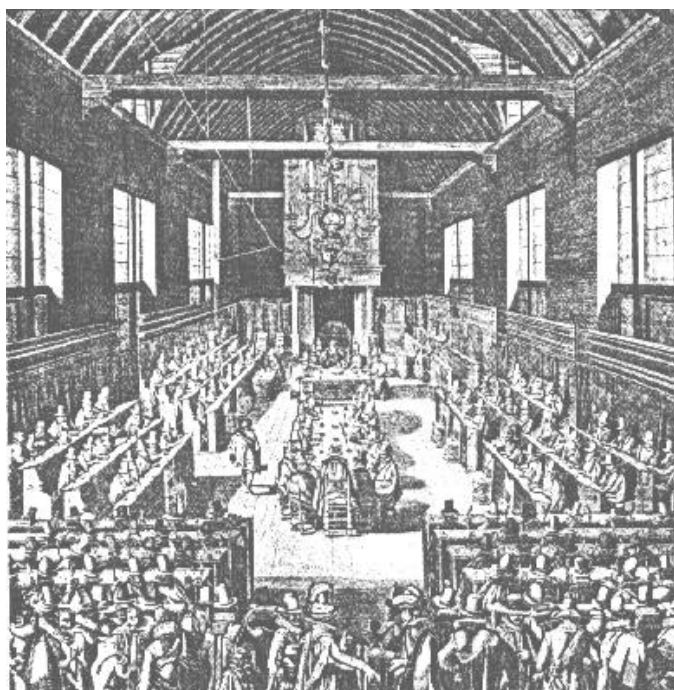


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of

THE ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

ORDAINED SERVANT

Statement Of Purpose

Ordained Servant exists to provide solid materials for the equipping of office-bearers to serve more faithfully. The goal of this journal is to assist the ordained servants of the church to become more fruitful in their particular ministry so that they in turn will be more capable to prepare God's people for works of service. To attain this goal *Ordained Servant* will include articles (both old and new) of a theoretical and practical nature with the emphasis tending toward practical articles wrestling with perennial and thorny problems encountered by office-bearers.

Editorial Policy

1. *Ordained Servant* publishes articles inculcating biblical presbyterianism in accord with the constitution of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and helpful articles from collateral Reformed traditions; however, views expressed by the writers do not necessarily represent the position of *Ordained Servant* or of the Church.

2. *Ordained Servant* occasionally publishes articles on issues on which differing positions are taken by officers in good standing in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. *Ordained Servant* does not intend to take a partisan stand, but welcomes articles from various viewpoints in harmony with the constitution of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

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Contents: Vol. 5, No. 3

Editorial Notes.....	49
The Story of Old Side Presbyterianism, by <i>John R. Muether</i>	50
The Outstanding Need of the OPC, by <i>Lawrence Eyres</i>	57
Appraising the Value of the Internet for Ministry, by <i>David W. Hall</i>	59
Terrible Honesty in an Age of Sentimentalism, from " <i>Modern Reformation</i> ".....	64
The Biblical Foundation of the Diaconate, by <i>George W. Knight III</i>	66
Resurrecting the Resurrection, by <i>G. I. Williamson</i>	69
Book Reviews.....	71

Please send all materials intended for possible publication in *Ordained Servant* to the Editor, G. I. Williamson, 119 Normal College Ave., Sheldon, IA 51201. (Email address is: williamson.1@opc.org). Please send all requests for additional copies, or back issues, to the Publisher, Stephen Sturlaugson, PLEROMA PRESS, Box 242, Carson N.D. 58529. Telephone: 701-622-3862

With the kind permission of Dr. Peter Y. de Jong, the Christian Education Committee reprinted his classic study entitled *Taking Heed to the Flock* in past issues of *Ordained Servant*. Because of the value of this study, and the need for all our elders to have ready access to it we asked, and received, permission from Dr. de Jong to republish this material—at cost—in book form. It is now available from the office of our General Secretary, Rev. Thomas E. Tyson, for a mere \$3 per copy, postage paid. We urge pastors to get this into the hands of all our ruling elders. And we hereby express, again, our deep appreciation to Dr. de Jong for his willingness to grant us this free gift.



In this issue we reprint another of the fine studies originally presented at a Regional Church Extension Conference held at Lake Sherwood Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Orlando, Florida. This conference was sponsored by our denomination’s Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension and we hereby express our appreciation for permission to make this material more widely available.



At the recent General Assembly, under the able direction of Mr. Clifford Collins of the computer section of the University of Ohio, we were shown how easy it is to access the Information Super-Highway. This demonstration was provided because it is part of the vision of the Christian Education Committee to encourage the Orthodox Presbyterian Church to make the best possible use of this means of communication. An example of what is “out there” on the Internet is provided by the interesting and informative article by Dr. David Hall of the Center for the Advancement of Paleo-Orthodoxy, and the Abraham Kuyper Institute. It is our hope that articles such as this will further stimulate interest and use of this new means of communication within the OPC. The editor first read Dr. Hall’s article via the Internet and when Dr. Hall was contacted, by email, he graciously granted us permission to include this article—written for the July issue of *Premise*—in the current issue of *Ordained Servant*. We hereby express our thanks to him.

“It is our solemn conviction that where there can be no real spiritual communion there should be no pretense of fellowship. Fellowship with known and vital error is participation in sin. Those who know and love the truth of God cannot have fellowship with what is diametrically opposed thereto, and there can be no reason why they should pretend that they have such fellowship.”

— Charles Haddon Spurgeon

“Scripture is not a dry tale or an old chronicle: it is the ever-living, ever youthful Word which God at the present time and always sends out to His people.”

— Herman Bavinck

“No single error has yet been demonstrated to occur in the Scriptures as given by God to His Church.”

— Benjamin B. Warfield

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• In my preaching, teaching and pastoring, I
• often ask: Do you and I know what that
• means that Christ has said: It is finished!
• (John 20:30)? Do we know Who this Christ
• is? Do we know what it is to behold the
• Lamb in all His beauty? Do we know what it
• is to give ourselves up to the surpassing
• worth of knowing Jesus our Lord (Cf.
• Philippians 3:8)? Do we know, from the
• heart of the Gospel, what the atonement is
• and what it means that God in Christ was
• reconciling the world to Himself (2
• Corinthians 5:19)? Do we know the lan-
• guage and the power of the blood of atone-
• ment? Do we know that without shedding of
• blood there is no remission (Hebrews 9:22)?
• Are we able to live apart from faith in the
• remission of sin? All these questions mean
• to lead us to the beautiful focus spelled out
• in our Belgic Confession of Faith, article 21:
• “... In [the] ...wounds... [of Christ] we find
• all manner of consolation. Neither is it ne-
• cessary to seek or invent any other means of
• being reconciled to God, than this only sac-
• rifice, once offered, by which believers are
• made perfect forever.” — from an editorial
• in *Diakonia*, Vol. 10, Number 1, June 1996.
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The Story of Old Side Presbyterianism

by

John R. Muether

When Presbyterians evaluate the doctrinal and experiential elements of their heritage, frequently they resort to a shorthand that contrasts different camps by way of prevailing stereotypes. It is often said, for example, that “the Old School can’t do evangelism” while “the New School can’t do theology.” But surely this is an unfair caricature of both sides. When raising these issues, it is necessary for us to begin with a preliminary series of questions. These are, to paraphrase Alisdair McIntire: “Whose evangelism, and which theology?” For the debate is not whether one side can or can’t “do” evangelism or theology, but instead it is over rival versions of each task.

The territory was staked on these competing versions long before the formation of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, and long before the Old School-New School split in the 19th century. They were established through key events in the 18th century. What follows is not an original thesis on this subject, but instead a summary of some new historiography on this period by recent interpreters of colonial American Evangelicalism.

Debates in colonial American Presbyterianism concerned a series of related issues. But essentially these issues boiled down to one: were you for or against the Great Awakening? Typically, reformed historians interpret the Great Awakening in a positive way, especially as it contrasts theologically with the Second Great Awakening. The First Great Awakening, under the leadership of Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield, was Reformed in its theology. On the other hand, the Second Great Awakening, under the leadership of Charles Finney, was Arminian in its theology, and Presbyterians are to eschew its reliance on “new measures” and psychological techniques. This standard Reformed interpreta-

tion of American revivals found expression in recent book by Iain H. Murray, *Revival and Revivalism*.¹ And this theological analysis is good as far as it goes.

But to focus entirely, or even primarily, on the theological differences between the two Awakenings is to ignore the underlying continuities between the two. Historians such as Harry Stout and Mark Noll have studied the rhetorical revolution of the First Awakening, and especially its development and use of mass communication. Here one begins to see these continuities. By surveying key episodes of colonial American evangelicalism, such as the Adopting Act, the ministry of George Whitefield, the controversy over the Log College, and finally the Old Side - New Side split and its aftermath, one might begin to see some rational in the objections of the Old Side, and thus regard the Old Side in a new light.

The Adopting Act of 1729

There were two parties in early colonial Presbyterianism. The Scotch-Irish were strict subscriptionists, and they wanted to ensure greater regularity and uniformity among its ministerial members. New England Presbyterians objected, arguing that this was a substitution of man-made creeds for the Word of God.

The Adopting Act of 1729 was comprised of two sessions, a morning and afternoon session. The morning session passed a preliminary statement that required all ministers to adopt “all the essential and necessary articles” of the Westminster Confession of Faith, apparently allowing some latitude in subscription. The afternoon session declared that the only permitted scruples were related to the civil magistrate’s authority over church synods, apparently restricting latitude in subscription. “Loose” and “strict”

subscriptionists differ in the weight they assign to the morning and afternoon sessions of the Adopting Act. The 1736 Synod passed a Declaration that attempted to resolve the debate: the morning session was preliminary, and the afternoon session itself was the Adopting Act. But this action failed to resolve the matter.

At this time, the Awakening was beginning in America, and for Presbyterians, the attitudes toward revival were aligning along views of subscription. Pro-revival New Englanders Presbyterians, who privileged “heart-felt” religion, tended to eschew formal and rationalistic expressions of religion, such as the perceived scholasticism of the Westminster Confession. These seemed too far removed from the everyday concerns of lay-people. Scotch-Irish antirevivalists felt the opposite.

So an alignment emerges in American Presbyterianism by the time the Awakening breaks out: the pro-revivalists were “loose” subscriptionists, and the anti-revivalists were “strict” subscriptionists.

George Whitefield and the Problem of Itinerancy

According to Harry Stout, George Whitefield was the first “media star” in American history.² George Marsden adds that Whitefield’s “tour of colonial America anticipated a pattern in American culture: lacking long-established traditions and rituals, Americans have been susceptible to waves of popular enthusiasm for ‘stars.’”³

Whitefield succeeded by appealing directly to the people, launching a self-consciously populist movement. He used the cold reception that he received from ecclesiastical authorities to bolster his claims to the common man. Thus, his effect, and that other itinerants that followed him, was a dramatic change from traditional patterns of ecclesiastical authority. The itinerant could challenge local authorities in the name of God and then move on to the next town, with no accountability for his words or actions.

Itinerancy was perhaps the most significant ecclesiastical issue during the Great Awakening. Charles Hodge summarized the effects of itinerancy in this way:

[Whitefield] assumed the right, in virtue of his ordination, to preach the gospel wherever he had an opportunity, ‘even though it should be in a place where officers were already settled, and the gospel was fully and faithfully preached ... If the pulpits should all be shut,’ he says, ‘blessed be God, the fields are open, and I can go without the camp’ ... If Whitefield had the right here claimed, then of course [New Sider] Davenport had it, and so every fanatic and errorist has it. The doctrine is entirely inconsistent with what the Bible teaches of the nature of the pastoral relation, and with every form of ecclesiastical government, episcopal, presbyterian, or congregational.⁴

The effect of itinerancy, in short was to undermine the disciplinary and teaching authority of the local church and the regional presbytery or synod. The anti-revivalists rightly feared the disorder, error, separatism, and radical individualism that itinerants cultivated. (Here we might submit a brief word about Jonathan Edwards. Edwards was friendly toward Whitefield and sympathetic toward his cause. Yet there is a significant difference in his understanding of revivals. Unlike Whitefield, Edwards believed in revival through the local church, an ecclesiastical consciousness missing in Whitefield.)

The Tennents and the Log College

In 1726, Rev. William Tennent formed the Log College in Neshaminy, Pennsylvania (20 miles north of Philadelphia) to educate his four sons and others in the Presbyterian ministry. The Log College would eventually train 18 men by the time it closed in 1746, after William Tennent’s death.

Traditional Presbyterians reacted negatively to the idea of a native form of Presbyterian education, fearing both a lack of academic rigor and the loose form of creedal subscription that might be taught there. In 1738 the conservatives passed a

stipulation that all Presbyterian ministers must receive their training in Britain or at either Yale or Harvard. William Tennent himself had impeccable credentials, being a graduate of the University of Edinburgh. But his most gifted son, Gilbert, had become friends with revivalist preachers, and his preaching took on more a revivalist cast that seemed to opponents as contrary to traditional Presbyterian practice.

Eventually, the Tennents emerged as the leaders of pro-Awakening Presbyterians. On March 8, 1740, Gilbert Tennent preached one of the most famous sermons in American Presbyterian history, "The Danger of an Unconverted Ministry". It was a scathing denunciation of the opponents of revival. In intemperant language that he would later regret, Tennent claimed that antirevivalists, by their opposition to revival, *proved* that they were unregenerate. These men, said Tennent, had no knowledge of their spiritual rebirth, and thus they could offer no spiritual nourishment to their listeners. God did not, and could not, work through such "dumb dogs".

This sort of rhetoric, it should be noted, did not originate from Tennent, because here he was following Whitefield's lead: "The generality of preachers," Whitefield said of New England during his visit there, "talk of an unknown, unfelt Christ. The reason why congregations have been so dead is because they had dead men preaching to them."⁵

Tennent's sermon was a study in anticlerical and anti-intellectual populism. The antirevivalists, "being greedy of filthy lucre", were "guided by the devil." They were "wicked [and] natural men", untouched by the Holy Spirit, and "their discourse are cold and sapless." These men were "moral Negroes" who were white on the outside but black as sin on the inside. Tennent went on to add that if one did not receive spiritual nourishment from your parish church, one could "lawfully go, and that most frequently, where he gets the most good to his precious soul."

Perhaps some of the antirevivalist ministers were as morally corrupt as Tennent claimed. But

how did Tennent know, and how did he prosecute his concern? What is lacking in "The Danger of an Unconverted Ministry" is Presbyterian due process. Tennent had no need to bring these up on formal charges through the church courts, because their unregenerate state was obvious. After all, they opposed revival. Thus, like Whitefield, Tennent's strategy was a direct and very effective appeal to the laity. McLoughlin concludes: "The Awakening made it clear that the private spiritual needs of the individual came before any loyalty to his parish church or pastor and that each man knew best where to find what he needed for his own good."⁶

In effect, the Tennents laid claim to supernatural discernment, which the Presbyterian antirevivalists regarded as superstitious and pretentious. According to the Tennent family, Gilbert's brother, William Jr., had an apparent resurrection experience, three days after dying from an illness induced by the ordeal of studying for his ordination exams.⁷ Gilbert also talked about a Lazarus-like resurrection from death in his own experience. These stories set the Tennents apart from the regular clergy as holy men in the popular imagination, and they could not help but raise the suspicions of the established Presbyterian clergy. One likened the Tennents to astrologers and fortune-tellers: Could Tennent really ascertain "Men's inward feelings?" If so, "Must not Mr. Tennent have some cunning beyond what is common to man?"⁸ In sum, the Old Side critique of the Tennents was that they claimed possession of that which Presbyterian orthodoxy reserved for the work of the Holy Spirit.

The Old Side - New Side Split

The Presbyterian establishment was centered in Philadelphia and was commonly known as the "Old Synod", or the "Old Side". Old Siders insisted that the call of men to the ordained gospel ministry must be carried out by the duly constituted officers of the church. They began to challenge the legitimacy of the ordination of men trained by the Log College, and they were especially wary of the terms of subscription that these men took. On the other hand, the "New Siders" argued that subscription matters were judgments that belonged

to the Presbyteries, that American Presbyterians needed an indigenous training school, and that, ultimately, Old Siders opposed none of these so much as the “experiential Calvinism” of the revivalists.

What quickly followed were ecclesiastical indiscretions by both camps as the rhetorical battle ratcheted up. The Old Siders presented a list of demands to the 1741 General Assembly, essentially insisting that the only commissioner who could be seated were those who held Old Side convictions. The two sides would describe very differently the events that followed. Old Siders claim that the revivalist withdrew from the Assembly. New Siders argue that they were illegally cast out of the deliberations. And so the first division in American Presbyterianism took place: the Old Side - New Side split.

This split would last 17 years. The New Side grew substantially during the years of division, while the Old Side fought for survival. From 1741 to 1758, the numbers of New Side ministers increased from 22 to 73, while the ministerial members of the Old Side decreased from 27 to 23. Further, the New Side largely won over the respect and enthusiasm of the Presbyterian laity. The congregations of the New Side grew to more than three times the size of the Old Side.

Largely through the efforts of the New Side, a reunion took place in 1758, and largely on New Side terms:

- * The Awakening was endorsed as a work of Holy Spirit
- * Experiential piety was affirmed as necessary for ministers
- * Latitude in subscription to the Westminster Standards was permitted.⁹
- * The power to ordain clergy was given to the Presbyteries.
- * A more mature and irenic Gilbert Tennent was elected moderator.

Like most ecclesiastical reunions, the marriage was not fully consummated in the minds of many. Historian Leonard Trinterud aptly called it a

“union without love.”¹⁰ Some Old Side clergy left for the Anglican church. Suspicions continued on both sides, and the battle soon focused on the control of the educational institutions, especially the College of New Jersey (what would become Princeton). The New Side generally succeeded in protecting their control over the College, a task made difficult by deaths that cut short the tenure of several of the Presidents (there were five presidents in 20 years). After constant showdowns over Presidential appointments, the controversy eventually subsided when John Witherspoon was recruited from Scotland in 1768. He proved to be a moderating force between the two factions over the course of his 25-year tenure.

We should add one final comment about the split and its aftermath: one doesn't fully understand the Old Side - New Side debate unless one sees what is happening here in sociological terms. The New Siders were “Americanizing” colonial Presbyterianism, reorienting it from the attitudes and practices of Scotland and redefining it according to its American environment. The stress was shifting away from correct belief, adherence to creedal standards and proper observance of traditional forms, to the emphasis on individual religious experience. In this sense, it would prove to be enormously successful. The New Siders may not have understood the Confession better than the Old Side, but they certainly accommodated better to American culture. As the frontier was opening up, as American religion was, in Nathan Hatch's term, “Democratizing”, the New Siders were offering populist forms of piety that were much more in tune with the values of the New World.¹¹

Some Lessons for Contemporary Presbyterians

This survey has been short and necessarily selective. We studied less of the people in question — Whitefield, Tennent, and their opponents — than the social and cultural effects, and especially the unintended consequences, of this period of history.

What are the particular lessons of the Old Side-New Side for contemporary American Pres-

byterians and especially for Orthodox Presbyterians? I would suggest there are several:

1) Subscription

The 18th century division began a debate that has plagued Presbyterianism ever since: the nature and extent of creedal subscription. It seems that both sides of the debate pushed their view of subscription in fundamentally unhelpful directions. Perhaps it might be said without too much exaggeration that the New Side denied the *necessity* of creedal subscription for doctrinal orthodoxy, while the Old Side insisted on the *sufficiency* of creedal subscription for doctrinal orthodoxy.

Students of American Presbyterianism know that these views have persisted and have their counterparts in contemporary Presbyterianism. Yet the OPC seems to have steered clear of extremes, insisting, on the one hand, on the creedal integrity of its ministers, while, on the other, falling short of demanding iron-clad forms of subscription.¹²

2) The Redefinition of Evangelism

As we noted, the Great Awakening unleashed a “rhetorical revolution”. In American culture. From that point forward, conservative American religion would be populist and parachurch. Whitefield and the itinerants offered radically new ways to express piety, stressing the emotions and downplaying the careful articulation of theological convictions. From that point forward, spontaneity and freedom would triumph dramatically over the order of traditional religious forms, forever recasting the shape of American religion. As Hatch well describes, popular religion would be highly suspicious of tradition and formal education: coarse language, earthy humor, and biting sarcasm would characterize evangelical rhetoric from this point on. The sermon was reinvented as a popular medium: colloquial, with storytelling, graphic application, and intimate personal experience.¹³

Orthodox Presbyterians rightly grimace when they hear of strategies such as “Marketing the Church.” But the origins of the

commodification of religion date early than our usual suspect, Charles Finney, and we must locate the culprits in the first Great Awakening. Harry Stout has demonstrated that Whitefield was the “Divine Dramatist”, and that modern evangelicalism’s commitment to the power of personality, the rise of celebrity, and the use of technique, all began with Whitefield.¹⁴ As Harvard historian Jon Butler has written: “Whitefield’s nondenominational ... revivals thus prefigured another tradition in American revivalism, exemplified in the careers of Charles Grandison Finney, Billy Sunday, Billy Graham, and Robert Schuller. Such evangelists ... stressed their own popularity at the expense of any denominational authority.”¹⁵

Related to the changing understanding of evangelism is the redefinition of the nature of Christian piety. Itinerant evangelism led the way to the massive crusade, and our modern appetites for evangelism under the “big top.” Under these conditions, Christian piety is often described through great extremes in the Christian experience. Reformed piety of a more traditional sort has stressed something quite different. The Larger Catechism [Q & A 154] tells us that “the outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicates to his church the benefits of his mediation, are all his ordinances; especially the Word, sacraments, and prayer; all which are made effectual to the elect for their salvation.” This beautiful statement says some very Calvinistic things about the application of redemption. The Christian life takes place by “outward and ordinary” means; the Christian grows through the unpretentious, unspectacular, and, by today’s standards, downright boring habit of gathering with the people of God in the presence of God on the Lord’s Day.

To be sure “experiential Calvinism” has been a hallmark of Reformed theology long before this period but Colonial American Presbyterianism sees a definite shift in sensibilities take place. Mass culture privileges instant gratification and “the big show,” and cultivates discontent for the outward and ordinary means of grace. When we see the Christian life nurtured by means of massive evangelistic crusades or stadiums full of

Promise Keepers, we need to reflect on how that concept of spirituality is shaped by the assumptions of modernity. Are we looking for a spectacular show, are we aiming for great numbers, or are we doing the hard work of faithful education of the people in the means of grace? And will our people persistently and faithfully pursue the means of grace when they are constantly presented with such high-octane alternatives?

3. The doctrine of the church

Evangelical anti-ecclesiasticism is arguably the greatest result of the Great Awakening. George Whitefield is rightly acknowledged as the father of the parachurch, and, and Joel Carpenter has written, “parachurch” is virtually synonymous with “evangelical.”¹⁶ The Awakening shattered the authority of churches. (Incidentally, Nathan Hatch and other have suggested that this Awakening-induced vacuum of ecclesiastical authority generated a “civil millennialism”, and through it, ripe social conditions for the American revolution.¹⁷

The decline of church authority extends beyond the work of evangelism. Recall Tennent’s concern of the problem of unconverted ministry. Did Tennent use the church courts used to adjudicate these disputes? Should Presbyterians simply have taken Tennent at his word? The OPC has a reputation for due process, a reputation often depreciated by those who see that debate as tortuously slow. But this is on balance a very strong feature about our church, and one that we ought not to despise. The temptation to try issues and individuals on the court of public opinion is very great in the democratic culture of American evangelicalism. We need to work hard at resisting this temptation.

You may remember that in the 1992 Presidential campaign Clinton supporters were fond of the slogan, “Its the economy, stupid!”. If we can imagine 18th century Presbyterians with a similar inclination toward sound-bite rhetoric, then we perhaps we can picture the Old Siders shouting to the masses gathering to hear Whitefield, “It’s the church, stupid!”

Notes:

- 1 Edinburgh; Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1994.
- 2 Harry S. Stout. *The Divine Dramatist: George Whitefield and the Rise of Modern Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991).
- 3 George Marsden. *Religion and American Culture* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1990) 24.
- 4 Charles Hodge, *A Constitutional History of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America* (Philadelphia: W. S. Martien, 1839-40), v. 2, 98.
- 5 Quoted in William C. McLoughlin, *Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform: An Essay on Religion and Social Change in America, 1607-1977* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978) 63.
- 6 *Ibid.*, 63.
- 7 Jon Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), 184-85.
- 8 *Ibid.*, p. 185.
- 9 John Murray notes that it is here, in the Old Side-New Side settlement, that we find the origins of the expression, “system of doctrine” in Question Two of Presbyterian ordination vows. See his “Creed Subscription in the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.” pp. 247-62 of *The Practice of Confessional Subscription*, ed. by David W. Hall (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1995).
- 10 See chapter 9 of his *The Forming of an American Tradition: A Re-Examination of Colonial Presbyterianism* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1949).
- 11 Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).
- 12 I have attempted to argue this point in “Confidence in Our Brethren: Creedal Subscription in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church”, p. 301-310 in *The Practice of Confessional Subscription*, ed. by David W. Hall (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1995).
- 13 Hatch, *Democratization*, 57.
- 14 Stout, *Divine Dramatist*, p. ??.
- 15 Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith*, p. 191.
- 16 “Impatient to do God’s Work” (*Christianity Today* 30 no. 15 [October 17, 1986] 27.
- 17 Hatch, *Democratization* ? or essay in Reckoning?

The Outstanding Need of the OPC

by

Lawrence Eyres

My entire life as a minister of the gospel is identical to the history of the OPC. I love the OPC and in no way wish to stand in judgment over her. In fact, I have often said that being in the OPC is like standing on the top of a mountain: no matter which way one goes from there it is down. But there is no perfect church this side of heaven, and I see red when some attribute to us the belief that OPC stands for Only Perfect Church! God, in his providence, brought me into the OPC through meeting and hearing Dr. Machen speak in the Wheaton College chapel some time during 1933 or 34. He came through to me as more than a scholar. He was man who lived in the consciousness of God. That influence brought me to Westminster Seminary in the fall of 1935.

I was doing summer work in New England under the Committee for the Propagation of the Reformed Faith during the summer of 1936 when the OPC was born. I transferred my membership to Second Parish Presbyterian Church, Portland, Maine, the following fall. And I've served as a pastor in the OPC for 58 years, beginning in the summer of 1938. I love the OPC, but she isn't perfect.

What, in my view, could I wish for the OPC in future years? I would put it in one sentence: She needs an increased degree of God-consciousness. Not that it is altogether lacking, but I believe that our zeal for orthodoxy is not enough. That is essential, but, to borrow a phrase from R. B. Kuiper, mere orthodoxy by itself can become "orthodoxism." To be true orthodoxy (in Kuiper's parlance) there must be the fear of God—the sovereign God of Scripture. We know and worship that God in the OPC, but are we sufficiently conscious of his holiness, his sovereignty, the awfulness of his wrath toward sinners and the beauty of his grace toward his people at all times and in all that we do? Who would dare affirm that we do?

God-consciousness on the part of ministers and elders, the members of our several congregations and in the homes of our churches should be the prayer and the passion of the whole denomination.

Let me begin with her ministers. I should add that I hold to the two-office view, that elders and ministers of the Word share a single office, yet the teaching elder alone has the right and responsibility of the pulpit. It is a high right and an awesome responsibility. God-consciousness in the pulpit means unction. The teaching elder needs the anointment of the Spirit to fulfill his high calling.

I recall a conversation I had with a fellow minister many years ago. I stated then that I believed that we had need of great preaching. He countered that he believed the OPC had good preaching. To this I responded that there is a difference between great preaching and good preaching. I don't remember how the conversation ended. If he remembers and reads this, maybe then he'll understand what I meant. I can best illustrate the difference with two examples. The first is of the preaching of Robert K. Churchill. I served with him over two periods of several years each in two presbyteries. I count him as one of my best and most admired friends. I sat under his preaching on many occasions. And most always I was impressed with the sense that what the Scripture dealt with was the most important subject for me at that particular time. I don't know how he did it. He never said so much, yet I felt it. He brought me to stand with him before Almighty God!

The other example is Prof. John Murray. I heard him deliver a message on the virgin birth of Christ at a Bible Conference in 1939. Later I thanked him for the sermon. He fixed his good eye upon me and said, "Lawrence, that was not a sermon; it was a lecture." I asked him what, in his mind, was the difference between a sermon and a lecture? He said, "A sermon has passion!" Well, I had listened to him lecture for more than two years, and he lectured with passion. But his sermons were more passionate still. R. B. Kuiper didn't put this into his lectures on the ideal homily, though he too preached with passion. But the point was well taken, (I might add in passing that another lecturer who lectured with passion was E. J. Young.) The unction, or passion, of which I'm speaking is often lacking in good OPC sermons (mine included) for what seems good reason. OPC preachers—especially those with small, struggling congregations—

The Outstanding Need of The OPC

have a lot on their plate. There's calling on newcomers, the sick and the troubled. And there's management of many things that aren't specifically identified in his call. And sermon preparation is demanding. The result is a sermon that's good, delivered by a worn-out preacher. Everything is prepared but his own heart. He feels hurried and harried. People have asked me how long it takes to prepare a sermon. My offhand answer is as much time as there is. Do we struggle with the text—not to know what it means, but with the fact that God is speaking through us in this Word? Have we struggled, wrestled with God, till we feel the awesome weight of our responsibility to “preach as a dying man to dying men”? If we are too busy for this kind of preparation, then we're too busy! For the minister of the Word, this is the most pressing need of the OPC.

And where do the elders fit into all this? First and foremost, they are responsible for the minister of the Word—especially in the matter of his unction in preaching. I've served six congregations as an installed minister and a couple more as interim. I've had some excellent elders. And I've urged all my sessions to instruct me as to what I should preach on and as to how to get through to my people every Lord's Day. But they usually smiled satisfied smiles and said nothing. One elder was different. Often he'd stop by my office on his way home from work and ask how my preparation was going. I'd tell him. Then we'd pray together for the message for Sunday. How I longed for that kind of support and for the assurance that these men, as a body, were upholding me in earnest prayer daily and during the preaching. Since retirement, I pray silently for the pastor as he enters the pulpit, and often through the preaching. I also pray that my heart will lay hold of the proclamation.

One pastor I know has a session which literally works with him for the improvement of his preaching with an eye to his better reaching the congregation with the message. He is no mean preacher. But he welcomes their interaction with him in pulpit ministration.

It was my privilege to serve as ministerial adviser to a session in a nearby church recently. As such I was a part of the session for several months until a pastor was called and installed. What a session! Members of the church frequently came bringing personal and spiritual problems. Business was set aside. The concerns were aired and discussed. Counsel was given. When all was dealt with, we all engaged in prayer for the brothers and sisters before us—not polite, short prayers, but caring

intercession. My heart was blessed. That's what elders are for.

Then there is the matter of discipline. Hebrews 13:17 requires obedience to church rulers as to “those who must give an account,” those who “watch for your souls.” Where does God-consciousness come into the work of the normal session if not at this point? It comes with the conviction that they are accountable for the souls under their care. They may not be respecters of persons—even if those under their care are relatives or friends. I remember one ruling elder who refused to be excused while dealing with his own daughter. Eldership is a costly function: it costs anguish and tears, even the loss of an esteemed friendship. God-conscious elders do not represent some minority in the congregation with whom they happen to agree. All elders represent Jesus Christ and him alone! In matters of judicial discipline and making judgments based on the Word of God, let them resolve to speak with one voice. You see, they represent one Christ whose will is revealed in one Bible! Since they are bound by the same vows and have understanding of the faith “once for all committed to the saints,” there ought to be agreement among them in the government of the church. This calls for God-consciousness!

It is my conviction that, with a session with such unity of faith and understanding of God's will for his church, nothing can come to the church that they cannot deal with, even though grief and loss may be the price to pay. But if there is serious division in the spiritual rule of the church, the enemy of all righteousness can and will enter the church and wreak destruction. He has succeeded in destroying more than one Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

—to be continued—

Rev. Lawrence Eyres was a student at Westminster Seminary when the Orthodox Presbyterian Church was established. He was ordained by that body in 1938 and so his ministerial career—if you include his training under Dr. Machen—spans the entire sixty year history of our Church. He is the author of an exceptionally fine book on the eldership entitled “*The Elders of the Church*.” He spoke of the early days in our history at the banquet marking the sixtieth anniversary of the OPC, during the recent General Assembly.

Appraising the Value of the Internet for Ministry

by

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“The computer power in the average 1996 Ford Taurus is greater than the computer power in Neil Armstrong’s Apollo 11.”—President Bill Clinton, June 3, 1996 (Commencement Address to Princeton University)

Perhaps the hype has already peaked—or is about to peak—in regard to the virtually-eschatological claims for the internet as a tool of ministry. Ranging from one of the great high priests of secularism, John Perry Barlow—former lyricist for the Grateful Dead—to Gary North—the warrior poet of theonomy—the hyperbolic claims for the internet as a categorically new and paradigm-altering tool may be about hyped-out. Such lavish appraisals notwithstanding, Christians may find themselves nearly as skeptical about such grandiose technological allegations as they are unpersuaded that every purported social crisis is indeed a crisis. In what follows below, I wish to bring a little sanity to the discussion and also summarize four compelling reasons to drive onto the information ramp.

First, let me assess the development of the internet according to a few distinct phases. Started by an obscure military-scientific working group in 1973, from its inception in 1973 to 1990, the internet was the sole possession of the wonk illuminati. Very few people outside of military or scientific fields knew about the internet in the 1970s and 1980s. Even that visionary vice-President, Al Gore, did not start pushing the “in-

formation superhighway” until the early 1990s. Phase One of the internet was its Laboratory Phase, characterized by elite users, multiple glitches, little popular access, small scope of information, huge investment of time for minimal results, and little graphical presentation. In sum, Phase One was available to the very few and enticing to few others except among the expert classes. Phase Two (1991-1995) can be viewed as the

Mass Introductory Phase. During this period, most of the commercial on-line services commenced (AOL, CIS, Prodigy) and commercial internet service providers (ISP) began. By 1992, the total number of users, however, for all these combined services was less than 2 million (less than 1% of the U. S. population). By 1993, the online services began to grow and email became popular. CompuServe took the lead, quickly surpassing Prodigy in terms of

customers. By the end of 1993, CIS had what appeared to be a commanding lead, then boasting of 2 million users, with AOL at a distant second place with a half million. Email was the main draw, the World Wide Web largely remaining a text-based phenomena by the end of 1993. Total users of early forms of the WWW were about 4 million at the end of 1993, a hearty increase of 100% in a single year. However, less than a million users trafficked the superhighway, and those still predominantly the elite.

The years 1994 and 1995 would see tremendous expansion among users. By mid 1995, there were 6-8 million customers from the major commercial services,



Appraising the Value of the Internet for Ministry

AOL having grown to dominance. By 1995, AOL had 4 million subscribers, leaving CIS at 2.5 million. Prodigy and other minor players would soon be absorbed. It was in 1994-1995 that many customers began to exit these commercial services for full internet service providers. In 1994 all metropolitan areas still did not have affordable ISPs, but they all did by 1995. In 1995, the predictions were that over 5 million users would be on line, a figure which was supposed to grow to 20-25 million by the year 2000.

Once again, the estimates proved far too cautious. By mid 1996, according to one report, there were 23.5 WWW users (nearly 10% of U. S. population—a ten-fold increase in four years). The number of home pages had grown from 8 million in May, 1995 to 35 million in May, 1996—an increase of approximately 450%—enough to make even the most frothy church growth projectors envious. Phase Two climaxed in late 1995 symbolized by everybody and his brother—only the most unprogressive among us excluded—finding themselves online. Several key factors explain the surge of use and the growth ahead.

Reduction of Rates: Go Market, Go

Not accidentally, Phase Three (1996-)—the era of Market-driven Access—was a free market phenomena. Two trends (a third one possibly being peer pressure) accelerated internet use and the transition away from commercial services toward full internet service providers. The first trend was the vast improvement in graphics-based Web browsers and software. With the advent, first of Mosaic and later of Netscape, users of the WWW finally found some user-friendly presentations. The days of text-based commands and key-strokes yielded to the icon and the mouse. With more intuitive and simpler browsers, the WWW was much more attractive to the non-expert. The second trend was the reduction in cost. The average cost per hour for either email, internet surfing, teleconferencing, or serious research dropped astronomically. The chart below illustrates the best rates. (Note: commercial service rates were all higher in per/hour cost than full internet providers for more than 8 hrs/month.):

1994

15 hrs. 32.95 (= \$2.20/hr)	30 hrs. (= \$1.85/hr)
50 hrs. (= \$1.61/hr)	100 hrs. (= \$1.60/hr)

1995

15 hrs. 19.95 (= \$1.33/hr)	30 hrs. (= \$1.17/hr)
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50 hrs. (= \$1.10/hr)	100 hrs. (= \$1.05/hr)
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1996

(Note: this schedule assumes \$19.95 for unlimited use)

15 hrs. 19.95 (= \$1.33/hr)	30 hrs. (= \$0.67/hr)
50 hrs. (= \$0.40/hr)	100 hrs. (= \$0.20/hr)

The pricing declines for comparative periods may be clearly seen from the above. The internet had become affordable. For high users in the span of months, the cost for 30 hr/month users had dropped from \$1.85/hr down to \$0.67/hr; for users of 50 hr/month, the charges had been cut four-fold, from \$1.61/hr. to \$0.40/hr; and the heaviest users saw prices plummet from \$1.60 per/hr. to a mere 20 cents an hour! For less than a quarter (price of one phone call, a third of a Coke, one photocopy, or two pieces of gum), one could email hundreds of thousands of customers, FTP thousands of pages, download software that only a decade ago was available only to the highest levels of diplomats, search sophisticated data bases for obscure theological material, or post hundreds of pages of text. All for the price of gum, fraction of a Coke, or a phone call. This meant that even small churches or individuals could become publishers. During 1995-1996, many discovered that opportunity. However, that was only the beginning of Phase Three—Market Access. The first half of 1996 saw massive invasion on the internet. A few observations below illustrate.

Change in Past Two Years

When our small group first jumped into the web, we found very few other reformed or evangelical voices. Search as we might, there were few biblical voices echoing throughout the WWW. The great news, however, is that 24 months later, we now find a lot of friends. Whole denominations and organizations are now available to witness to those within and without the Christian community. One of our ministries, The Kuyper Institute (<http://www.usit.net/public/capo/ckuyper.html>), specializes in political analysis from a distinctively biblical point of view. To our surprise in 1994, we could not find any of the following much-larger Christian ministries on the WWW: Family Research Council, Focus on the Family, American Family Association, Coral Ridge Ministries, Christian Coalition, the 700 Club Liberty University, Eagle Forum. All of these ministries were proven in this area, and yet as we emailed briefings during the fall of 1994 on key races—when timely information was important—we had to use U. S. Postal service to mail hardcopies to

our other friends and colleagues above. Now, however, in 1996 it is an entirely different story. All of the above are on line, most with very fine WWW sites. The company, besides being welcome, illustrates the rush toward the net in the past two years. We've watched as numerous seminaries came on line. Early on, we tried to entice the leading evangelical seminaries to jump on line for academic research and publication of journals. In 1994, none of the following leading evangelical seminaries were on line: Dallas, Trinity, Gordon-Conwell, Westminster (Philadelphia), Westminster (CA), Reformed (Jackson, Charlotte, or Orlando), Covenant. Now all are on in some form, with the Dallas, Westminster, and Reformed Seminary home pages leading the pack.

Still, there is much development that will occur in the next five years. Most leading Christian Colleges now have some internet presence, whereas only a few did two years ago. The same is true for individual churches. Our small denomination had two or three churches with home pages two years ago. Now, that number is approaching 100 (8%). Other denominations confirm similar trends. Regarding publications, many Christian publications are just now coming on line (See our e-zine, *Premise*, now in its third year at: <http://www.usit.net/public/capo/premise>, for example). The rapid invasion of the internet by evangelical groups is thrilling. *Gospel Light* has an excellent site and Quentin Schultze's *Internet for Christians* site is consistently on the cutting edge. Only recently has the "Best of the Christian Web" developed. Earlier and still, ICL has a fine catalogue.

Technical and commercial developments in past few months alone are equally stunning. Eastman Kodak recently announced a digital camera (which will aid the graphics for any site) for \$350, and top-flight computer systems are available for \$1500-\$1800. In the past quarter, large telephone companies have announced commercial plans. When AT&T offered unlimited service for \$19.95/month, they were swamped and to date have still only been able to actually provide service to 400,000 new customers, sending many prospective customers to other internet providers. June 1, 1996 PacTelesis announced unlimited service for \$19.95/month. 1996 also saw the cable companies begin forays into providing service, with many more to follow. The tools and software, e. g., HomesiteX (an html editor that allows editing on the fly), new versions of Netscape Navigator, faster modems, and more T-3 connections further enhanced access. New plug and play software packages lent themselves to non-wonks

coming on line. And the development of Java script appears to be the next rage.

Another factor that may be a leading indicator is the success of internet-related IPOs offered on the NYSE over the past 12 months. Since late summer of 1995, Netscape, Yahoo, Point Cash Systems, and other stock offerings have far surpassed any expectations. Setting new records for opening prices or increases, the market at least is investing heavily in these new companies. Conversely, the non-survivors litter the info super highway. Among the cyber road kill are: Delphi, Prodigy; and the MSN internet software and CompuServe are in the danger zone. Even the leading commercial service for the past two years, AOL (which added as many subscribers in one year as CIS had total), recently confirmed a decrease in projections for the summer quarter '96 from 700,000 to 400,000. If even the best commercial service is halving its estimates for new subscribers, that is worthy of analysis. The explanation is likely that more people are moving to/signing up with full internet service providers. The net (pun unintended) result of all this was that millions of people were coming on line in droves. Rather than taking until the year 2000 to reach the 25 million user-level, that plateau would probably be passed in 1996. Internet service providers would surpass the commercial providers, leading to yet more price reductions in the future. With the cost decreasing and the ease of use increasing, the WWW was headed for perhaps a 50% market share by the year 2000. By that, I mean that likely half of the U. S. population (125 M) would have access by 2000. How could a visionary Christian or Church ignore such a community that could be reached so inexpensively? In light of the above review, perhaps it would help to identify categories of users.

Categories of Users:

- 1) End-user only. These can probably stick with AOL (5 million subscribers) or CIS (2.5 million) These ever-adapting services bring some order to chaos for the non-expert; they also house a number of fine proprietary sources and offer chat-sessions or tailored-ministry needs. Even though the per/hour cost will remain higher than an ISP, these will assist the family-emailer, the occasional surfer, and beginners. In time, many may switch, but this is not a bad starting point, and the basic charge of \$9.95/month requires little investment. We recommend that ministries without access to technical support begin here. If after 6 months, you are satisfied, this option may be right for you. (Requirements: tools available at

WalMart: modem (28.8), 486 or greater, Windows 95, subscription to AOL or CIS).

2) Researchers (occasional), communicators (newsletters, periodicals), occasional publisher. This is the person/ministry who is beyond email. This person wants to access a number of publications, communicate with a large number of users, and inexpensively publish sermons, newsletters, small books, studies, essays, or other material—scholarly or practical; perhaps complete a degree on-line. (Requirements for little interactivity, minimum graphics, some knowledge of html, inexpensive access: Pentium chip, 100 mhz, 1 g storage, 28.8 modem, Windows 95, internet provider (\$19.95/mo.) Netscape Navigator, Pegasus Mail).

3) Organizational use, professional research, publication. This ministry has numerous facets, multiple publishing opportunities, many collegial contributors, and ongoing research needs. Few local churches will need this, although some will be able to justify it. Every Christian institution of education will need these for the 21st century. (Requirements for much interactivity, as-graphic-as-you-wannabe, working knowledge of html, full access: Pentium chip, 133 mhz, 1.6 g storage, 28.8 modem, Windows 95, internet provider (\$19.95/mo), Netscape Navigator, Pegasus Mail). These three categories will probably remain fairly constant in the era of Market Access. The four uses below will further clarify what best fits your needs; but first a little computer-aided prognostication.

What's Ahead

Playing the prophet for the internet may be nearly as risky as seeking to predict events in ancient Israel. We certainly don't wish to subject ourselves to those standards. However, we are aware of a few trends on the horizon that do not require prophetic insight to mention. One of the greatest inchoate improvements is increasing bandwidth. Presently, modems are hooked up to telephone wires. As ISDN becomes more affordable and as cable companies begin to offer wide bandwidth, visual communications and large amounts of content will flow more quickly. Such exponential increase, according to George Gilder, will yield a new era of growth on the internet. (cf. George Gilder's *Telecosm* at: <http://www.seas.upenn.edu/~gaj1/ggindex.html>) TV channels and movies will be available over same network. In time, the home terminal will be something like Gateway's new 35" monitor that doubles (quadruples?) as a TV screen, computer terminal, and online terminal. All manners of entertain-

ment, communication, and information will be available from one screen. Missions agencies can already provide email, teleconferencing, sophisticated accounting, studies, reports, continuing education, and news to keep foreign missionaries current—for pennies.

Decreasing prices should continue, although they will bottom out fairly soon. AOL has announced a heavy-user price-break for mid-summer 1996 and CIS' WOW! Service will be priced at \$17.95/month. Already the industry standard is \$19.95/month for full access. Some areas have competitors offering full access at \$17.95 or \$15.95/month. AOL and CIS will have to lower their prices (as will other new providers), or face certain death. It is not unrealistic to expect \$9.95/month full-access pricing—which will even further accelerate use. Newer models of computers and software will have more built-in capability for easy internet use. Last year the prediction for a computer in the year 2000 was: 600 MHz, with 64 megs of memory and nearly a gig of storage, with a modem zooming at close to 100 million bps (WSJ, R6, June 19, 1995). Again those predictions are dated in less than 12 months. In less than two years, most computers will be armed with more WWW savvy than 99% of the population had in 1995.

With market forces at work, even the dumb and dumber among us will hop on. Speaking of which, dumb terminals will be available for about \$500 within a year. A dumb terminal will make the net even affordable for those without expensive personal computers. A dumb terminal requires virtually no memory and is a shell of a computer. With inexpensive internet connections, the user then connects, downloads only the software needed for the specific task (from the web), completes the task, then throws away the software—greatly reducing the need for a large computer brain. With affordable dumb terminals, a person can plug in anywhere, download what he needs, and go. The next five years will also see the continuation of the astronomical growth of users. Last year's predictions are already outdated; so would any we could make. Some will even give up on these new technologies in frustration, but return in a few years when things are easier. As price and ease continue to move in positive directions, users will increase.

Likely before too long, some master organizational scheme will be developed to more easily orient new users. One of the largest frustrations of the WWW—the difficulty in providing an organizational matrix for virtual-chaos—will eventually yield to order. Some

company will become the “Netscape” of order and make a bundle.

Also on the horizon is inexpensive conferencing and education. Publications, schools, and many other traditional institutions are truly threatened by these innovations. The average 6th grader now has access to information that only Presidents once had. A motivated sophomore in college has access to graduate-level data. Smaller ministries can be on par, and members are finding that hierarchies or privileged information is going the way of the dinosaur. A strong democratizing dynamic is at work to make affordable what was once elite. For example, we hope to develop a journal of the future that will open up to a regular user (or a dumb terminal) and simultaneously do the following: A person will see a short, high-quality video on the subject (with links to 3-4 other more informative videos on related subjects), while an audio review of some other field is running. At the same time, an automatic email or fax of selected news events will be triggered, while the user's computer also downloads several studies automatically. Each of these features is further linked to other resources and message-with-presentation will dominate. Affinity ministries will be tied in by links; from a computer terminal a user can have at their fingertips the best of present and past Christianity.

Conclusion

The internet is also the wave of the future with a definite generational dynamic. Very few users were born prior to 1940 (92% of users are under 40). Like it or not, it is largely a baby-boom tool. A few more mature evangelical scholars use email and do some research on the web; but not many. Nearly all professors, however, in secular or university situations are already acquainted with these powerful research tools. Will theologians be left in the dark ages? Perhaps. Even more promising, however, are the opportunities for biblical pastors and Christian scholars to get on the net, show some leadership, learn some new tools, and bring ‘salt and light’ to the web. Baby boomers will become increasingly comfortable with such technologies. Their children will use them as reflexively as breathing. Shall we lose the next two generations by default? Many churches in the past century sought to be relevant. Unfortunately, many of them became relativistic in meaning instead of in mode. The internet has enormous potential to avoid that trap. One way is to retain orthodox content, but use new medium. These tools—contrary to deconstructionism—are fundamentally logocentric. We have home court advantage (Jn. 1:1);

content will be king in the end. After a while, even with enormous information available, an ideological construct is needed for analysis and meaning. Christianity will always be superior in that regard. The Word will triumph in the end. The era of geek-oidal experimentation is over (1990). The age of elitism and experts is fading (1990-1995). The era of wide use is beginning. And in that environment, accurate, rational, and lasting thought will win out. Does the world have better ideas? No, it's just ahead of us in the tools right now. But we'll catch up. In closing there are four compelling reasons to begin internet ministries. Depending on other factors (technical assistance, economics, giftedness, desire, vision), these four reasons match the goals of our internet ministry below. Four compelling reasons to get on the highway are:

- (1) The WWW offers an inexpensive and timely mass-communication tool;
- (2) The WWW offers high quality and quantity research data;
- (3) The WWW can drastically reduce the price of quality/quantity publishing;
- (4) The WWW will be second nature to the next generations. Those not conversant may be left behind. Our goals, therefore, are to help: Every church/ministry improve its communication with users (email for church members soon); Every church be an educator (access to seminaries, bible colleges, journals, etc.; also its own materials) Every church/ministry a publisher; Every church/ministry a discipler: there's a new generation to reach. We hope these four compelling reasons and four goals will help Christians clarify their own needs in light of the categories of users above.

We are indebted to Dr. David W. Hall for this article. He is associated with The Kuyper Institute, 190 Manhattan Ave. Oak Ridge, TN 37830, (615) 483-9888 voice (615) 483-5581 fax. URL: <http://www.usit.net/public/CAPO/ckuyper.html> This article was used with permission and was reprinted from *Premise*, vol. 3, no. 6 (July 1996).

"Terrible Honesty in an Age of Sentimentalism:"

An Interview with Dr. Ann Douglas

by

"Modern Reformation"

Hailed as "one of the leading feminists of our time," Dr. Ann Douglas is Professor of American Studies at Columbia University and has also taught at Princeton and Harvard. Her highly acclaimed work, *The Feminization of American Culture*, was followed recently by *Terrible Honesty: Mongrel Manhattan in the 1920's*. One of Dr. Douglas's main theses is that the demise of Calvinism led to a sentimentalism in religion that shaped the larger society. Although Dr. Douglas is committed to a much broader theological perspective than we would embrace, her critique is trenchant. It is an especially appropriate topic in relation to our understanding of Christ's saving work in our time and place.

Modern Reformation: You talk a lot about sentimentalism. Is that part of the dismantling process in the 19th century?

Dr. Douglas: Yes, it is. Calvinism had experienced sustained attacks, especially in the eighteenth century, with the founding of such groups as the Universalists and then, of course, the Unitarians. The liberals, headed by Unitarians and Universalists and some Congregationalists as well, began to say as we enter the 19th century, 'No, if God loves human beings, he understands and sympathizes with human beings. He wouldn't ask them to do something or believe something that would go against their own needs or desires.' There's that line in Job: 'Though he slay me, yet will I worship him,' and this was the Calvinistic ethos that the liberals simply could not accept—that idea that God is much greater and larger than our own happiness. Calvinism wasn't saying that God wanted to be cruel, but that his plans are so much vaster and grander than anything human beings can conceive. The liberals could not accept this view of God, due in part to the humanist tradition, but it is also partly commercial: You know, if we've got to sell ourselves now—since the churches are now

self-supporting rather than dependent on state-funding—is this the adspiel, so to speak, that will best sell our product?

Modern Reformation: Today, especially in what is being called the church growth movement, we hear, in varying degrees, that we must tone down doctrinal distinctives and meet felt needs, focus on healing and wholeness, and prefer soft inspiration to hard sayings. Soft lights, soft sermons, soft choruses caressing the air, have become the rage. Instead of "Eternal Father, Strong To Save," we sing about walking with Jesus alone in a garden "while the dew is still on the roses," or, in the words of one chorus, "I keep falling in love with him over and over and over and over again."

Doctor Douglas: Right, this is straight out of the liberal Unitarian, sentimental tradition of the last century. Women, by far, comprised the largest number of churchgoers and they were staffing mission boards, Sunday school classes, and any other church position they could, at a time when they could not vote or purchase property. As writers, moral reformers, Sunday school teachers... women transformed the church and they wondered, 'Why do we have to have all this theology and an emphasis on sin and the need for redemption? Why isn't the home the model for God? Why shouldn't the things we do and hear in church suit us where we are and woo us where we are, rather than expecting this radical change of heart that Calvinism had required?'

Modern Reformation: That's an interesting point. A few years ago, Christianity Today ran a cover story on a so-called "megashift" in evangelical theology, from the 'courtroom' model that emphasizes sin, guilt, judgment, and the need for an atonement and justification, to a more 'relational' model. It was a switch from the courtroom to the family room, toning down the tough theology in favor of a more therapeutic approach. Do you see this

Terrible Honesty in an Age of Sentimentalism

as in some way the arrival of the sentimental creed firmly within that same evangelical Protestant establishment that ended up leaving liberal Protestantism over these same issues early this century?

Doctor Douglas: Oh, it is. I could quote you chapter and verse of ministers and evangelical women writers and reformers in the 1830's who said exactly the same thing—a sense that we need a more human God, a God who is nearer and will understand us better. It's a tough issue, and Calvinists weren't saying that God is not uncaring [caring?]. The problem with this whole sentimental tradition, which you're describing in the 20th century and I'm describing in the 19th, is that once you drop the idea that God is a judge, you do seem to weaken things. To some extent, my own sympathies lie with the Calvinist tradition, because I have enormous respect for the intellectual and spiritual endeavor of trying to understand a world that, you admit, is not necessarily there just to make you happy.

Modern Reformation: In the 19th century, the Arminian revivalist Sam Jones thundered, 'God never did throw a javelin into the heart of his Son,' thus attacking the classical doctrine of the substitutionary atonement as insufficiently moral and sensitive. Increasingly, there is this cry for a 'kinder, gentler' God in evangelism. Then you have the 'Re-Imaging' conference of mainline feminists, among whom was one speaker who declared, 'We don't need guys hanging on crosses with blood dripping and all that weird stuff.' As strange as the parallel may seem, is there a connection here between Arminian revivalists and liberal Unitarians that makes today's evangelicals and liberals more similar than we might have thought? In reaction against offense of the Cross, many came to see Christ more as a caring nurturer (a mother, as you say in your book), rather than as a bloody sacrifice. Doesn't this make unlikely bedfellows?

Doctor Douglas: Of course, it is part of the whole thing. Again, it does have to do with that sense that, 'Let's not make all of this pain and suffering.' Surely, one replies, 'Of course, let's not. Faith is also a matter of joy'—something a Calvinist would have believed also. The problem is that there is injustice in the world and there is suffering. By constantly softening Christian doctrine, there is a danger that you are simply going to efface them altogether, and people are going to be left in a real way unguided and left to themselves, as they already are.

Modern Reformation: So consumerism is all one is left with in this bargain.

Doctor Douglas: Well, that's the danger. I am not on the side of the fundamentalists, but there is a kind of rush toward accommodation these days, to get rid of all the elements that don't suit our own causes. Two things seem clear to me: one, that the liberalization is here to stay, at least for the foreseeable future, and that most of the groups that are fighting it are doing so on the wrong front: on the social and moral issues. This seems to me to simply be a continuation of this process of turning God's terms into human terms. I'm not saying they are not important issues, but they are social and political; they are not theological issues. It seems clear that we're going to go on in this more humanized fashion. At the same time, it seems to me that life is such that most people who believe in something, however they describe it, are going to need a faith and a concept of God that includes rather than mitigates or denies the harsh realities of life as we experience it.

Modern Reformation: This is what you call, 'terrible honesty'?

Doctor Douglas: Well, this is especially in relation to the 1920's, when America's leading artists and cultural figures were still dealing with theological questions, whether Ernest Hemingway, who described his "*Sun Always Rises*" as a story about

Terrible Honesty in an Age of Sentimentalism

how people go to hell, or F. Scott Fitzgerald, who said the ultimate question was you standing in a white light before your God. These very secular writers were still speaking in terms of saving souls: What constitutes a life lived in the sight of God? In Europe, Karl Barth was launching the Neo-Orthodox movement, a revival of these older views of sin and the need for salvation. How did one explain the Holocaust without an almost Calvinist sense of original sin? Difficult explanations may get in the way of sentimentalism, but they are ultimately a solace because they match difficult realities.

Modern Reformation: Studies of evangelical seminarians and the laity have shown that, in spite of whatever they may hold officially, when asked whether they view the self as essentially innocent, the findings are startling. Seventy-seven percent of the nation's evangelicals believe that "man is by nature basically good." Is this the triumph of the Sentimental Creed even over the body of Protestants who have at least officially attempted to defend classical Christianity?

Doctor Douglas: Sure it is, because the arguments in the last century revolved around the question, 'Can you really tell me that children are really born sinful?' The Bible, after all, says that the imaginations of man's heart are evil continually. Now I think we all feel that that's a bit too strong, but the notion that the human heart is essentially innocent seems to me to reflect denial rather than optimism.

Modern Reformation: George Lindbeck at Yale says that the shift in convictions can be measured by the fact that only liberal sentimentalists could swallow Norman Vincent Peale in the '50s, but today evangelicals accept the same message in the form of Robert Schuller. Sermons on sin and grace, with the Cross at the center, are often replaced with the focus on my happiness and self-esteem. Are you saying that positions that would have been regarded as more in line with Unitarian, liberal sen-

timentalism are now easily marketed in conservative circles? In other words, would someone like Robert Schuller have been considered an enemy of the Faith in the earliest days of Harvard, Yale, and Princeton ?

"How did one explain the Holocaust without an almost Calvinist sense of original sin? Difficult explanations may get in the way of sentimentalism, but they are ultimately a solace because they match difficult realities."

Doctor Douglas: Yes, very much so. Harvard became the bastion of Unitarianism by the early nineteenth century, but early on that would have been true. The emphasis on therapy is really the big distinction: Do you see faith as therapy? We are moving steadily toward a therapeutic world order. Now, much of this is so admirable. Good therapy has a huge claim, but it isn't really theology-friendly because it's pragmatic. I believe in the Twelve Steps programs.

They work. But there has to be some sense that there are other realities out there. Before the therapeutic triumph there was this sense that denying one's desires and one's importance was a sign of character. Getting one's life in order is a good thing, but it is not the only thing—or even the ultimate thing. When Roosevelt struggled to understand Hitler and the Nazis, he was at a loss until he was given a book of theology and was able to finally see in a bit deeper to the human condition. More liberal explanations just couldn't explain Hitler to him.

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The Biblical Foundation of the Diaconate

by

George W. Knight III

The word Deacon, which designates a specific office in the church, translates the Greek word *diakonos* which has been rendered in English by Deacon in Phil. 1:1 and 1 Tim. 3:6 and 12 where the translators thought that the context indicated that this special office was in view. In doing so they were using one of the specialized senses of the Greek word *diakonos* which means in its most basic sense “servant” (cf. for example Mt. 22:11; John 2:5,9). Thus the word is used of all Christians of their relationship to the Lord and to one another (cf. Mt. 20:25-28, Mk. 10:42-45; John 12:26). And it is also used of those serving the church as leaders, and in those cases the English translation is often that of “minister”, indicating a slightly more restricted sense of the Greek word *diakonos* (cf. Eph. 6:21; Col. 4:7; 1 Tim. 4:6). These church officers, or leaders, are designated by other terms, such as elders, overseers, pastors, and teachers. But those officers whose role is so characteristic of service are always in the New Testament designated only by the term Deacon (servant), using *diakonos* in this specialized sense of a particular church officer.

That designation of servant links these officers with their great example and model, Jesus Christ the Servant of the Lord. He points to his own life of service as the model for Christians when he says in Mark 10:43-45: “whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve...” One of the ways that Jesus served was in feeding the multitudes and in caring for the needy. He showed particular compassion for widows and welcomed little ones to himself and blessed them. In this activity he fulfilled that which James summarizes as the essence of pure religion: “Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress...” (James 1:27). He is the model for all Christians and particularly for Deacons.

Deacons are mentioned in Paul’s letter to the Philippians and in his first letter to Timothy as recognized officers in the church. But where and how does the office of the deacon first manifest itself in the New Testament? The answer to that question is to be found in the Apostolic action of instituting a separate group of men to assist them and have special responsibilities. We read about that decision and its outcome in Acts 6 where the Apostles indicate to the disciples that they should choose seven men from among themselves for a particular responsibility.

The warrant for seeing those seven men in Acts 6 as the first deacons is evidenced by the following considerations. First, even though the word “deacon” (*diakonos*) is not used in the passage to designate these seven men, their task, “to serve [wait on] tables” (Acts 6:2), is related in the Greek text by the verb cognate to the noun “deacon” (*diakoneo*). And this relationship is not only one of language but also of task. The task of serving tables is certainly appropriate for those who will be later called servants or deacons. Second, the particular responsibilities of apostles and the seven men indicated in Acts 6 is virtually identical to the particular responsibilities of elders (or overseers) and deacons stated in other passages in the New Testament. And just as apostles have alongside of them the seven men so also the elders (or overseers) have alongside of them the deacons (Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:1-13). The apostles speak of their own labors as that of the word and prayer (Acts 6:5), not to mention ruling, and the same function is that given to elders or bishops (overseers) (cf., e.g., Acts 20:28; 1 Tim. 3:2, 3; Titus 1:9). The seven men are called to serve in Acts 6:2 and 3 (*diakoneo*) and the same is said of the deacons in I Tim. 3:10 and 13 (*diakoneo*). Third, the seven men are to be chosen from those who manifest certain spiritual qualifications (Acts 6:3). The Deacons are to be chosen from men who manifest similar spiritual qualifications (I Tim. 3:8-10 and 12). Although the two sets of qualifications are not

The Biblical Foundations of the Diaconate

identical, the more specific list in I Timothy 3 could easily be seen as the specifications of the more general outline of Acts 6. There is no obstacle to equating the seven men and the Deacons and much to commend it.

The diaconal work in view in Acts 6 is initially carried on by the Apostles. They do so because of two reasons. First, the work committed to the people of God is often best, but not exclusively, carried on by the church through its officers or representatives. Second, it would appear that the Apostles include within their function and office the regular functions and offices of the church, namely that of elder and deacon. By analogy, it may be correctly presumed that the office of elder also includes the functions and office of deacon. This may be the reason why only elders are elected in the new churches mentioned in Acts 14:23 and in Titus 1:5ff.

The Apostles, however, in Acts 6 determine that they can no longer adequately handle the diaconal function and particularly that they cannot do so without forsaking that function which is their prime responsibility, i.e., the Word of God (Acts 6:2). Thus the office of the first deacons, the seven men, comes into existence to continue to meet the specific physical needs of the widows, especially their need for food (Acts 6:1 and 2), and also at the same time to help the apostles and relieve them of “this task” (Acts 6:3 NASB, “this responsibility” NIV). These seven men in their ministry of serving tables do so as men “of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom” (Acts 6:3 NASB). This account serves as a model for determining the ministry of deacons since nowhere else in the Scriptures are their tasks specified. This model shows them performing a spiritual ministry to those within the church who need the basic necessities of life provided for them. This is the first and main principle with which this account provides us. The second and related principle is that of providing assistance to those who rule and teach in the church and carrying out those “tasks” or “responsibilities” which must be accomplished by the officers of the church and which the elders cannot do without detriment to their main function as the spiritual pastors of the people of God. But these other tasks which they may appropriately be assigned must not cause the deacons themselves to

forsake the specific task of deacons, namely, the ministry of mercy to those in need.

That the deacons work in subjection to the elders and their rule, even in the area of finances and, specifically, the funds for the needy, is not only evident from the fact that the elders are required to rule over the entire church and all its organizations and officers, including the deacons, but also is demonstrated by the particular passage of Acts 11:27-30. The famine relief funds sent to Jerusalem are given over to the elders (verse 30). The elders, like the apostles, are to be concerned for the victims of the famine and oversee and provide for them. Thus the funds come to the elders. But like the apostles, even though it is not stated in the text and does not need to be stated in the light of Acts 6, we may presume that the elders committed this business to the deacons to accomplish the actual distribution.

It might be argued from the further activity of Stephen and Philip (Acts 8:5ff.), who are listed among the seven men of Acts 6 (verse 5), that their activity indicates that deacons should also be evangelists, i.e., preachers. Certainly Philip in Acts 8 is an evangelist and is engaged in preaching in a very full sense of the word. However, it is not as one of the seven men whose job it is to serve tables for the widows in Jerusalem that he is engaged in these activities away from Jerusalem. This distinction and evaluation is borne out by the text of Acts 21:8 where Philip’s ministry as an evangelist is distinguished from his being, or having been, one of the seven men: “. . . Philip the evangelist, one of the Seven.” This is also borne out by the description of the activities specifically given to the seven men in Acts 6. They were to “serve tables” and assist the widows and engage in similar activities in order to relieve the Apostles so that they could preach and minister the Word. The description of the task of the seven men in Acts 6—especially when seen in the light of what the Apostles were to do in contrast with them—defines the diaconal work of the seven men and the deacons and does not include what Philip later does. His activity later is his work as an evangelist not as one of the seven men, and these two activities in which Philip was engaged one after the other must not be confused with one another.

The Biblical Foundations of the Diaconate

This distinction is also borne out by a comparison of the lists of qualifications for overseers and deacons in 1 Tim. 3:1-13. It is said of overseers (elders) that they must be “able to teach” (verse 2, cf. Titus 1:9 and also the further distinction among elders in 1 Tim. 5:17) and that they must take care of God’s church (verse 5), neither of these two things is said of deacons in 1 Tim. 3:8-13, even though the deacons and elders have other qualifications that are common or similar.

Certain distinctive qualifications of deacons indicated in 1 Tim. 3:8-13 may well help to underscore the sensitive and important interpersonal relationships which deacons will be involved in while ministering to the needy. They would not of themselves establish the area of labor, as Acts 6 does explicitly, but on the background of that passage their meaning and significance are more readily recognized.

The reference to women or wives in 1 Tim. 3:11 is set in the midst of a passage which describes those to whom the designation deacon () is applied as men (cf. verses 8 and 12, the latter in which the deacon is said to be the husband). Who are these females referred to in verse 11? Several answers have been given, but because of the brevity of the paper I will restrict these comments to the answer I consider most in harmony with the biblical context here and elsewhere.¹ The Greek word (in the plural) which is rendered “wives” by the NIV, and which is rendered by other translations as “women”, can mean either depending upon the context. Its use in the very close context of both verses 2 and 12 with the meaning wife favors the meaning wife here. This rendering also explains other aspects of verse 11. If indeed the wife is in view, as I believe she is, this would explain the location of the verse in the middle of the discussion of the deacon and right before the statement about his marital and family qualifications. This statement about his wife is then the first of those familial statements and therefore it is not an intrusion. Furthermore, reference to his wife can best explain the absence of reference to marital fidelity for the

¹ For a fuller discussion see Dr. Knight’s, *The Pastoral Epistles* [NIGTC] on this verse.

wife which is otherwise always present (cf. 1 Tim. 3:2,12 and 5:9). The Greek transitional word —rendered in the NIV with the phrase “in the same way”—both distinguishes and correlates this verse and the one in it from and with the deacon. The distinguishing aspect shows that she is not a deacon or deaconess, and the correlating aspect shows that she is one who has similar qualifications and thus is qualified to assist her husband. The church today should give heed to both aspects of this verse and act accordingly. In the light of this passage and in the light of the fact that the Apostles specifically required the church to elect “men” in Acts 6:3 (as they did, Acts 6:5; the Greek word used in Acts 6:3 designates a “male” and is different from the Greek word that means a human being), it is best to understand the usage of with reference to Phoebe in Romans 16:1 to be used in the same general sense of servant as it is used in the only other reference in Romans (13:4ff.) and not as a designation of her as a deacon or deaconess (this general sense of servant is found in a number of modern translations). 1 Timothy 3 applies the title deacon to a male officer (verses 2 and 12). The consistency between Acts 6 and 1 Timothy 3 provides the biblical basis for deacons being men.

What consolation and encouragement is there for deacons in performing such tasks of service to the needy and such assistance to the elders? Many could be mentioned but let one suffice, that of the Apostle Paul himself in 1 Tim. 3:13: “Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus.”

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Resurrecting the Resurrection

(A Call for a Stronger Emphasis on this in our Preaching)

by G. I. Williamson

One of the undoubted articles of our historic Christian faith is surely the resurrection of the body (*anastasis*, in the Greek; *carnis resurrectionem*, in the Latin). And it is my contention that in selecting this item of biblical teaching rather than the destiny of the soul at death, this ancient creed correctly reflects the emphasis of the Bible. Paul the Apostle, for example, makes it very clear that his central focus for the future was not on what we call the intermediate state—when the soul is absent from the body and present with the Lord—but the final state when he will have part in the resurrection! For “indeed” he says, “I also count all things loss...that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ...that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection...if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead” (Philippians 3:8-11).

I realize that what I have pointed out here is so commonplace that you could well be tempted to say “so what? Isn’t this something we all believe in orthodox Reformed denominations?” And, of course, my answer is “yes!” And yet there have been several times lately when I have been both surprised and dismayed because of what seems to me to be a wrong change of focus. I refer to sermons that I have heard at funeral services in churches in which the doctrine of the resurrection of the body is still recognized as essential to the authentic Christian faith. The amazing thing is that—no doubt quite unintentionally—the whole focus was shifted from the glorious hope of the victory of the Christian over the grave in the final state, to the less glorious reality that the souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness and are with Christ. And it is my conviction that this phenomenon—which I believe is far too common—gives

undeniable proof of the fact that we of the orthodox faith are more influenced than we like to admit by the spiritual climate of the day.

We all know that Modernist ministers have long since ceased to believe in the resurrection of the body. That is why the funerals they conduct are essentially in line with the thinking of the ancient Greeks—that is, that the better part of man (the soul, or mind, or spirit) lives on, as distinct from the body. It is my conviction that this has a lot to do with the increasing popularity of cremation. Bible-believing Christians are confident, of course, that God will *also* resurrect the physical bodies of those who have been burned to ashes. But they have always been reluctant to dispose of the body in a way that might seem to suggest that it has no glorious future. Usually they have chosen—rightly, it seems to me—burial, after the example of Jesus himself, in the sure and certain hope of sharing bodily resurrection with him.

It is for this reason that I have tried to make it a practice—whenever I have been asked to preach the Word of God at a funeral—to emphasize this glorious doctrine. Here, it seems to me, is the way that we can make it very clear that we are willing to be fools for Christ. There will usually be people at funerals who are very cynical about death, and who consider themselves to be sophisticated enough in their scientific wisdom to know that the great articles of the Christian faith are nothing more than beautiful symbols. Here, then, is our opportunity to give them the kind of shock therapy that they need. What a wonderful opportunity to remind them that the ancient world, too, had its wisdom—its philosophers and cynics—who were absolutely convinced by the science of *that* day that there is no such thing as a bodily resurrection. As in our day so in Paul’s day, these sophisticated people were willing to hear almost

Resurrecting the Resurrection

anything else, but not about this kind of nonsense. “When they heard of the resurrection of the dead some mocked, while others said ‘We will hear you again on this matter.’” (Acts 17:32). Yet the inspired Apostle never held back regardless of these reactions. And the reason is that he understood the importance of this glorious teaching.

The reason is quite simple and is clearly stated by the Apostle. “For I delivered to you” he says, “first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures!” (I Cor. 15:3,4). Or, in other words the number one thing that we must preach is the doctrine of the atonement. But then, only second to that, the doctrine of the resurrection. And it is this doctrine that the Apostle goes on to expound at length through the rest of the 15th chapter of his letter to the Corinthians. And what ought to hit us today—right between the eyes—is the way that he ties the bodily resurrection of Jesus to our own bodily resurrection. For “if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how is it” cries the Apostle “that some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?” In other words, if there is no general bodily resurrection of all God’s people, then Christ himself is not risen.

It is easy to imagine that our knowledge is so far advanced, in this modern age, that we face difficulties that were not faced by the ancients. It is on this basis, as a matter of fact, that even the neo-orthodox theologians such as Barth and Brunner were unwilling and therefore unable to believe in what John Murray has called ‘the drama’ of the grave yard. “In the case of Jesus there was the resuscitation of that material body that was laid in the tomb. And without this there was no resurrection...Jesus had ‘flesh’ after his resurrection because he rose in the body with which he suffered. And this is just to say that there was the resurrection of his flesh. Jesus’ own witness knows nothing less (Luke 24:39). And neither does the witness of the apostles” (*Collected Writings*, Vol. 4. p. 300). Therefore, “since by a man came death, by a Man also came the resurrection of the dead...as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all (that is,

all who are in Him) shall be made alive” (I Cor. 15:21,22).

There is, of course, great comfort in the thought that “the souls of believers are, at their death, made perfect in holiness” and that they “do immediately pass into glory...,” but let us not forget the equally important truth that “their bodies, being still united to Christ, do rest in their graves, till the resurrection” (Shorter Catechism Ans: 37). And even more important let us remember that: “At the resurrection, believers, being raised up in glory, shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgment, and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity” S.C. 38)—which, according to my reading of the Scriptures, will be in the new heaven and the new earth in which we will dwell in our glorified bodies. For, though “it does not yet appear what we shall be, we know that we shall be like him when we see him as he is” (1 John 3:2).

It is my plea that we cease to preach sermons at funerals that even Modernists can take “their way.” Rather let us boldly proclaim the message that the wisdom of this world will mock today just as it always has. True, we may offend unbelievers. But we will also comfort the godly. And who knows, it may also be that God will use the mighty hammer of his word to break some rocks in pieces.

“It is precisely because the resurrection of Jesus from the dead took place in all the concreteness of datable, calendar history, in history that is as concrete, factual, and phenomenal as the situation in which we men find ourselves in the desperation of our sin, and misery, and death, that it is the power of God to us.” — John Murray

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to his abundant mercy, has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” — the Apostle Peter

Jus Divinum Regiminis Ecclesiastici, or The Divine Right of Church-Government. [By] The Ministers of Sion College London, 1654. Revised and Edited by David W. Hall, 1995, Naphtali Press, P. O. Box 141084, Dallas TX 75241. Reviewed by Rev. Ralph A. Pontier, Pastor of the Redeemer Alliance Reformed Church in Orange City, Iowa.

Jus Divinum is a must read for all concerned with doing things “decently and in order” in Christ’s church. Originally written at the time of the Westminster Assembly, it is a thorough and eminently biblical presentation of the case for presbyterial church government. It will undergird and fortify all those committed to Presbyterian or Reformed church government, demonstrating that the structures handed down to them from the past are more than a matter of mere tradition. The book also employs a pastoral approach designed to “gain rather than grieve” those who dissent from the arguments presented. In an age where pragmatism and relativism rule, this book is a light shining in the darkness. It will do much to guard against the temptation to discard the structures of the past because they have been abused or because something else may appear more suited to the tenor of the times.

It begins with a valuable article by the editor, “The Original Intent of Westminster” describing the historical setting of the work and citing numerous authorities demonstrating that *Jus Divinum* represents the full and unfettered views of the Westminster divines, who, because of pressures from the Parliament under whose authority they labored, were not able in the Westminster standards, to give full expression to all their views. Though the Westminster Confession and Directories do not contradict the views of the Presbyterian majority of the Westminster Assembly, they were modified under duress from the very Erastian Parliament. Therefore, *Jus Divinum*, published anonymously to protect its authors from reprisal, is an invaluable resource to understanding the full thinking of that historic body.

The editor has also included in his article a section on the nature of church power, which by itself, may be almost enough to convince any congregationalist or independent that the church assemblies should have more than merely an advisory voice. Summarizing ideas from the book, the editor shows that church power differs from civil power not in the extent of enforcement but only in the agency of enforcement. Christ bestows on His church officers real authority that is to be submitted to and obeyed wherever it is properly manifested.

The book displays careful, logical, and thorough scholarship of a kind rarely found in modern works. It is divided into two main sections, the first setting forth general principles of church government and the types of proofs that may be adduced to establish the biblical form of church government, and the second describing the biblical form of church government with proofs and objections answered.

The first two chapters of Part I briefly set forth the main argument of the book, that there is for the visible church a divinely revealed and appointed form of church government which is obligatory for all Christ’s churches. This government is *jus divinum* that is, by divine law or divine right. The thesis is essentially the same as that summarized in the Belgic Confession, Article 30 that the “Church must be governed by that spiritual polity which our Lord has taught us in His Word.”

The rest of Part I briefly sets forth the grounds by which anything may be claimed to be by divine right, in ascending importance:

- “1. By Light of Nature;
2. By obligatory Scripture Examples;
3. By divine Approbation;
4. By divine Acts;
5. By divine Precepts or Mandates.”

The main body of the book is found in Part II which sets forth the general nature of church

government, namely its power and authority, and distinguishes church government from other types of government. It proves that the proper “receptacle” of church government is not the civil magistrate, as in Erastianism, nor the community of the faithful, as in congregationalism, but in “Christ’s own officers,” namely pastors and

By careful examination and collation of biblical data, which by themselves might appear incidental, a clear pattern of church organization emerges.

teachers, ruling elders and deacons. Special attention is given to show how the officers are the subject of church government “severally and jointly in different Ruling Assemblies” showing “the Divine Right of Congregational Elderships, Classical Presbyteries, Synods or Councils.” It concludes by adducing several proofs of the real but not absolute power of the greater assemblies over the lesser assemblies, showing the “Divine Right of Appeals from the lesser to the greater Ruling Assemblies.” Several helpful appendixes and indexes have been added by the editor.

Of special note—and worth—is Chapter 12 setting forth an analysis of the churches of Jerusalem, Antioch, Ephesus, and Corinth showing that in each city there were multiple house congregations under one presbyterial government. By careful examination and collation of biblical data, which by themselves might appear incidental, a clear pattern of church organization emerges. Such a pattern of organization, which was under the direct supervision of Christ’s apostles, must, contend the authors, be received as Christ’s rule for the church of all later ages.

Chapter 13 is also a treasure of rich exposition of Acts 15 and related texts, demonstrating the

need and warrant for provincial, national and ecumenical synods.

Editor David Hall deserves our commendation and thanks for making available this classic reprint.

Beyond Promises, A Biblical Challenge to Promise Keepers by David Hagopian and Douglas Wilson, paperback, 270 pages, Canon Press, Moscow, Idaho 1996. \$14.00. Reviewed by the Editor

This is an important book. It is very well researched and exemplifies the biblical mandate to ‘speak the truth in love.’ The authors are more than willing to give credit where they can, as they do in the opening chapter. Yet the disturbing facts concerning this rapidly growing movement are such that, in the end—after a fair and extensive demonstration of the unbiblical aspects of the whole thing—one can only wonder that so many evangelical Christians have been so undiscerning.

The book is divided into four sections. The first section—consisting of a single chapter—properly notes some of the positive features. The second—which has six chapters—contains a fine exposition of basic Reformed doctrine in interaction with some of the shallow and inconsistent thinking that marks the PK movement. This is followed by a third section—consisting of 8 chapters—dealing with the seven promises that serve as a kind of creedal masthead for the movement. It is in this section that the authors convincingly demonstrate the stubborn fact that PK is not so much a solution as it is “a major part of the problem” (p. 208). If this sounds too severe I can only recommend that you read these chapters for yourself. The final section—consisting again of one chapter—is a call to both the PK and to the Church to rise to more biblical standards.

I would urge all office bearers of the OPC to read—and ponder—this book.