marks of evangelical congregations today" (*Grounded*, 16). It is our prayer that, by the help of the Holy Spirit, this shall not be true of our children, or our children's children, or to a thousand generations of our children.

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## ☆ Congratulations

The **Children's Catechism** has been recited by:

• **Philip Korkie**, *Tyler OPC, Tyler, TX*

## Favorite Psalms and Hymns *Trinity Psalter Hymnal* no. 245 "Great Is Thy Faithfulness"

*Robert C. Joubert*

"The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness" (Lam. 3:22–23).

Like countless believers before and after him, Kentucky native Thomas Chisholm (1866–1960), who wrote "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" in 1923, found inspiration in these words of comfort. Chisholm used the gifts that God gave him to serve as a newspaper editor, followed by a brief appointment as an ordained Methodist minister, and a long career as an insurance salesman. He became a Christian at the age of twenty-seven through the ministry of Henry Clay Morrison of Asbury College and Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky. Chisholm relocated his family a few times due to health complications and employment opportunities, eventually landing in Vineland, New Jersey. By the time he retired to Ocean Grove, New Jersey, in 1953, he had penned more than 1,200 poems, 800 of which were published, often in religious periodicals such as the *Sunday School Times*, *Moody Monthly*, and *Alliance Weekly*. Many, including "Great Is Thy Faithfulness," were set to music.

George Beverly Shea (1909–2013), Canadian-born singer of the Billy Graham Crusades, introduced this hymn to a wide audience in 1954, and it immediately became a favorite. The first stanza speaks of God's unchanging nature: "there is no shadow of turning with thee; thou changest not, thy compassions they fail not." James 1:17 supplies the foundation for this image: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change." In the second stanza, creation, including the cycle of the seasons, demonstrates God's faithfulness. The final stanza introduces God's plan of Christ as our mediator as we are restored to the presence of God. William Runyan's tune ideally serves to enhance the text, while his subtle changes in harmony and solemnity climax on the word "faithfulness" to admirably end the refrain.

We all have witnessed so many changes over the last few years, especially in this post-COVID world. This hymn reminds us of one sure thing. God has been, is, and will be faithful. His promises are sure.

Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness!

Morning by morning new mercies I see:

All I have needed thy hand hath provided—

Great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

# THREE MISSION WORKS SPREADING THEIR WINGS

// KATHARINE OLINGER



A family being received into membership at Heritage Presbyterian in New Braunfels, TX

A few weeks ago, parents around the country packed their children up, drove them to their Welcome Week orientations, and said goodbye. College drop-off is a developmental milestone. When we say our goodbyes and drive away, we do so because we have faith that our college students have reached some level of maturity and independence. Yes, there will still be bumps, challenges, and setbacks. But it's time for them to spread their wings.

## A Milestone for Three Mission Works

This year, three mission works that receive support from our denomination reached a developmental milestone: they were organized as particular congregations of the OPC.

When a mission work begins to display the characteristics of an organized congregation—financial stability, regular attendance, a session of church officers—it petitions its presbytery for particularization. The Committee on Home Missions' manual, *Planting an Orthodox Presbyterian Church*, identifies four distinguishing characteristics of an organized congregation: It is 1) self-sustaining, 2) self-governing, 3) self-propagating, and 4) self-consciously a church. The committee's support program is designed to encourage and assist the development of these characteristics through things like pastoral training, a declining schedule of financial aid, and prayer. Particularization—the establishment of a new Orthodox Presbyterian church—is the committee's end goal.

Of course, church planting is much more than measurements and milestones. In *Planting an Orthodox Presbyterian Church*, author and former General Secretary of Home Missions Rev. Ross Graham writes,

It must also be remembered that this maturing process [particularization] is a spiritual work done by God. The efforts of the presbytery, the overseeing session, and the organizing

pastor allow the building of Christ's Church to be laid and built on a firm foundation. But Christ himself does the building, and no manner of effort, however well-intentioned, can make a group into a church without His presence and power. (108)

Elsewhere, Graham writes, "Jesus said to the confessing Peter, 'I will build my church' (Matthew 16:18). He did not say, 'Men shall build my church,' nor to Peter, 'You shall build my church.' What He did tell us is that the church is supernaturally generated by the triune God" (15). Without Christ's presence and power, our efforts are hopeless—but with Christ, there's no corner of the earth too dark for the church to penetrate.

## Covenant Reformed in West Plains, Missouri

Covenant Reformed Church in West Plains, Missouri, can attest to the supernatural providence and power of God. The first seed of this congregation was planted by ruling elder Dr. Curtis Horstman, who moved to the area in 2010. Horstman found a pressing need for the gospel in West Plains; the nearest Reformed church, Sovereign Grace OPC in Doniphan, Missouri, was an hour and a half away—a Sunday drive Horstman would make for over six years. In 2015, Horstman organized a Reformed Bible study in West Plains. This work continued for a time, experiencing periods of success and decline. In 2018, Rev. Paul Mourreale moved to West Plains at Horstman's encouragement. Mourreale's previous call was as an OP church planter in St. Louis. Although his primary employment was now as a teacher in West Plains' local Christian school, Mourreale became deeply involved with tilling the soil for this potential mission work—a mission work that seemed far off. When the Mourreales arrived, the original Bible study had dwindled to just the Horstman and Mourreale families. Paul and Curtis made new contacts in the area, a new Bible study was formed, and in September 2019, twenty-five believers were meeting for regular worship.



Covenant Reformed started Home Missions field support in June 2020—the height of the first wave of the pandemic in the United States. It should have been a rocky start, but month after month, attendance rose. The core group families leaned on each other for fellowship during this season of isolation. They invited neighbors and friends to visit their new church. At times during COVID, the congregation even met in Mourreale’s backyard to hear God’s Word and sing praises to him. Throughout it all, God began to gather more of his people together. Covenant Reformed now has over fifty members, and it sees between sixty and seventy in attendance on Sunday morning. The church was particularized on April 1, and Mourreale installed as pastor.

It’s important to note that a mission work receiving support from the Committee on Home Missions does not concede this support by particularizing “ahead of schedule.” This would create a disincentive for one of the committee’s clearest goals. Rather, these young churches are encouraged to receive their originally scheduled field support and to maintain the culture of evangelism that they developed while still a mission work.

### Heritage Presbyterian in New Braunfels, Texas

In New Braunfels, Texas, Pastor Carl Miller leads around eighty men, women, and children in worship each Lord’s Day. Heritage Presbyterian (formerly New Braunfels OPC) is a daughter church plant of South Austin Presbyterian Church (OPC). In 2015, Jon Davis and Phil Lovelady, members of South Austin Presbyterian, were both driving an hour to worship with the saints in Austin. Together, they began a weekly men’s fellowship at one of their local coffee shops. When this effort failed to generate interest in a new mission work, Jon and Phil coordinated an informational meeting with regional home missionary Mark Sumpter. Only one person showed up! But Phil and his wife, Tamara, continued to organize Bible studies for families in the area, inviting friends, neighbors, and new contacts. Eventually, a core group took shape.

The OPC has historically (and for biblical reasons—see *Planting*, 24–30) preferred church planting with core groups as opposed to using a parachute-drop style. The mother-daughter church planting model is a more recent strategy in church extension, but it’s already shown itself to be effective for stability and growth (for more about mother-daughter church planting and the OPC’s Seed and Sowers Fund, see Miller’s article, “Churches Planting Churches,” in the May 2021 issue of *New Horizons*). Sending out a core group from your congregation can be hard, but it’s also an opportunity to trust God and his Word to us—that he will grow his church. What’s particularly

remarkable about Heritage Presbyterian’s story is that South Austin Presbyterian was itself a church plant just seven years ago! Heritage Presbyterian Church was particularized on May 20, and Miller installed as pastor.

### Light of the Nations in Dayton, Ohio

Finally, consider Light of the Nations OPC (formerly First Street Reformed), another daughter church plant. Light of the Nations, located in downtown Dayton, Ohio, was started by Covenant OPC in Vandalia, Ohio. Rev. Brad Peppo, now regional home missionary for the Presbytery of Ohio’s Miami Valley, served as the mission work’s organizing pastor. Rev. Tyler Detrick, now LotN’s pastor, was at one time the church-planting intern.

Galatians 4:19 (“Until Christ is formed in you”) is a verse often linked to the process and goal of church growth and particularization. A presbytery and its home missions committee will ask questions of a mission work like “Do the members love, respect, and defer to one another?” “Does their worship unify them and encourage their hearts?” and “Are they demonstrating a concern for the needs of those in their community?” (Graham, 109). These characteristics are evident in LotN’s commitment to gospel transformation and mercy ministry.

The very things that made downtown Dayton a challenging field for a Reformed and Presbyterian church plant—its urban character, sizable immigrant population, and the area’s diminished property value—have become the heartbeat of LotN’s mission. The church offers free weekly ESL classes and provides childcare so that mothers can attend as well. Recently, the church held a diaper shower for one of the ESL students; a few students have attended worship at the invitation of their tutors. Brad Peppo has led church members in establishing a friendship with some of Dayton’s Muslim Turkish immigrants. Since 2020, members of LotN and Dayton’s Turkish immigrant community have met together to discuss their respective faiths and to share food. Lastly, LotN was able to purchase its own building due to the region’s property values. Light of the Nations was particularized on April 8, and Detrick installed as pastor.

The denomination’s fledgling mission works may be spreading their wings, but the Great Commission means that we’ll never have an empty nest. On the contrary, God has called us to be expectant, because his Spirit is at work. In fact, a few of the very mission works the committee is now “graduating” have already started planning for their own daughter churches. When we see churches planting churches, we’re reminded that our God is faithful from generation to generation. God demonstrates his power through our weakness—what weak vessel is more fitting than a humble, Reformed church plant?

*The author, a middle school Bible teacher at Phil-Mont Christian Academy, is member of Calvary OPC in Glenside, Pennsylvania.*

### Home Missions Today

For up-to-date news and prayer requests, receive our newsletter by subscribing at [CHMCE.org](http://CHMCE.org) or by scanning this QR code.



# STONEHOUSE'S CHARITABLE CONFESSIONALISM

[Continued from page 7]

in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church regarding several people involved with the Peniel Bible Conference and charismatic teachings on revelation and the Spirit's guidance. Several of these figures had been students at Westminster Theological Seminary, including Raymond Meiners and Herman Petersen, but it was a complaint involving Grover Travers Sloyer that concerned Stonehouse most significantly.<sup>6</sup>

Sloyer served as stated supply at Redeemer OPC in Philadelphia. When Sloyer's license was revoked (a second time) by his presbytery due to his view on spiritual guidance and sanctification, Stonehouse vigorously supported his former student. However, Stonehouse later recognized the effects of Peniel's doctrine upon the church. He worked on a presbytery committee that delivered a decisive report in response to the complaint from Sloyer and the Redeemer session. Reflecting on the dispute in the *Presbyterian Guardian*, Stonehouse revealed a tension that he seems to have carried throughout his ministry:

Although the [Peniel Bible] Conference is an inter-denominational organization and, accordingly, is not under the jurisdiction of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the fact that several ministers and members of this Church are affiliated with it and even are numbered among the leaders of the Conference underscores the fact that the issue has a strongly ecclesiastical aspect. As a church that is deeply committed to purity in doctrine and holy living the Orthodox Presbyterian Church may not, without losing its integrity and even forfeiting its very right to separate denominational existence, be indifferent when a question of this kind is drawn to its attention. On

the other hand, to be sure, the fact that many of the adherents of the Conference are brethren and sisters in the Lord and have made the same commitments which we have to the Christian faith and life places upon all of us the very special responsibility to deal with them and the issue involved with the utmost fairness, understanding and patience.<sup>7</sup>

Even when Stonehouse expressed strong disagreement with those involved with the Peniel movement, he



Stonehouse (left) with Herman Ridderbos in Amsterdam

did so while maintaining church order and in a spirit of Christian love and charity. Stonehouse did not always "win" in terms of persuading the church courts to concur with him, but even in his disagreements he sought to maintain the peace, purity, and unity of the church.

Our concern must always be to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3). Yet we must also seek to remain connected to the body of Christ. Jesus told his disciples, "Peace I leave with you; my

peace I give to you" (John 14:27). In his high priestly prayer, our Lord prayed that his people would be sanctified in truth (John 17:17) and that they would be one (verse 23). Stonehouse may not have succeeded in every instance. Nevertheless, his effort to follow Christ by faith in these matters was commendable. □

*The author, an OP minister, is Historian for the OPC.*

## Endnotes

1. Ned B. Stonehouse, "A Clarification of Some Issues," *Presbyterian Guardian* 3 (March 13, 1937): 217.
2. *Ibid.*, 218 (emphasis original).
3. Just after the formation of the new church, Van Til reported to his countrymen in the Netherlands, "Now there came a proposal to the synod that contained the following content: 'that a Declaratory Statement be appended to the Confession of Faith to this effect, that The Presbyterian Church of America does not interpret any part of the Westminster Confession of Faith or Catechisms as being opposed to the Premillennial view.' One can see how great a danger is threatened here: the confession should not be so interpreted that it excludes premillennialism. But considering now the fact that the confession, and that very clearly, excludes even moderate premillennialism and, in short, does not want to know anything about a millennium, the obvious danger was that thousands of full-blooded chiliasts would flood the churches. At least they had a semblance of legitimacy in such a Declaratory Statement. Then, of course, nothing would have come of a renewal of the Reformed life. With joy I may, however, report that this proposal has been rejected and that no proposal at all regarding premillennialism has been adopted." From Cornelius Van Til, "The General Assembly," *De Reformatie* 17/12 (December 18, 1936): 94–95 (forthcoming translation by Daniel Ragusa).
4. Darryl G. Hart, *Between the Times* (OPC Committee for the Historian, 2011), 297.
5. *Minutes of the Sixteenth General Assembly* (1949), 31.
6. See "Complaint against the Presbytery of Philadelphia," Bernard R. Grunstra, Walter T. Oliver, and G. Travers Sloyer (November 18, 1957); Charles G. Dennison, *History for a Pilgrim People* (OPC Committee for the Historian, 2002), 173–174.
7. Ned B. Stonehouse, "Certain Aspects of the Peniel Issue," *Presbyterian Guardian* 26 (November 15, 1957): 154.

# OCTOBER



The Jenkines (day 2)



The Verdicks (day 12)

**1** Pray for affiliated missionaries **DR. MARK & LAURA AMBROSE**, Cambodia, as they consider how to disciple, teach, and encourage. / Yearlong intern **SAMUELIS (MILDA) LUKOSIUS** at Covenant Presbyterian in Barre, VT.

**2** **DAN & STACY HALLEY**, Tampa, FL. Pray for Bay Haven Presbyterian, that they would better serve the needs of the community. / **MARK & CELESTE JENKINS**, Placentia, CA. Pray that Resurrection Presbyterian would make new contacts.

**3** Pray for the persecuted church in **EAST AFRICA** and the **ETHIOPIAN REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH** that God will strengthen them. / Pray for general secretary **DANNY OLINGER** as the Committee on Christian Education meets.

**4** **CARL & STACEY MILLER**, New Braunfels, TX. Pray for Heritage Presbyterian as they transition into their new building. / Stated clerk **HANK BELFIELD** and database administrator **CHARLENE TIPTON**.

**5** **NATE & ANNA STROM**, Sheboygan, WI. Pray for the continued vision and wisdom of Breakwater Church's leaders and members. / Christian Education office secretary **ABBY HARTING**.

**6** **MARK & JENI RICHLINE**, Montevideo, Uruguay. Pray for Mark as he teaches a seminary class on the Psalms. / US Army active duty military chaplains **STEPHEN (LINDSEY) ROBERTS** and **DAVID (JENNA) DERIENZO**.

**7** Pray for affiliated missionaries **CRAIG AND REE COULBOURNE** and **LINDA KARNER**, Japan. / Home Missions associate general secretary **AL TRICARICO**. / Foreign Missions administrative assistant **TIN LING LEE**.

**8** **DAVID & ASHLEIGH SCHEXNAYDER**, Scottsdale, CA. Pray for outreach efforts at their local university. / **STEPHEN & CATALINA PAYSON**, Montevideo, Uruguay. Pray for Stephen's language abilities as he preaches and teaches in Spanish.

**9** **CALVIN & CONNIE KELLER**, Winston-Salem, NC. Pray that the Lord would raise up elders. / Yearlong interns **ZACHARY JOHNSON** at Immanuel OPC in Bellmawr, NJ, and **COREY (ANDREA) PAIGE** at South Austin OPC in Austin, TX.

**10** Pray for **MIKE (ELIZABETH) DIERCKS**, area home missions coordinator for the Presbytery of Ohio. / Associate missionaries **OCTAVIUS & MARIE DELFILS**, Haiti. Pray for the spiritual and physical needs of church members as they face difficult economic conditions. / Director for the Committee on Ministerial Care **JOHN FIKKERT**.

**11** **BEN & HEATHER HOPP**, Haiti. Ask the Lord by his Spirit to send true reformation to the nation of Haiti. / Coordinator **DAVID NAKHALA** asks for prayer for additional Disaster Response volunteers.

**12** Associate missionaries **CHRISTOPHER AND CHLOE VERDICK**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray that the clinic staff housing construction will be completed. / Loan Fund manager **MARK STUMPF**.

**13** Pray for associate missionary **ANGELA VOSKUIL**, Nakaale, Uganda, as she serves children in the Karamoja Education Outreach. / **DAVE (ELIZABETH) HOLMLUND**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of Philadelphia.

**14** **ETHAN & CATHERINE BOLYARD**, Wilmington, NC. Pray that the Lord would bless Heritage OPC's new hospitality ministry for visitors. / **KERRI ANN CRUSE**, video and social media coordinator.

**15** Pray for missionary associate **JUEON KIM**, Nakaale, Uganda, as he assists with preaching and teaching in Karamoja. / **MELISA MCGINNIS**, financial controller, and **ANNELISA STUDLEY**, office manager.

OCTOBER



*The Repps (day 17)*

**16** Home Missions general secretary **JOHN SHAW**. / Associate missionaries **JAMES & ESTHER FOLKERTS**, Nakaale, Uganda. Thank God for well-received evangelistic conferences this summer, and pray for fruit.

**17** **JAY & ANDREA BENNETT**, Neon, KY. Pray for Neon Reformed as they recover from historic flooding that destroyed their building and community. / Yearlong intern **CHRISTIAN (HANNA) REPP** at Harvest OPC in San Marcos, CA.

**18** Pray for missionary associate **JED HOMAN**, Nakaale, Uganda, as he works on maintenance projects in the mission compound. / Yearlong intern **CHRIS (AMANDA) MANFREDA** at Covenant Presbyterian in Fort Worth, TX.

**19** Pray for associate missionary **LEAH HOPP** and tentmaking missionary **JOANNA GROVE**, Nakaale, Uganda. / **BILL & MARGARET SHISHKO**, Deer Park, NY. Pray for The Haven OPC as they prepare to transition to a new facility.

**20** Pray for missionary associates **DR. JIM & JENNY KNOX**, Nakaale, Uganda, as they make plans to travel to the US. / Pray for **THE REFORMED DEACON** podcast and its work toward encouraging local deacons.

**21** **GREGORY & GINGER O'BRIEN**, Downingtown, PA. Pray for faithfulness and fruit in Christ Church's discipleship and witnessing efforts. / Tentmaking missionary **TINA DEJONG**, Nakaale, Uganda.

**22** **MELAKU & MERON TAMIRAT**, Clarkston, GA. Give thanks for opportunities in their work with refugees. / Yearlong intern **BEN (JOELLE) CAMPBELL** at Presbyterian Church of Cape Cod in West Barnstable, MA.

**23** Pray for **RETIRED MISSIONARIES** Cal & Edie Cummings, Brian & Dorothy Wingard, Greet Rietkerk, and Young & Mary Lou Son. / **MARK (PEGGY) SUMPTER**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of the Southwest.

**24** **CHARLES & CONNIE JACKSON**, Mbale, Uganda. Pray for the completion of the new Juba Lodge dormitory at Knox School of Theology. / Pray for the trustees of **GREAT COMMISSION PUBLICATIONS** as they meet today.

**25** **BRUCE (SUE) HOLLISTER**, regional home missionary for the Presbyteries of the Midwest and Wisconsin & Minnesota. / *Ordained Servant* editor **GREGORY REYNOLDS** and editorial assistant **AYRIAN YASAR**.

**26** **MIKE & NAOMI SCHOUT**, Zeeland, MI. Pray for the leadership of Grace Fellowship as they seek to faithfully shepherd. / Yearlong interns **CHRISTOPHER (LAURA) BARNARD** at Lake Sherwood OPC in Orlando, FL, and **NATE (SARAH) CROFFUTT** at Redemption OPC in Gainesville, FL.



*The Lopezes (day 28)*

**27** Affiliated missionaries **JERRY AND MARILYN FARNIK**, Czech Republic. Pray that the Lord might further their connections with summer English Camp participants. / OPC.org technical assistant **ANDREW MOODY**.

**28** **BRADNEY & EILEEN LOPEZ**, Guayama, PR. Pray for the church's outreach efforts. / **HEERO & ANYA HACQUEBORD**, L'viv, Ukraine. Pray for God's gospel of peace to reach his people in Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia.

**29** Home Missions administrative assistant **ALLISON HILL**. / Yearlong interns **DOMINIC (MARTHA) SILLA** at Living Hope OPC in Allentown, PA, and **JACOB (LINDSAY) CASH** at Redeemer OPC in Beavercreek, OH.

**30** **MR. AND MRS. M.**, Asia. Pray for those in the church who are enduring persecution for the gospel. / Yearlong intern **RICHY (NEVA) BRASHER** at Escondido OPC in Escondido, CA.

**31** Pray for **MR. AND MRS. F.**, Asia, as they witness to the good news at their new location. / **MATTHEW & LOIS COTTA**, Pasadena, CA. Pray for Pasadena OPC's progress toward particularization.

# NEWS, VIEWS & REVIEWS

## IN MEMORIAM: DONALD H. TAWS

*Danny E. Olinger*

On July 19, OPC pastor Donald H. Taws died at the age of ninety-two and went to be with the Lord in glory. For four years starting in 1958, Don and his wife, Jeanette, served as missionaries to Eritrea. In 1992 when the Eritrean field was to be reopened to OPC missionary labor, Don and Jeanette answered the call once more. For Don, it was a return to the land where he had been stationed as a soldier in the US Army at Kagnew Station in 1948. Don would later confess that “in Eritrea, I saw for the first time how great were my sins, and how great was my need for salvation, and how great God was in sending his only begotten Son to atone for that sin.” As a pastor, Don served at Immanuel OPC in Thornton, Colorado, Bethel OPC in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and Calvary Community OPC in Phillipsburg, New Jersey. He is survived by Jeanette, his wife of sixty-seven years, and four of their five children: Elizabeth, Jonathan, Bruce, and Ann.

## SIXTY YEARS OF ACCOMPANYING

*Tara Davis*

Susan Baker has faithfully used her musical gifts to serve OPC congregations for the past sixty years. She began at age thirteen at Calvary Community Church in Harmony, New Jersey, when her father, Ben DeBoer, said, “You have to start playing for the evening service. There is a need, and you simply have to play.” Since then, she has accompanied countless worship services for OPC congregations, including Bethel Presbyterian in Leesburg, Virginia, where she has been the pianist for more than thirty years.

Sue started playing under Rev. Lewis



*Donald Taws and wife Jeanette (front) with their children and other members of the Eritrean mission in 1961*

Grotenhuis, and when Van Til and others would come out from Philadelphia to fill the pulpit at Calvary, she kept playing. When she moved with her husband, Larry Baker, and children to Faith OPC in South Jersey, she kept playing. For years she accompanied organists Dot Laubach and Eleanor Kellogg, taught others to play the piano (including a young Mark Richline), directed choirs, and played for youth rallies that featured musical guests such as James Ward.

Sue enthusiastically adapted to the various changes in worship music that the past sixty years brought us, but her greatest love has always been playing hymns. Like most pianists, she knows exactly what hymns will have congregants singing with exuberant joy and which ones



*Susan Baker at Bethel Presbyterian in Leesburg, Virginia*

will result in tears streaming in the pews. She represents many who use their gifts to steadfastly serve the Lord and his people week after week, decade after decade.

## IN MEMORIAM: HENRY L. BRINKS



*Henry L. Brinks*

*A. Craig Troxel*

Henry Brinks, 97, a longstanding OPC elder, died on June 22, 2022. He was raised in the faith by his loving parents, Luke and Clasina, and alongside his

younger brother, Don. After graduating from Wheaton College and law school at George Washington University, Henry married Phyllis and together they had three children: Darlene, Karin and Luke. He practiced intellectual property law for over sixty years and early in his career headed a group of lawyers to form the Christian Legal Society, now an international organization.

The Brinks family was involved in Bethel OPC in Wheaton, Illinois, from the beginning. Henry was in the first group of men ordained and installed as elders. In 1989 he stood against the majority of the session, which proposed that the congregation withdraw from the OPC over the issue of women and ordained office. The large congregation voted in favor

of the session's recommendation, moving to another building and denomination. Forty-four members remained to carry on. Henry continued at his post until retirement, serving alongside many elders and six successive pastors.

Perhaps the most endearing memory of Henry Brinks that many Bethel members have, is his fixture, every Lord's Day morning and evening, seated just a few rows from the front.

## CATASTROPHIC FLOOD DESTROYS NEON REFORMED'S BUILDING

*Trish Duggan*

Debris litters the roadside in Eastern Kentucky after record-breaking flood waters rose suddenly overnight on July 27. The watermarks on the wall indicate that over six feet of water rushed into Neon Reformed OPC, submerging the first floor for at least eight hours. The flood swept hymnals and chairs from the sanctuary into the fellowship hall, depositing them into a water-logged pile of debris. Nothing in this store-front church was salvageable—not Pastor Jay Bennett's library shelved in his first-floor study, nor the furniture, nor the church library. The interior was ruined. Yet, the session and church members agreed that Neon Reformed OPC is an anchor in that community and needs to be rebuilt.

Within the first month of the cleanup effort, more than fifty volunteers from OP churches and sister churches participated in mucking out, cleaning, sanitizing, and restoring the church building, as well as other buildings in Neon. By the thirty-day mark, the church building had appropriately dried out and was ready for rebuilding. After Reuben Long's month of excellent service as "muck-out coordinator," the Lord raised up Art Allen, a contractor and deacon from Shiloh OPC in Raleigh, North Carolina, who began serving as the site coordinator for the Neon church rebuild.

An estimated 25 percent of homes in Letcher County were flooded. Many residents, with no other options, have moved back into unsafe and unhealthy conditions. This has led OPC Disaster Response to establish the role of a mercy coordinator for Neon, one who can consider



*Inside Neon OPC's sanctuary as the floodwaters receded*

the needs in this desperate community, focus on the most vulnerable, and work to coordinate bringing them relief in the name of Christ.

To make a donation, go to [give.opc.org](http://give.opc.org). To volunteer, go to [OPCDisasterResponse.org](http://OPCDisasterResponse.org). To participate in replacing Pastor Bennett's library write to: [BookDonations@opc.org](mailto:BookDonations@opc.org). Please continue to pray for all involved.

## UPDATE

### MINISTERS

- On May 1, the Presbytery of Philadelphia dismissed **Jonathan L. Master**, president of Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, to Calvary Presbytery of the PCA.
- On May 27, **Kevin J. Olivier** was ordained as a minister and installed as pastor of Pineville Presbyterian in Pineville, LA.
- On May 31, **William B. Kesler** retired as pastor of Grace Presbyterian Church in Columbus, OH. He is now pastor emeritus.
- On June 17, **A. J. Millsaps** was ordained as a minister and installed as an area evangelist

for East Tennessee at Sandy Springs Presbyterian in Maryville, TN.

- On July 15, **Shane M. Bennett** was installed as associate pastor of Living Hope Presbyterian in Gettysburg, PA. Bennett previously served Reformation mission work in Grand Rapids, MI.

### MILESTONES

- OP minister **Donald H. Taws**, 92, died July 19. He was a missionary to Eritrea, and pastored OP churches in CO, FL, and NJ.

## LETTERS

### FRASER'S MISSIONARY BAPTISM

Editor:

In my review of Cameron Fraser's *Missionary Baptism and Evangelical Unity*, in the June issue, I noted a significant error in a quotation of an article that I had written over twenty years ago. It turns out that Dr. Fraser was quoting the original version of the article, which did contain the error, not the corrected online version that was cited and understandably assumed to be the same. Thus, the presence of the error in the quotation is largely the result of my own mistake. I do not want my inadvertently unfair criticism, for which I apologize, to influence anyone not to read this book and give careful thought to the issues raised in it.

James W. Scott  
Willow Grove, PA

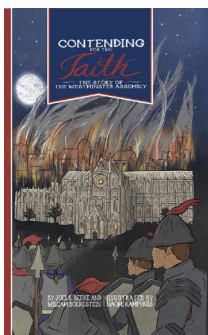


*A. J. Millsaps at June 17 ordination and installation as evangelist of Sandy Springs Presbyterian in Maryville, TN, with wife, Chelsea, and daughter*

## REVIEWS

***Contending for the Faith: The Story of the Westminster Assembly*, by Joel R. Beeke and William Boekestein. Reformation Heritage, 2022. Hardcover, 40 pages, \$7.50. Reviewed by OP member Linda Finlayson.**

Dr. Joel Beeke and Rev. William Boekestein have written a very accessible book for children on the Westminster Assembly. They wisely chose to start the story much earlier, giving an overview of the historical events that led to the assembly. Starting with John Wycliffe, they explain the beginnings of the Reformation as it occurred in England. They move swiftly through Henry VIII's divorce, which opened the door to change in the church, and through the reigns of his children, Edward, Mary, and Elizabeth. Arriving at the Stuart line of kings, the authors do a good job of explaining the complicated events leading to the English civil war and the assembly itself. Explaining history to children means an author must walk a fine line. To give too much detail not only bores readers, but also causes them to miss the overall picture. To simplify too much leads to the danger of misinformation. Beeke and Boekestein got it right: just enough detail to make sense of the times. Leaving the civil war to rage on its own, the authors then take the reader into the meeting rooms where the godly men prayed, discussed, and eventually wrote the five documents that have been so important in the history of Presbyterianism: the Form of Church Government, the Directory of Public Worship, the Confession of Faith, the Larger Catechism, and the Shorter Catechism. For each document, there is a clear summary and an explanation of how it is to be used. The final page shows how these documents have spread around the world and are still used today.



On the whole, the illustrations are well

done and complement the text. However, there was one chart and page of text that left me wondering if a young reader would understand it. In the chart about the Form of Church Government, Jesus (his name; not his picture) is at the center, with Moses, Aaron, and King David looking toward Jesus,

and from Jesus come the officers of the church: pastor, deacon, elder. The accompanying text does not mention the Old Testament figures, which might make a reader wonder what the purpose of them is in the chart. Also, the text mentions four officers—pastor, teacher, deacon and elder—but the chart only shows three.

This, and the lack of page numbers, may not be preferable but do not detract from the overall message of the book. I recommend this beautifully produced book for children ages eight to twelve.

***Questions Women Asked: Historical Issues, Timeless Answers*, by Simonetta Carr. Reformation Heritage, 2021. Paperback, 240 pages, \$14.00. Reviewed by OP member Abby Harting.**

*Questions Women Asked: Historical Issues, Timeless Answers* is a valuable and quick read that covers roughly two thousand years of church history from the perspective of women who thoughtfully engaged with church leaders—sort of like *Choosing the Good Portion* did for eighty years of Orthodox Presbyterian history!



Members of the presbytery at Andrew Wann's (center) May 27 installation as pastor of Covenant Presbyterian in Bluffton, SC

Simonetta Carr has previously published wonderful stories of heroes of the Reformation and church history as children's books and is a capable storyteller who catches the reader's imagination. *Questions* is different from these previous stories as it was born from a blog project, "Cloud of Witnesses," where Carr brought to light people whom the Lord used during the Reformation. Because of this, the book has an almost conversational tone as it introduces many women who participated in the life of the church and the work of the kingdom in diverse ways.

It is comprised of thirty-one mini biographies, each dealing with a specific woman, the question she asked, and the thoughtful answers given by the theologian or church leader with whom she was engaging through letters or personal discussion. The majority of the biographies are of lesser-known women. You will not find Katherina Von Bora or Jeanne d'Albret here, but you will come to know Dorothy Leigh and Kata Bethlen while being reintroduced to Monica, Anne Bradstreet, and Phillis Wheatley.

## Trinity Psalter Hymnal Update

The Trinity Psalter Hymnal Joint Venture (OPC, URCNA) is pleased to announce that the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal Accompanist Edition* is back in stock and available for \$60 at the Great Commission Publications website at [www.gcp.org](http://www.gcp.org). The accompanist edition has a hard cover and 1,040 pages and is divided into two sections with durable wire spiral for ease of use.

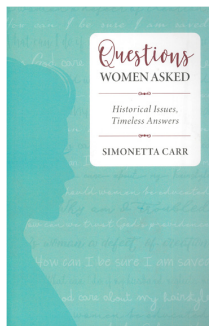
The Pew Edition is currently being reprinted and will be available in the coming months. You may check GCP.org for the latest information.

Although each biography introduces a different woman, the book deals with questions that are applicable to all Christians. Twenty-two chapters discuss such topics as: Can I be a secret believer? Should we speak against injustice? and How can I be sure I am saved? The other nine chapters cover questions that, while specific to women, are themes that any Christian could find useful or interesting.

Biographies like these, and especially Christian biography, can be difficult to write and read. The author must write in such a way to encourage the reader, but without creating a false, sinless representation of a real person who lived and struggled with the same sins and strife that we live with today. One weakness of *Questions Women Asked* is that these women are celebrated for their good work, and this creates potential paragons.

The other critique that could be leveled at the book is that it covers so much history in such a short volume. At only 240 pages, each of the book's mini biographies must be narrow in focus and shallow in treatment. To compensate, Carr includes recommended reading at the end of each chapter, along with discussion questions for group use.

I wholeheartedly recommend this book to anyone, but especially to sisters in Christ, that they would be encouraged like Tryphaena and Tryphosa to work hard in the Lord (Rom. 16:12).



***Christ and His Threefold Office*, by John Flavel (abridged by J. Stephen Yuille). Reformation Heritage, 2021. Paperback, 160 pages, \$12.00. Reviewed by OP pastor and professor A. Craig Troxel.**

In the first year of my pastoral ministry, I preached a twenty-eight-week sermon series on the person and work of Christ. Those sermons, marked as they were by the many foibles of a young minister, were nonetheless crucial to building a theological foundation for the years to come. My sure guide throughout it was *The Fountain of Life* by John Flavel—a collection of around forty sermons on Christ and his work, found in volume one of Flavel's *Works*. *Christ and His Threefold Office* is an abridgment of *The Fountain of Life*.

We owe J. Stephen Yuille our thanks for this work of abridgment and for writing the preface, in which he briefly introduces Flavel as a person and as a pastor. The chapters chosen for this collection are those that highlight Christ's redemptive work as a mediator, and particularly, in his threefold office as a prophet, priest, and king. Reformed theology has long favored this threefold framework for the work of Christ, and Flavel employs it with comfortable dexterity. He expositions each office for its distinctive perspective on Christ's mediation, while holding to the overall unity of Christ's one work. One of Flavel's strengths is his ability to affirm the unity of Christ's person (though in two natures), the unity of Christ's twofold obedience (both active and passive), and the unity of Christ's two states (of humiliation and exaltation). When appropriate,

he ably points out the errors of departure from sound theology, and he warns of the consequent dangers that attend them.

Put biblically, Flavel's approach is to present a "knowledge of the truth, which accords with godliness" (Titus 1:1). As an author, he is guided by the deeper currents of theology. As a pastor, he steers us, his readers, toward the spiritual benefits of these biblical truths. Flavel's depth does not sacrifice his simplicity, nor vice versa. Each chapter leads with a particular doctrine, which is followed by several lessons that tease out the application of

that doctrine. Since the work focuses upon Christ and his mediation, we are inevitably drawn to meditate on the benefits of our salvation purchased by our Savior in his manifold office. This is intended to aid us in our communion with God and our daily Christian walk. Throughout the book, Flavel encourages us to look away from ourselves

and look to Christ for the completeness we have in him: "We must remember that Christ's blood speaks when we cannot. It pleads for us when we are unable to speak for ourselves" (113).

If you wish to grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ, I warmly commend this little volume. In due time you will wish to move to the original in the first volume of Flavel's *Works*. Many sacrifices must be made on the altar of abridgment. Not all are satisfying—like a minor one at the bottom of page 118 where the abbreviated sentence runs counter to Flavel's point and the longer sentence in his *Works*. But this does not threaten the value of reading this book, nor the honorable labor of its editor.

