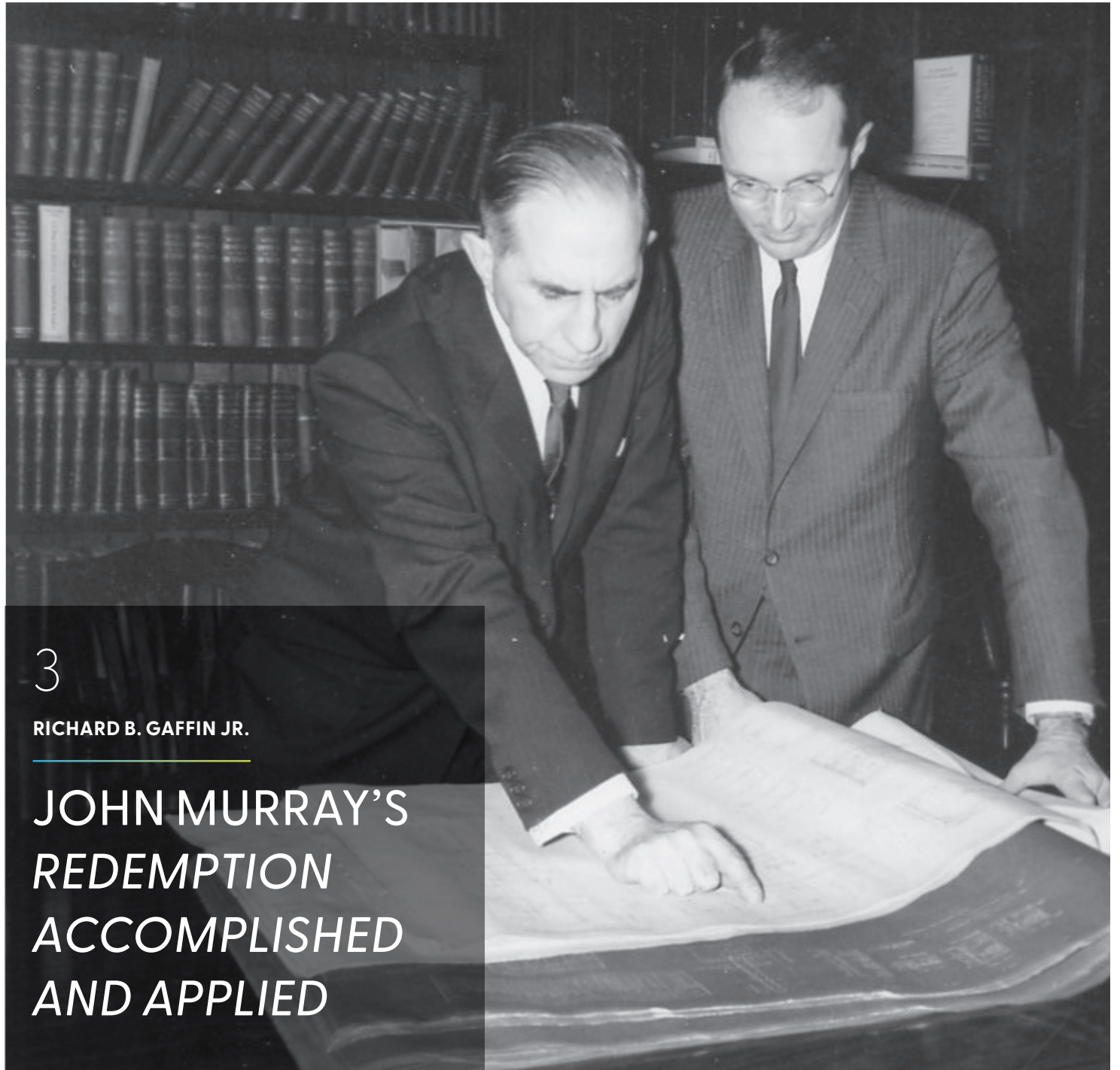


NEW HORIZONS

OCTOBER 2024

IN THE ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



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JOHN MURRAY'S REDEMPTION ACCOMPLISHED AND APPLIED



RICHARD B. GAFFIN JR.

John Murray (1898–1975), a native of Scotland, taught systematic theology at Westminster Theological Seminary (WTS) from 1930 until his retirement in 1965. He was ordained as an OPC minister by the Presbytery of New York and New England, of which he was a member until his death. For many decades, ministers (my father and I were both his students) and others in the OPC and beyond owed their first in-depth exposure to sound doctrine to their times in his classroom. His memorable lecturing radiated a profound love for God and the truth of his Word that made a decisively formative and lasting impression.

Murray also wrote extensively, his publications invariably marked by his characteristic clarity and precision of expression. Of these, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, the primary focus of this article, has proven to be the most widely read. Next year will mark the seventieth anniversary of its appearance, and a new edition is being published by Westminster Seminary Press. There is good reason for this enduring reception, for in this book Murray instructs a broad audience in a singularly valuable and edifying manner regarding matters that, as the title indicates, are at the heart of the gospel and so of paramount doctrinal concern, especially within the tradition of biblical and confessional Reformed orthodoxy in which he stands.¹

What is the gospel, the good news it communicates? This is a question for which the church must always have

a clear and robust answer because nothing less than its existence is staked in the answer. This demand is all the more pressing in times like the present when *gospel* continues to have a currency so broad and varied or so vague that often even among Christians its use is misinformed and misleading.

Scripture is replete with the requisite answer. Expressed most succinctly, the gospel is “the gospel of your salvation” (Eph. 1:13). The content of the gospel message is, in a word, salvation. So, the question about the gospel becomes the question about salvation or, used interchangeably, redemption (Luke 1:68–69).

It does not overstate, then, to say that the truth of the gospel stands or falls with the distinction, made and kept clear, between redemption accomplished and applied. Much error and confusion about the gospel stems from the failure to grasp or maintain this distinction properly. In this regard, it is worth highlighting that the distinction, as essential as it is, is irreversible. Clearly enough, simply from the terms employed, “accomplishment” has priority in the sense that it is the precondition and basis for any “application.” Without accomplishment there can be no application; the latter presupposes and depends upon the existence of the former. Application does not somehow constitute accomplishment. Nor is the truth of redemption and the gospel to be defined in terms of its application, by your or my experience of redemption.

But, with that noted, the necessity of application must not be slighted. The multiple benefits of the redemption accomplished by Christ are not “for Christ’s own private use” (Calvin’s arresting phrase). Rather, those benefits are saving benefits that have been acquired and are secured by him in order to be shared with others. Specifically, as Christ’s death, together with his resurrection, is “for our sins” (1 Cor. 15:3–4), these saving benefits are for sinners; they are to be shared with needy sinners. In other words, for the accomplished redemption to be effective it must be applied. And that application must take place in the life, the actual life history, of the sinner. As it has been put succinctly, “Without application, redemption is not redemption.” The *irreversible distinction* between accomplishment and application involves their *inseparable connection*.

INSEPARABLE CONNECTION

Murray’s treatment manifests this truth in a most effective and satisfying fashion. In the preface he calls attention to the “difference . . . in the mode of treatment between Part I and Part II.” This disparity exists because, unlike the former (on redemption accomplished), the material in the latter (on its application) originated as a series of articles written for the readers of *The Presbyterian Guardian*. Also,

this may explain in part why Part II is nearly twice as long as Part I. Nothing is said about the source of Part I with its slightly more academic tone, but as a former student I recognize the content as that offered in his treatment of the atonement in a required course on soteriology taught multiple times annually at WTS.

For Part I, its fourfold division—Necessity, Nature, Perfection, and Extent—facilitates an effective and instructive overall treatment of the atonement. Among other strengths is his treatment of the *necessity* of the atonement. With an eye to the *Cur Deus Homo* question (the reason for the incarnation), he focuses the issue in terms of the distinction between “hypothetical necessity” (held, he notes, by Augustine and Aquinas) and “consequent absolute necessity” (“the more classic Protestant position”).

Arguing emphatically for the latter enables him to make clear a crucially important reality that is not to be missed for a sound understanding of the atonement. On the one hand, given the fall, God was not compelled by an antecedent absolute necessity, however understood, to provide atonement for sin. However, consequent upon his entirely uncoerced and sovereignly free and loving determination to atone for sin, the incarnation of the Son culminating in his death on the cross is not a theoretical option but an absolute necessity. Given the immutable demands inherent in his person, only God can save sinners, but God *only as God* cannot save sinners. “He . . . did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all. . . . by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh” (Rom. 8:32, 3), and he did that because, given his free determination to redeem his “elect” (v. 33), he *could* not spare his Son. No other way to atone for sin was possible. In the words of the hymn “There Is a Green Hill Far Away” concerning the *incarnate* Son, “There was no other good enough / To pay the price of sin; / He only could unlock the gate / Of heav’n, and let us in.”

“But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more” (Rom. 5:20 κκϿ). This super-abounding truth is shown with admirable clarity in treating the *nature* of the atonement. The obedience, active and passive, of Christ is “generic . . . the unifying and integrating principle.” In light of the compounding and complicating exigencies created by our sin, four “specific categories” delineate the substitutionary obedience that removes these different liabilities. These are sacrifice, propitiation, reconciliation, and redemption. “Just as sacrifice is directed to the need created by our *guilt*, propitiation to the need that arises from the *wrath* of God, and reconciliation to the need arising from our *alienation* from God, so redemption is directed to the *bondage* to which our sin has consigned us” (my emphasis).

In discussing the *extent* of the atonement, Murray’s careful and compelling exegesis brings him to this con-

clusion: “The inference is inevitable that those for whom Christ died are those and those only who die to sin and live to righteousness.” And, “The conclusion is apparent—the death of Christ in its specific character as atonement was for those and those only who are in due time the partakers of the new life of which Christ’s resurrection is the pledge and pattern.”

“This,” he then adds, “is another reminder that the death and resurrection of Christ are inseparable.” This observation prompts the further reminder—too often insufficiently appreciated—that Christ’s resurrection is as integral and necessary for the once-for-all accomplishment of redemption as is his obedience unto death. The precious and undeniable “it-is-finished” efficacy of the cross in removing death as the just wages of sin is only realized and revealed in the resurrection and not before, not until then. Minus his resurrection, the accomplishment of redemption remains not only incomplete but in fact unachieved. “And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins” (1 Cor. 15:17; Rom. 4:25: he was “raised for our justification”).

Part II, on the application of salvation, deals with what is termed the *ordo salutis* (order of salvation); the two—application and the *ordo*—are often and fairly viewed as virtually equivalent and used interchangeably. This *ordo*, Murray shows convincingly, has in view (1) that the application of the salvation accomplished by Christ has a fullness marked by multiple elements or aspects, and (2) that these are not received by sinners in an arbitrary or confused fashion but in an ordered pattern with fixed connections among them. The failure to recognize the existence of this ordering with its interrelationships runs the risk of ignoring or misrepresenting individual aspects or acts and so distorting the work of Christ applied as a whole.

UNION WITH CHRIST

Especially noteworthy in Part II is the chapter on “Union with Christ.” Though occurring in this part dealing with the application of redemption, Murray shows that in its scope this union is not limited to application. Rather, from beginning to end, from its pretemporal plan to its eternal consummation, “Union with Christ is the central truth of the whole doctrine of salvation.” With edifying clarity he demonstrates conclusively from Scripture that “All to which the people of God have been predestined in the eternal election of God, all that has been secured and procured for them in the once-for-all accomplishment of redemption, and all that by God’s grace they will become in the state of consummated bliss is embraced within the compass of union and communion with Christ.”

Accordingly, concerning its place and function within

the application of redemption specifically, union is plainly not subsumable within the *ordo salutis* as one coordinate component in series with others. Rather, it is the central and radiating benefit from which all the others—like regeneration, faith and repentance, justification, adoption, sanctification, and glorification—flow. Murray’s understanding of the role of union with Christ in the application of redemption is clearly akin to that expressed by Calvin in the opening words of Book Three of the *Institutes*: “First, we must understand that as long as Christ remains outside of us, and we are separated from him, all that he has suffered and done for the salvation of the human race remains useless and of no value for us.”

No more important words, I’m inclined to say, have been written about the nature as well as the necessity of the application of redemption. The heart of the *ordo salutis* is union with Christ, sharing with him by faith created by the Spirit in all the benefits of salvation he has secured. Westminster Larger Catechism (WLC) 69 reflects this truth: “. . . justification, adoption, sanctification, and whatever else, in this life, manifests their union with him.”

It is worth noting that Murray’s thinking about union with Christ apparently underwent some development or clarification subsequent to the publication of *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*. For instance, several years later in treating the *ordo salutis* in the course he taught on soteriology mentioned earlier, union was dealt with immediately following effectual calling and before the other elements in the *ordo*. This contrasts with the book, where the chapter on union is next to last. This repositioning in the course, with union presented as the initial result of effectual calling (“called into the fellowship of his Son,” 1 Cor. 1:9), enables a clearer and more effective focus on the centrality of union and how it is antecedent in the sense that justification, adoption, sanctification, and other benefits of application flow from union, as WLC 69 indicates.

A further observation may be made about union with Christ in relation to sanctification. The chapter in the book provides a helpful and incisive treatment of sanctification seen largely as ongoing, as a never complete, lifelong process. However, while the rudiments, the initial indications, are certainly present, missing is a clear and explicit presentation of the definitive, as distinct from the progressive, aspect of sanctification, a definitive reality that Murray cogently delineated in articles published about a decade later (reprinted in volume 2 of his *Collected Writings*). In these articles he shows, with a focus on Romans 6 and related passages, that being irrevocably united with Christ as

crucified and resurrected entails a definitive, once-for-all breach with the dominion of sin. As a consequence of that union, although a struggle with indwelling sin is an ongoing reality for believers, they are no longer in overwhelming bondage to sin, but, having been set free from its controlling power, they are now permanently enslaved to righteousness and able to freely serve Christ as Lord.

This definitive aspect of sanctification—the necessary basis for its progressive aspect and without which growth in holiness is impossible and the all-too-real struggle with indwelling sin is hopeless—also finds a particularly rich and illuminating expression subsequent to *Redemption Accomplished and Applied* in the chapter, “The Dynamic of the Biblical Ethic,” in his *Principles of Conduct*.

In providing a jacket endorsement for Geerhardus Vos’s *Biblical Theology*, Murray wrote, “Dr. Vos is in my judgment, the most penetrating exegete it has been my privilege to know and, I believe, the most incisive exegete that has appeared in the English-speaking world in this century.” Such high and unalloyed praise reflects Murray’s controlling conviction that, with due attention to the help provided by the history of doctrine, sound exegesis is the lifeblood of systematic theology that would be true to Scripture in its doctrinal formulations. One of the notable strengths of this volume, as of Murray’s work as a whole, is that it reflects in such an exemplary fashion exegesis informed by biblical theology, the importance of which he learned from Vos, his former Princeton professor.

In the preface, particularly with “Redemption Accomplished” in view, Murray writes: “It is with some misgiving that I have ventured to offer for publication the following attempt to deal with an aspect of divine revelation that has been explored to such an extent. This present study cannot pretend to be in the same class as many of the superb contributions of both the more remote and the more recent past.” How thankful we should be that Murray did not allow these self-effacing misgivings to keep him from venturing as he has in this volume. For the result, quite contrary to his depreciating assessment, makes an indeed superb contribution, one that will continue to be, as it already has proven to be, for the enduring well-being of the church. **NH**

The author, an OP minister, taught at WTS from 1965 to 2010.

Notes

1. A bibliography of Murray’s publications is in volume 4 of his *Collected Writings*; missing there is his important article, “Structural Strands in New Testament Eschatology,” available at <https://kerux.com/doc/0603A2.asp>.



GEORGE KNIGHT: A PERSONAL REMINISCENCE



T. NATHAN TRICE

My first introduction to Dr. George W. Knight III was courtesy of my college professor, Dr. Henry Krabbendam. Dr. Knight was making a trip to Covenant College to promote a new seminary being founded in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and my esteemed professor invited me to a meal hosted by Dr. Knight. My first impressions of this southern gentleman and scholar were good, I recall, though they did not dissuade me from my original plans to attend another relatively new seminary in the fall of 1991: Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. A year and a half later, however, after a rewarding experience at Greenville, I found myself reaching out to Dr. Knight about a transfer to Knox Theological Seminary, where he served as Professor of Greek and New Testament Studies. He was very gracious in welcoming me into what would become the second graduating class of that institution.

PROFESSOR AND STUDENT

Dr. Knight and his wife, Virginia, were, in fact, gracious to welcome me into their very lives. For the first few weeks of



George and Virginia Knight in Fort Lauderdale

my sojourn in South Florida, they fed and housed me, and I remained a frequent guest in their house for the duration of my time at Knox, often trading my lawn-mowing service for Mrs. Knight's laundry service. As a typical seminarian, I plied Dr. Knight with endless exegetical and theological questions; with a smile on his face, and with eyes often closed for thought, he would unfold his perspective and convictions with humility and grace. I learned from Dr. Knight that a man who was willing to confess to an occasional uncertainty on a matter was a man you tended to listen to all the more closely when he was expressing deep conviction.

I also learned from Dr. Knight how to rightly handle the Word of God. In many a class in New Testament exegesis, I found myself spellbound at my professor's skillful handling of various key texts: first making various interpretations seem plausible to us all, then leading us inexorably to the only interpretation that accounted for all the nuances of the text. During my high school years, my father had introduced me to the writings of John Murray, and I had acquired a love for his method of humble but relentlessly biblical exegesis. Dr. Knight was a living model of what I had come to think of as the "Murray method" of exegesis, and, of course, he came by that naturally. Dr. and Mrs. Knight told me more than one story (some quite amusing) of their own friendship with Professor Murray during their seminary years at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. I think Dr. Knight would be honored by the comparison I have made here between him and Professor Murray, and I think it is a fair one.

Regarding his theological contributions to the church, I join many in testifying to a deep debt to Dr. Knight for his helpful writings on the subject of the biblical roles of men and women (he served as president of the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood during the first years

of our friendship), his careful but compelling argument for cessationism, his defense of what he called a “two-and-a-half office” view of church polity, his contribution to the church’s biblical stance on the ethics of abortion and divorce, and his long-standing special interest in the pastoral epistles (eventually publishing a volume in the New International Greek Testament Commentary series on 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus). I also remember as a student being very glad that I was introduced to the whole field of textual criticism under his scholarly and pastorally reassuring hand.

COLLEAGUES

Dr. Knight and I left Fort Lauderdale the same year: I with the intent to pursue further studies at Westminster Theological Seminary, and he with the intent to retire near his native Charlotte, North Carolina. A year and a half later, though, we would be again reunited: this time as colleagues in ministry. The Knights in their retirement joined the OPC congregation in Matthews, now called Resurrection Presbyterian, whose pulpit had just been vacated, and Dr. Knight was soon prevailed upon to become the stated supply of the congregation. Eventually the pastoral search committee began to look in the direction of a twenty-five-year-old bachelor, enrolled in the ThM program at Westminster Seminary. My eventual call as pastor to the church, despite my youth and inexperience, could not have taken place, I am sure, without a show of support for my candidacy from my old friend and mentor. He and I would become colleagues on the session of that congregation, which I still serve: I with a call as pastor, and he eventually with a call as teacher in the congregation.

Serving with Dr. Knight in the local church was as great a privilege as sitting under him as a student. I was sometimes asked what it was like having a theologian like George Knight listening to my first attempts at preaching, but I was always able to say that “the good doctor,” as we called him at the time, made it easy. There could not have been greater deference shown to his pastor, though many years his junior, and Dr. Knight’s wise contribution to sessional business was always with care for my leadership, symbolized by his consistent, respectful references to me as “Mr. Moderator.” I did come to have some differences of perspective from my mentor—for example, in the way we articulated covenant theology. But I eventually realized that Dr. Knight was ably articulating the Southern Presbyterian tradition with which he had a lifelong identification, while I was reflecting perspectives gleaned from

my time at Westminster Seminary. The graciousness with which Dr. Knight articulated his views, however, and the humility with which he engaged in disagreement, even with me, has profoundly shaped my own ambitions as a churchman.

With our congregation’s planting of a daughter church closer to the Knights’ home in South Carolina, the Knights eventually moved their membership and ministry to Redeemer Presbyterian Church in Charlotte, under the ministry of my friend Cliff Blair. Dr. Knight’s “true retirement” years, therefore, were spent somewhat removed from the fellowship that he and I had shared in former years. A few years ago, upon coming across something written by my mentor, I felt an awakening of fresh gratitude to him and resolved to express that to him once again. Those sentiments included the following:



I remember sitting with you in your home in Florida, hearing about the paper you intended then to present to the Evangelical Theological Society entitled “The Scriptures Were Written for Our Instruction.” I believe it was then published in JETS [Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society] shortly after I had taken up my duties as pastor at Matthews OPC in 1996. You should know that your good work is still bearing fruit! I have read it with great profit once more, with an even deeper sense of the importance of the issues you were contending for. And it has put me in remembrance of the many other ways you were such a formative influence on me in my training for ministry. I am so grateful, Dr. Knight, for your mentoring of me in those years.

George Knight’s passage into glory came on October 11, 2021, at the age of eighty-nine. Others have ably paid tribute to his larger life accomplishments as a theologian and churchman; it is an honor for me to have this opportunity to pay a more personal tribute to a dear mentor and friend. **NH**

The author is pastor of Resurrection Presbyterian in Matthews, North Carolina.

MACHEN, MODERNISM, AND ART



WILLIAM B. KESSLER

Virginia Woolf declared, “On or about December, 1910, human character changed.” She was commenting on the Post-Impressionist art exhibit held that year in London, England. A similar comment was made by New York City’s patron of all things modern Mabel Dodge during a similar show of modern art held at the National Guard Armory in 1913, now referred to as the Armory Show.

At the same time the Armory Show was drawing crowds, J. Gresham Machen published an article in the *Princeton Review* entitled “Christianity and Culture.” The opening of the Armory Show and the publishing of Machen’s article converging in the same month of the same year is historical irony. The show’s purpose was, in part, to shake up and change American culture. Machen’s purpose in his article was to sound an alarm over the changes occurring in American culture, which were given a disquieting face in the show’s Post-Impressionist art. Observing the sweeping changes taking place throughout Western culture and perceiving the power of modernism, a power not only capable of shaping human character, but of changing the church and her message, Machen called for Christians to engage their culture.

GUESS WHO’S COMING DOWN THE STAIRCASE

The early twentieth century was a time of tremendous upheaval throughout the West, but especially in the United States, due not only to dramatic social changes like mass immigration, urbanization, industrialization, and unrestrained capitalism, but also the transformation of institutions and centers of influence, thought, and power. The Armory Show signaled these changes. It provided a new language, a new ethos, and a new face in the arts that upset and even revolutionized the status quo. The star of the show was Marcel Duchamp’s painting, *Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2*. Painted in neutral browns and beiges, the painting is of a human figure abstracted, cubistic, mechanical, and machinelike (even robotic), trailing blurred images of itself down a staircase. Along with Pablo Picasso’s and George Braque’s cubism paintings, the show worked its way into popular American culture and its collective consciousness. People held cubist parties, showing off cubist furniture, preparing cubist food, and wearing cubist fashion designs. A mock children’s book was titled *The Cubies ABC*. All the major newspapers carried reviews of the show, and some carried parodies as well; in one, abstract human figures tumble down the frame of the cartoon with the caption, “The Rude Descending a Staircase (Rush Hour at the Subway).”

Machen understood that modernism was producing a new world order. But with all the revolutionary newness, and all the material progress, there was a perceptible loss in the spiritual realm, evidenced in the arts. In his introduction to *Christianity and Liberalism* in 1922, he wrote:

Despite the mighty revolution which has been produced in the external conditions of life, no great poet is now living to celebrate the change; humanity has suddenly become dumb. Gone, too, are the great painters and the great musicians and the great sculptors. The art that still subsists is largely imitative, and where it is not imitative it is simply bizarre.

There seems to be a pessimistic shift from his 1913 “Christianity and Culture.” Though we may argue with Machen’s broad criticism, I believe Machen felt the world’s weariness after the devastating First World War. And with the harsh battles taking place within Protestant churches, especially in the Presbyterian Church, he could have felt the dark cloud of pessimism hanging over the arts in general. Perhaps Duchamp’s *Nude* is a symbol, or a parody, of how modernity was “changing human character,” but as a dehumanizing force. Machen may have perceived modern art as simply “bizarre”; however, as early as 1913, Machen understood its power in American life and faith.

LOSING THE COLLECTIVE THOUGHT

Clearly modern art was a conscious movement away from classical, realist, and romantic styles. It was an expression of a new way of thinking, a new way of being, a new awareness, rejecting old canons of Western tradition for individual freedom, longing for the new. But does art have the power to shape, transform, and change human thinking and awareness? Are Virginia Woolf and Mabel Dodge correct in believing an art exhibit can change human character?

Machen held that modern art represented the changes taking place under the influence of modernity (it is noteworthy how often in his speeches and articles Machen mentions the world of art). His concern was this: there is a danger in losing the collective consciousness of a nation that still had a Christian consensus to a force, modernism, that was assaulting the Christian church. Emphasizing reason and ideas as the engine of cultural change, he warns:

False ideas are the greatest obstacles to the reception of the gospel. We may preach with all the fervor of a reformer and yet succeed only in winning a straggler here and there, if we permit the whole collective thought of the nation or the world to be controlled by ideas which, by the resistless force of logic, prevent Christianity from being regarded as anything more than a harmless delusion. (“Christianity and Culture”)

Machen understood the stakes in losing “the whole collective thought of a nation” (a rather modern way of defining the problem of Christianity and culture). And for Machen, modern art was a clear sign that the collective thought was under assault by a hostile power.

CULTIVATING AND CONSECRATING

In the face of that power, Machen called for Christians to engage their culture. His position is consistent with classical and Reformed positions of the past, reaching back to Augustine:

Instead of destroying the arts and sciences or being indifferent to them, let us cultivate them with all the enthusiasm of the veriest humanist, but at the same time consecrate them to the service of our God. Instead of stifling the pleasures afforded by the acquisition of knowledge or by the appreciation of what is beautiful, let us accept these pleasures as the gifts of our heavenly Father. Instead of obliterating the distinction between the Kingdom and the world, or on the other hand withdrawing from the world into a sort of modernized intellectual monasticism, let us go forth joyfully, enthusiastically to make the world subject to God.

For Machen, the relationship between Christianity and culture is not an amalgamation or an abandonment, but rather a serious, discerning, and thoughtful engagement.

Machen’s call to cultural involvement includes a call to militancy. His call is for the church to advance the kingdom extensively, through evangelism, and at the same time to advance the kingdom intensively, by bringing about a deep, transformative conviction within the whole person. He explains that

Christianity must pervade not merely all nations, but also all human thought. The Christian, therefore, cannot be indifferent to any branch of earnest human endeavor. It must be brought in some relation to the gospel. . . . The church must seek to conquer not merely every man for Christ, but also the whole man.

The Christian who is called into the sciences or the arts is to attempt to “mold the thought of the world to make Christianity something more than a logical absurdity.” What God desires is this: any obstacle to Christian thought is to be destroyed at its root. Machen has a militant tone in his call to Christians to engage the world, using images of soldiering, warfare, fields of battle, conquering, destroying, and using phrases like, “the dangers of the Lord’s enemies remaining in possession of the field.” Lest we think too harshly, Machen is echoing and expounding Paul’s description of fighting a spiritual warfare (2 Cor. 10:4–5).

But Machen’s call to cultural engagement also has tones of heroism and hope. He writes:

The situation is desperate. It might discourage us. But not if we are truly Christians. Not if we are in vital union with the risen Lord. If we are really convinced of the truth of our message, then we can proclaim it before a world of enemies, then the very difficulty of our task, the very scarcity of our allies becomes an inspiration, then we can rejoice that God did not place us in an easy age, but in a time of doubt and perplexity and battle.

And Christians, not only speaking the gospel in love, but also devoted to cultivating the arts, either professionally or quietly, whether studio artist, writer, designer, musician, architect, or simply believers giving attention to gardens, to hospitality, to raising children, or to decorating home or church, can be assured that on some deep level their aesthetic expressions will speak in profound, collective, and transformative ways. **NH**

The author is a retired OP minister.

REVIEW: RICHARD E. BURNETT'S *MACHEN'S HOPE*

D. G. HART

Orthodox Presbyterians may not warm to the question but it is one that follows immediately from Richard Burnett's biography of J. Gresham Machen: would anyone know (or care about) Machen if not for the Presbyterian controversy of the 1920s and 1930s that led to the 1936 formation of the OPC? This is not to say that Machen was nothing more than a controversialist—the father of Machen's warrior children, as some might have it. The question is merely a way to imagine Machen apart from those events. What was his significance as a biblical scholar, theologian, or apologist? Can Machen rival Karl Barth, a contemporary who like Machen also studied at the University of Marburg with Wilhelm Hermann? Graduate students in theology continue to pore over Barth's writings in order to complete an advanced degree. They do not do so with Machen. His most scholarly books are dated in the world of New Testament studies. His most widely read books, *Christianity and Liberalism* (1923) and *What Is Faith?* (1925), show the signs of ecclesiastical controversy. For that reason, Machen's place in history depends greatly on his opposition to theological liberalism. (For the record, Barth's opposition to Hitler and the Nazis gave him a hearing that he might not have had if merely an academic theologian.)

This perspective makes Burnett's rendering of Machen a remarkable if not outlandish undertaking. Church controversy has little role to play in this biography.

Readers with some awareness of Machen's convictions might be tempted to read Burnett's title, *Machen's Hope*, as a phrase with theological or pastoral significance. Those same readers would be wrong. The hope that Burnett finds in Machen's life is not Jesus Christ but the modern research university. (By the way, one of the treats of this book is the long leash editors at Eerdmans gave Burnett for including lengthy and extensive quotation from Machen's correspondence, seemingly more than Ned Stonehouse's biography, also published by Eerdmans.) One of the first uses of the phrase, "Machen's Hope," comes in the chapter

on Machen's time as a graduate student in Germany. "Where Machen expressed greatest confidence," Burnett writes, "was in the future of the universities of the United States." The author proceeds to give a close reading of a talk that Machen delivered at his German fraternity (technically *burschenschaft*) on the state of American universities. (Burnett deserves praise for translating from the German this presentation by Machen that lasted probably close to an hour; "The Universities of the United States" is an appendix to the biography.)

A graduate of Johns Hopkins University, for both a BA and MA in classics, Machen did inhale the heady aspirations for specialized research. What is now taken for granted in American higher education was revolutionary when Machen began his university education (1898). This means Burnett has a point about Machen's optimism about research, the expansion of knowledge, and academic inquiry as the road to lasting truth. This high estimate of the university and applying the tools of science to all areas of inquiry, from the natural sciences to the study of Scripture, also allows Burnett to portray Machen as a "modernist"—the book's subtitle is "The Transformation of a Modernist in the New Princeton." But using this lens to understand Machen—the proponent of the highest academic standards—does not explain why Machen entered the Presbyterian controversy and came out on the other end in a new Presbyterian denomination, a process that took sixteen years—half of his entire professional career (1906 to 1936). Burnett almost sets readers up to expect that Machen will not start a new seminary but a new university or research center. Since Machen did not enter the university world, readers of Burnett's book may well surmise that Machen entered church controversy as a way to take out his academic frustrations.

The point at which Machen's modernism transformed, as Burnett tells it, came in the mid-1910s about the time that Machen was ordained (1914) and became a voting member of Princeton Seminary's faculty. His inaugural

address, “History and Faith” (1915), was one of Machen’s first public critiques of liberal theology. Here he went after the so-called “liberal Jesus,” who became an “impossible figure” on historical ground thanks to the supernaturalism that pervaded Christ’s being and doing. Machen believed that recent New Testament scholarship had finally proved that the Jesus of nineteenth-century German liberal theology was “a failure.” Burnett takes issue with Machen’s critique, first, because many people continued to write sentimental, liberal biographies of Jesus. The new scholarship that Machen promoted did not put an end to the liberal Jesus.

Burnett also contends that Machen had more or less constructed a straw man since the Bible professors at Princeton University had not embraced philosophical naturalism, which Machen argued was the only alternative to supernaturalism. Instead, the university’s religion scholars remained attentive to the parts of Jesus’s life that lay beyond scientific explanations. They did so by employing “spiritualistic” (as opposed to naturalistic) philosophy. This was one place where Machen broke with modern scholarship. It showed an antagonistic attitude to the academic world that had nurtured him. What might well have helped Burnett at this point would have been to look at *Christianity and Liberalism* where Machen admitted that liberal Protestants had admirably tried to preserve the spiritual and moral components of Christianity without its supernatural character. What Machen asked about liberal Protestantism (was it still Christianity?), Burnett could well have asked of “spiritualistic philosophy”—was it still theism?

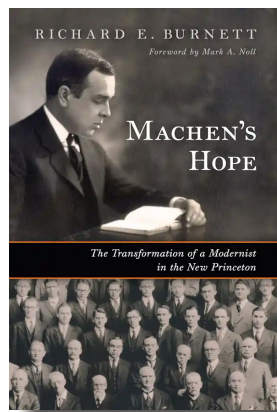
Burnett’s depiction of Machen as a modernist totters when it traces the influence of Johns Hopkins on his subject. As much as the ethos of the modern university marked Machen’s education and early career, Burnett uses it as the key to unlock Machen’s career at Princeton Seminary. To evaluate the seminary by Johns Hopkins is one thing, and Machen did much of this when he was a seminary student. But to keep the comparison going—seminary in the light of the university—Burnett uses Princeton University as the standard for the seminary. In fact, the “New Princeton” in the book’s subtitle is not the seminary but the university. Controversies over religion on campus in the 1910s (one involving Billy Sunday, another with guest lectures from the liberal president of Andover Seminary) become the means Burnett uses to evaluate Machen’s early scholarship and changes at Princeton Seminary in

the 1910s. Burnett assumes that teaching the Bible or the study of religion at Princeton defined the standards of the university. Machen was on the outside helplessly looking in from the outmoded institution of a seminary.

What Burnett does not notice is that the study of religion at the university was considerably different from the university standards Machen learned at Hopkins while studying ancient Greek and Latin texts. He found a path to the New Testament by recognizing that he could use the methods and rigor of the classics in the study of another set of documents from the ancient world. The “scientific” nature of the classics was several steps removed from the sentimental and literary approach to the Bible in most undergraduate courses. In the case of the new field of comparative religion, that “science” also ran contrary to the classics by lumping all religious expressions into one generic religion rather than focusing on the differences between authors and texts as characterized the study of Rome and Athens.

Even in his concluding chapter, Burnett continues to look at Machen more through the lens of the university than the Presbyterian Church. He reads closely Machen’s articles and lectures during the last decade of his life that bear on education and scholarship. The politics of Princeton Seminary and the church receive a wave of the hand, however. “Machen’s decision to leave Princeton was long in the making,” Burnett writes. The conflicts within the seminary and denomination “seemed intractable.”

Readers may conclude that Burnett’s biography distorts Machen. What may be more accurate is to acknowledge Burnett’s use of categories, some of which are peculiar to his own understanding, that do shed a different light on the circumstances of Machen’s life and work. In that way, Machen may look like a modernist who became a conservative. Either way, Burnett’s interpretation fails to explain how most people remember Machen—namely, as the odd, highly educated, and wealthy defender of historic Christianity.



The author is an OP elder and professor at Hillsdale College.

Machen’s Hope: The Transformation of a Modernist in the New Princeton, by Richard E. Burnett. Eerdmans, 2024. Cloth, 638 pages, \$45.99.

GOD'S FLOURISHING WORK IN URUGUAY

STEPHEN S. PAYSON

Like a root growing up out of dry ground, the Reformed faith continues to be watered, to grow, and to flourish in Uruguay, which has been deemed “the graveyard of the missionaries” because of a palpable hardness to the truth of the gospel. OP missionaries Mark and Jeni Richline, together with Ray and Michele Call (PCA) and missionary associates Markus and Sharon Jeromin, were instrumental in establishing the OPC’s first mission congregation in Montevideo, Uruguay: Iglesia Presbiteriana Salvos por Gracia. Even after the departures of the Calls and Jeromins, and through a global pandemic, the Richlines and the congregation of Salvos por Gracia persevered. The Lord was seasonably building his church through his appointed means of biblical preaching and teaching, and by the hunger of the members for a church where God’s glory was esteemed over the glory of men.

In August 2022, my wife, Catalina, and I arrived in Uruguay to join the Richlines. We discovered, over time, that the Spirit of Christ had used the pandemic to expose many people to the social media ministries of popular Reformed preachers. Not that these biblical ministries were entirely

Payson preaching in Ciudad de la Costa



unknown, but the pandemic seemed to accelerate the exposure of Christians throughout Uruguay to the doctrines of grace, to expository preaching, and to worship informed by Scripture rather than manipulative “prophecy” and beguiling promises of health and wealth. So while the largest Christian bookstore in Montevideo still carries the unsavory volumes of many unbiblical teachers, shelf space is increasingly given to Sinclair Ferguson, J. I. Packer, R. C. Sproul, A. W. Pink, and Charles Spurgeon, to name a few. Even Herman Bavinck’s abridged *Reformed Dogmatics* is available and selling well. Praise the Lord for this tangible evidence of the shift to an appreciation of Reformed theology!

The Richlines with Salvos por Gracia leadership, saying goodbye



EXPANSION OF REFORMED MISSION WORKS

When the Richlines arrived in Montevideo in 2012, missionaries from the Brazilian Presbyterian Church (Igreja Presbiteriana do Brasil, IPB) were operating a sole mission church there, still known and thriving today as the Iglesia Presbiteriana del Uruguay. Over the next few years, our OPC Uruguay Mission labored jointly with Iglesia Presbiteriana del Uruguay. Eventually, differences in ministry direction led the OPC Uruguay Mission to start an entirely new work in Montevideo—the Salvos por Gracia church. Both congregations and their respective IPB and OPC missionary pastors continued to hold marriage and family conferences jointly as well as an annual conference on the Reformed faith. The latest Reformation conference, in

2023, was held at Salvos por Gracia for the first time, with Pastor Dale Van Dyke of Harvest OPC in Wyoming, Michigan, as one of the principal speakers.

During the past two years, the Brazilian Presbyterian Church has expanded its presence in Uruguay by bringing three new missionaries to plant churches. One missionary labors in an already existing work in the interior city of Mercedes, another in Ciudad de la Costa, just east of Montevideo, and the third arrived in April to labor in Las Piedras, just north of the capital. In June of this year, Rev. Mauricio Rolim, the most tenured IPB missionary in Uruguay, together with the session of Iglesia Presbiteriana del Uruguay, invited me to begin attending their monthly meetings. These meetings include all four IPB missionaries as well as two elders and two deacons from the IPB congregations in Montevideo and Mercedes. There is a growing sense among these men that the necessary groundwork for an Uruguayan presbytery is being laid. I believe their openness to having an OP missionary and church plant represented at their meetings strengthens our mutual hope for forming a future presbytery.

GOD GIVES THE GROWTH, RECEIVES THE GLORY

Before these recent developments with the IPB and the departure of the Richlines in May, the Lord was already expanding the work of the OPC Uruguay Mission and maturing the growth of the Salvos por Gracia congregation in several ways.

First, he brought into church membership three young people from the growing coastal area of Maldonado, two hours east of Montevideo, who were hungry to be part of a Reformed church. This has opened the door for the development of a future mission work.

Second, our Lord has expanded Salvos por Gracia's leadership to include two more elders, one of whom is a very gifted teacher and expositor of Scripture. All three elders are now taking turns leading worship and teaching adult Sunday school. This has allowed me, as the sole missionary, to travel to Maldonado two Sundays a month to teach and to disciple a small core group of four members, plus an enthusiastic new believer. On the Sundays when I am teaching in Maldonado, the Brazilian Presbyterian missionaries have been gladly filling the pulpit once a month, while ruling elder Matías Blanco has ably begun to exercise his gifts in preaching.

Third, missionary associates Lucas and Erica Payson, serving in Uruguay from June to December, have been a tremendous asset during a time of transition for the OPC Uruguay Mission. Not only are they our son and daughter-in-law, but also their abilities in both the Spanish language



In the Plaza Independencia in Montevideo

and social media platforms have helped to encourage the Salvos por Gracia congregation and to expand the reach of Reformed gospel ministry in Montevideo and Maldonado.

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthian church, which he had established, that “I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth” (1 Cor. 3:6–7). His words are a humbling reminder to all laborers in Christ’s church, including myself, that the Spirit of the Lord has often been at work long before we arrived on the scene. We are so thankful for the Lord’s work here through our former missionaries and even through a worldwide pandemic. He uses us to fulfill his purposes—despite our weaknesses—and those who follow in our footsteps can achieve nothing lasting apart from Christ’s power, grace, and mercy. Praise God, our faithful Lord Jesus continues to build his church in Uruguay, planting, watering, and bringing to himself alone all the glory.

The author is an OP missionary in Montevideo, Uruguay.

WHAT CAN THE GOD OF GRACE DO?

JOHN E. TERRELL

UPS is known for their slogan: “What can brown do for you?” The advertisement wants you to imagine the possibilities and then expect them to be met. As followers of Christ, we know that God does better than this slogan. Not only can he meet our expectations, he can and does far exceed them:

Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen. (Eph. 3:20–21)

The God of grace is not limited to our finite plans and imagination.

Yet God’s abundant care and power don’t seem to be noticed much in good times. It is through the dark times that his power, like a fireworks show, is most easily seen.

PRECIOUS GIFTS FROM ABOVE

As a church planter and now pastor, I can personally attest to this reality. Even before I was born, the Lord went beyond what could be imagined. My parents found out they were pregnant with me in the emergency room after my mom fell asleep at the wheel on an icy night in 1975, flipping the car and causing a total wreck. Yet my parents walked away with minor injuries, and I was safe. As a child in Dallas, Texas, the second of eight kids, I continually saw the Lord meet our needs even in the leanest moments. As I matured and interacted with my mom’s Jewish family, I witnessed that the truest poverty is a life that lacks the gracious, saving work of Jesus Christ. In high school and especially college, I had the joy of leading several people to the Lord and witnessed the abundant riches of God’s saving grace.

When I was given truly a front-row seat to God’s over-abundant care, however, was while studying at Westminster Seminary California and especially in my first call. It was in seminary that I met my wife, Katie, also a student. This woman, who rapidly became my best friend, showed me what persevering and gracious love



Aboard Living Hope’s parade float this summer, which was modeled after Noah’s Ark, featured a live sheep, and misted water on parade attendees

looks like. It was more than I could imagine. Then, as God showed himself gracious, we saw people become believers through our time in seminary, in my first call as a youth and family pastor in Houston, and when I became a solo pastor in a church south of Sydney, Australia. We saw one adult convert per year. We saw marriages helped and relationships in Christ deepened. God never failed to do the work he does, which is beyond what we can imagine. In Texas and Australia we also received God’s abundant gift of four wonderful blessings in our children: Esther, Josiah, Moriah, and Miriam.

So, in 2021, when I was called from Australia to become a church planter south of Grand Rapids, Michigan, I was ready to see how God would work abundantly. Harvest OPC, our mother church, paid the full—and expensive—cost of moving us internationally from Australia. They were also gracious in providing me with a car because we didn’t have the money to get reestablished back in the States. I will forever be thankful for the unexpected generosity of Harvest.

ROUGH WATERS

Yes, the Lord raised up blessings in unexpected ways. As you read this, you may get the impression that God's unimaginable grace meant that every step in church planting was easy. This is not the case at all. Living Hope's beginning as a church plant was hastened by the issues around COVID and the civil government regulations involved with it. This made the planting of the church unique and difficult: there is no manual for planting after a global shutdown. I wasn't prepared for how the pandemic would reveal ideological and pastoral differences in the ecclesiastical circumstances of planting the church. Nor was I prepared for the cultural differences that emerged as I, with Southern and Jewish heritage, was called to serve in Grand Rapids, a predominantly Dutch Reformed area. So, our beginning as a church plant was not easy, and we witnessed various trials that deeply grieved us.

Yet, whenever the church plant and I would go through a difficult moment, the Lord raised up support. Sometimes his abundant, unexpected provision was through various presbyters, including our Church Visitation Committee. Sometimes it was through my presbytery's church-planting committee, CHEX. We would have never become a church without their continual encouragement. Wise planters like Steve Igo and Doug Bylsma made it seem possible to plant when waters and waves got rough. Their weekly encouragements and friendship made the church-planting process not only sane but also encouraging. Liz Schumaker, the administrative assistant for CHEX, provided digital and print materials, set up accounts, and ensured the church plant was prepared administratively to become a church. She worked hard and generously for Living Hope. Again, the Lord provided in ways we didn't expect.

Sometimes the abundant provision was at the denominational level, through John Shaw and Al Tricarico of the Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension (CHMCE) and John Fikkert of the Committee on Ministerial Care. They gave me advice in some crucial moments and provided the God-honoring encouragement needed in the moment.

God is good and wise in how he provides the right help and encouragement at the best time. God has a multiform way of providing his shepherding care.

A FAMILY, AN OASIS, A REFUGE

Living Hope was able to particularize in October 2023, two and a half years after I became the planter. Two or three previous attempts to plant an OPC church in the area had, for different reasons, fallen through. So we were excited to

see God do what seemed to be the difficult thing. Moreover, Living Hope was able to be self-governing with one elder and one deacon, and, this summer, we ordained two new elders. With the support of CHMCE, we have been financially strong. Though church planting has been a challenge for many in the church, it caused people to grow and be fruitful in their Christian walk.

And, probably most importantly, the church has become a family. We have developed lifelong friendships with others in the presbytery and denomination, as well as those in the area. We are a church family that has become an oasis and refuge for those who are hurting, helping them to grow in the gospel. This is especially true in an area where so many Reformed churches have caused deep, spiritual pain. As the adage goes, diamonds don't develop without heat and pressure.

The God of grace works in unexpected ways to bless his people, especially in the difficult moments of church planting. Please pray for Living Hope, as we know you do. Your encouragement and prayers have been expressed to us, and we truly appreciate it. And, as you've done in the past, please reach out to a church planter this week and encourage them. I am sure they will appreciate it, too. You could be an unexpected but abundant blessing to one in the trenches.

The author is church planter of Living Hope OPC in Dorr, Michigan.

HOME MISSIONS TODAY

For up-to-date news and prayer requests from the Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension, sign up for our newsletter at chmce.org.

RUNNING TOWARD THE HURTING

REBECCA SODERGREN

Bob Keys says being a deacon is like being a firefighter. “Deacons are those who run not away from but toward the hurting, the poor and unlovely, the alien and the lonely, the widow and the orphan, the sick and the disabled, the elderly and the broken,” he said.

He and Paul Archer understand this deeply. They have served Grace Presbyterian in Columbus, Ohio, as deacons since 1982, when their congregation was just five years old. In fact, Keys shepherded the church through its first building project. Keys has served for forty-two years and Archer for forty with a two-year hiatus when his family relocated temporarily.

Both men were twenty-eight years old when they were ordained. They had wives, young children, and budding careers, Keys as a research chemist and Archer as a geologist. Yet they made time to serve.

Keys came by it naturally. Two of his great-grandfathers helped their Presbyterian and Reformed church to assist escaped slaves on the Underground Railroad. Keys grew up in that same church with his father as the sole deacon. His hardworking dairy farmer parents taught him to care for others, and he always knew he wanted to be a deacon like his dad.

Archer, also raised in a Christian family of dairy farmers, was moved to serve because the Grace congregation was young and needed help.

“There was definitely a lot of learning on the job,” Archer said. “We made our mistakes, but the Lord was gracious.” They credit their wives, Kathy Keys and Cynthia Archer, for supporting and encouraging them.

Both men have handled church building repairs. Over time, they delegated those tasks to laypeople, freeing the deacons to care for needy members and outsiders. Living in a college town, they have helped many people move. They have coordinated congregational cooperation with local agencies like pregnancy care centers and city missions. The Archers have led many youth mission trips. Keys has done disaster relief work after hurricanes, including taking a Grace Church group to Key West to retiling the floor of Keys Chapel, an evangelistic OPC work. As the original members of the congregation have aged, the deacons have learned

how to care for widows and widowers. Keys said it is especially important for deacons to pray with and for those they serve.

Archer said a complicated diaconal task is helping outsiders who ask the church for help. Evaluating whether needs are real while erring on the side of generosity at times proved challenging. They found practical wisdom in the book *When Helping Hurts*.

Both men have appreciated serving alongside other Grace Church deacons over the years. Keys said it’s not good to have a lone deacon like his father was, and Archer noted that “having a plurality of deacons is so beneficial.”

Both men also said they have watched the OPC mature. The Committee on Diaconal Ministries and the Presbytery of Ohio’s diaconal committee have provided collaboration and resources that weren’t available when they first began serving. Keys has served on both committees and Archer on the presbytery’s committee.

Looking to the future, Keys said he wants to mentor young men to join a graying diaconate. He encourages deacons to get to know their congregations, identify people’s gifts, and invite them to work alongside the deacons to develop hearts of service. Theological acumen and handyman skills are nice, but first and foremost “we need deacons who love people,” Keys said.

Looking back over more than four decades of service, Archer said the Lord’s faithfulness has been his greatest joy. “He is blessing people and working through us even with all our faults and mistakes,” he said.



Bob Keys and Paul Archer

Rebecca Sodergren is a member of Redeemer in Danville, PA.



OCT 2024
PRAYER CALENDAR

1 **Mike (Elizabeth) Diercks**, area home missions coordinator for the Presbytery of Ohio. / Pray for **Danny Olinger** and the Committee on Christian Education meetings on October 1-2.

2 **Stephen & Catalina Payson**, Montevideo, Uruguay. Pray for Spanish-speaking OP pastors and teachers who can come help equip Uruguayan men for pastoral office. / **Dan & Stacy Halley**, Tampa, FL. Pray that members of Bay Haven OPC would be bold in their conversations for Christ.

3 Missionary associates **Lucas & Erica Payson**, Montevideo, Uruguay. Pray for Erica as she teaches the children at Salvos por Gracia in Spanish. / Pray for the **Committee on Diaconal Ministries** as it meets today in Willow Grove, PA.

4 Home Missions associate general secretary **Al Tricarico**. / **Charles & Connie Jackson**, Mbale, Uganda. Pray that new construction at Knox School of Theology will be completed efficiently for the students.

5 **David & Ashleigh Schexnayder**, Scottsdale, AZ. Pray for Providence OPC as they seek to reduce their facility expenses. / Yearlong intern **David Wright** at South Austin Presbyterian in Austin, TX.

6 **Ben & Heather Hopp**, Africa & Haiti. Pray for Ben as he meets with the graduates of Knox School of Theology and connects with their churches. / OPC.org technical associate **Stephen Pribble**.

7 Associate missionaries **Octavius & Marie Delfils**, Haiti. Pray for the church's ministry to children living in fearful circumstances; pray that many would come to

faith in Christ. / **Nate & Anna Strom**, Sheboygan, WI. Pray for Breakwater Church as they sacrificially reach out to their community.

8 Loan Fund manager **Mark Stumpff**. / Pray for **Trish Duggan** as she produces episodes of *The Reformed Deacon*.

9 **Mike & Lili McCabe** (on furlough), China. Pray that church leaders from different regions might safely meet together for fellowship and encouragement. / Yearlong intern **Tyler (Jeanna) Freire** at Redeemer OPC in Beavercreek, OH.

10 **Dave (Elizabeth) Holmlund**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of Philadelphia. / Pray for **Sam & Eunsoo Folta**, China, as they adjust to a new job and apartment.

11 **Carl & Stacey Miller**, New Braunfels, TX. Pray for the Lord's provision as Heritage OPC looks for land to build a meeting place. / Active duty US Army military chaplains **David (Jenna) DeRienzo**, and **Joshua M. (Stephanie) Jackson**.

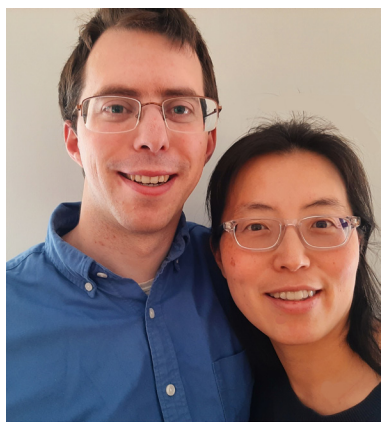
12 Pray for the persecuted church in **East Africa** and the families of the many pastors imprisoned for over twenty years for their faith. / Yearlong intern **Brennen (Tiffany) Winter** at Harvest OPC in Wyoming, MI.

13 **Heero & Anya Hacquebord**, L'viv, Ukraine. Pray that the Crates for Ukraine project would point people to the love and the salvation of Jesus Christ. / **Matt & Hyojung Walker**, Yorktown, VA. Give thanks that God has added new members and brought visitors to Peninsula Reformed OPC.

14 Home Missions general secretary **Jeremiah Montgomery**. / Pray for the stated clerk, **Hank Belfield**, and his staff as they prepare the 2025



The Delfils (day 7)



The Walkers (day 13)

.....
editions of the *Book of Church Order* and the OPC Directory.

.....
15 Pray for affiliated missionaries **Jerry & Marilyn Farnik**, Czech Republic, to have renewed energy as they return to the field after their furlough. / Pray that the Committee on Christian Education's *Ruling Elder Podcast* would bless listeners.

.....
16 **Mark (Peggy) Sumpter**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of the Northwest. / Pray for Foreign Missions general secretary **Douglas Clawson** and administrative assistants **Joanna Grove** and **Tin Ling Lee**.

.....
17 **Johnny & Berry Serafini**, Marion, NC. Pray for the upcoming new members class at Landis OPC. / Yearlong intern **Andrew (Noel) Davis** at Covenant Presbyterian in Marina, CA.

.....
18 Associate missionary **Leah Hopp**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for the Timothy Discipleship students, that they would commit their families and studies to the Lord this fall. / Pray for the Committee on Diaconal Ministries' **Refugee Ministry Subcommittee** as it seeks to minister to refugees around the world.

.....
19 Pray for **Travis & Bonnie Emmett**, Nakaale, Uganda, as they wrap up their stay in Mbale and prepare for new duties in Karamoja. / **Bill & Margaret Shishko**, Commack, NY. Pray that The Haven OPC would become financially self-supporting.



The Verdicks (day 24)

.....
20 **John & Erin Nymann**, Suffolk, VA. Pray that All Saints OPC would secure a more permanent meeting space. / Yearlong intern **Joe (Melody) Gehrmann** at Covenant OPC in Orland Park, IL.

.....
21 Missionary associate **Beatrix Taverne**, Karamoja, Uganda. Pray that the Lord would keep her focused on the mission of his church in her daily work. / Pray that *The Reformed Deacon Podcast* would spur deacons on to joyful service in the church.

.....
22 **Andrew & Cheyenne Farr**, Klamath Falls, OR. Pray for Klamath Falls Reformed Fellowship as they begin an evangelism class for members. / Pray for missionary associate **Jed Homan**, Nakaale, Uganda, as he works to survey the maintenance needs of the compound.

.....
23 **Bruce (Sue) Hollister**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of the Midwest. / **Char Tipton**, database administrator.

.....
24 Pray for **Christopher & Chloe Verdick**, Nakaale, Uganda, and their daughters as they reacclimate to Karamoja and meet new team members. / Pray for the **brothers and sisters** who are suffering from the ongoing war in Ukraine.

.....
25 Affiliated missionaries **Craig & Ree Coulbourne** and **Linda Karner**, Japan. Pray that Japanese Christians will receive good regular discipleship at their local churches. / **Gregory & Ginger O'Brien**, Downingtown, PA. Pray that the Lord would save the lost through the ministry of Christ Church Downingtown.

.....
26 **Will & Lauren Sloan**, Eastern Shore, VA. Pray that members of Good Shepherd OPC would continue to delight in God's Word. / *New Horizons* editorial assistants **Diane Olinger** and **Ayrian Yasar**.



The O'Briens (day 25)

.....
27 Tentmaking missionary **Tina DeJong**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray that the Lord would answer the critical need for two missionary-evangelists for Mbale and one for Karamoja. / **James (Bonnie) Hoekstra**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of Wisconsin and Minnesota.

.....
28 Pray for the **GCP Trustees Board** meeting today. / Pray for missionary associates **Josh & Danielle Grimsley**, Nakaale, Uganda, as their daughters Paisley, Viola, Rosey, and Grace begin a new homeschooling year.

.....
29 **A. J. & Chelsea Millsaps**, Athens, TN. Pray that the Lord would use Zion OPC to foster revival in Athens. / Yearlong intern **David (Hope) Garrett** at Orthodox Presbyterian in Franklin Square, NY.

.....
30 Pray for the good health of retired missionaries **Cal & Edie Cummings**, **Mary Lou Son**, and **Brian & Dorothy Wingard**. / **Anneke Fesko**, care coordinator for ministers' wives.

.....
31 Pray for affiliated missionaries **Dr. Mark & Laura Ambrose**, Cambodia, and their sons Silas and Hugh as they return to the States for three months. / Home Missions administrative assistant **Allison Groot**.

WHY YOUR MINISTER (AND YOU) SHOULD HAVE A WILL

BRYAN HOLSTROM

Do you know whether your pastor has a will and other end-of-life documents in place to guide his family in the distribution of his personal estate upon his death? Admittedly, that question probably isn't top-of-mind for most readers of *New Horizons*. Perhaps it ought to be. Along with ensuring that your minister is adequately provided for financially in his current call, congregations can further demonstrate their care for him by encouraging him to take this step for the sake of his family.

Many of us mistakenly assume that having a will is unnecessary if one is not wealthy. However, almost any adult with assets in their name should have a will. Moreover, ministers may be particularly prone to neglecting this task since it is their life's work to point people to the spiritual realm, where our true citizenship lies, and dealing with matters of this world such as how your assets will get divided when you die can seem—well—rather earthly.

Failure to have a properly drafted will in place can have negative unintended consequences. When a person dies without a will, the distribution of their assets is determined by state law. In Illinois, for example, that means that one-half of the estate would go to the spouse and the other half to the children of the deceased. At best, this default distribution creates an awkward situation for the family to work through amid the grief and personal upheaval they are already going through as a result of their loved one's death. In some family situations, receiving only half her husband's assets could be a financial disaster for the minister's widow.

A host of other problems can arise as well, particularly in the case where there is no surviving spouse. Issues regarding funeral arrangements, the appointment of an administrator, and the distribution of items of sentimental value have caused a good deal of contention in some families, not to mention the delay and potential extra expense involved in getting these questions resolved when the wishes of the deceased were not put down in writing.

On the other hand, ensuring your minister and his wife have a simple will in place can minimize the risk of such problems arising after their deaths. For those who desire it, a will can also provide for specific charitable bequests to be made after death, thereby continuing the couple's legacy of giving and serving as an example to their children. An organization such as the Barnabas Foundation, the OPC's Planned Giving Consultant, can help with setting up such giving arrangements, and it can also help with the initial work of setting up a will.

As your congregation begins its annual budget process this fall, why not use that opportunity to confirm that your minister has an up-to-date will in place? You might even consider helping him with the cost of doing so. It's another way to show your loving care for him and his family.

For the rest of us, as God's people we know that he will one day call us to our heavenly home; and that day could be nearer than we think. Taking care of all that "earthly stuff" beforehand is a great way to express love to your family.

The author is an OP elder and member of the CMC's Volunteer Financial Planning Team.

HELP FROM THE BARNABAS FOUNDATION

Preparing a will is relatively simple, especially with help from the Barnabas Foundation. All members of the OPC may consult a Barnabas estate planning attorney at no charge. Their attorney will help identify your specific needs and goals and prepare a plan you can take to your attorney to draft the legal documents. Contact the Barnabas Foundation at 888-448-3040.



Lou Ann Shafer working on the Trinity Psalter Hymnal

NEWS

IN MEMORIAM: LOU ANN SHAFER

Lou Ann Shafer, music editor of the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal (TPH)*, went to be with the Lord on July 12, at the age of sixty-three. A founding member of Resurrection OPC in State College, Pennsylvania, with her husband, Timothy, and three daughters, Sarah, Elisabeth, and Grace, Lou Ann graciously accepted an invitation from the Committee on Christian Education to serve on the Psalter-Hymnal Subcommittee in 2008. For the next decade, she brought to the task her expertise from seventeen years as Instructor of Music Education at Penn State University and from directing church and youth choirs, including founding and overseeing the prestigious Nittany Valley Children's Choir. Working closely with Timothy, the *TPH's* musicologist, she provided expert analysis regarding the singability of every text and tune of every psalm and hymn. She also provided tune recommendations and harmonizations, fitting the psalm texts to the tunes, and entry of all music and lyrics for printing. The beautiful and majestic musical setting she authored for "Consider Well," and the good news concerning Jesus Christ that the hymn proclaims, is a lasting testimony to Lou Ann Shafer's life and confession that Jesus Christ is Lord.

COTTENDEN HONORED

J. Zachary Siggins

At the Ninety-Fifth Commencement of Westminster Theological Seminary on

May 23, 2024, the Rev. George R. Cottenden was awarded an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree by the faculty and Board of Trustees at the seminary for his many years of faithful and fruitful service in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and on the Board of Trustees at Westminster. Rev. Cottenden also delivered the sermon for the commencement ceremony from John 17, addressing and encouraging the graduates that the Lord Jesus is the one praying for them and for their ministry. Rev. Cottenden and his wife, Barbara, were joined by family and friends to celebrate the occasion.

WATKINS INSTALLED AS EVANGELIST

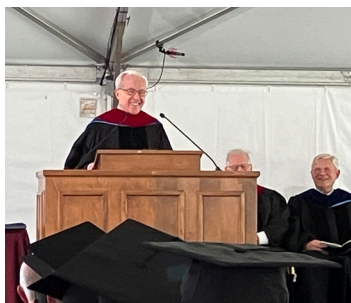
On August 24, Eric Watkins, formerly pastor of Harvest OPC in San Marcos, California, was installed as an evangelist of the Presbytery of the South to labor toward a new mission work in Daytona Beach, Florida. Joel Fick served as moderator; Jeremiah Montgomery preached; Mark Winder gave the charge to the evangelist. The service was held at Spruce Creek PCA, with several guests from that presbytery present at the service.

TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY AND A NEW BUILDING

Jonathan J. Bartlett

On June 8 and 9, Sovereign Grace Community Church in Hughson, California, celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary with the grand opening of its new building. Former pastor Mark

At Watkins's August 24 installation



George Cottenden

Richline (1999–2011) exhorted the congregation from Deuteronomy 8, and former pastor Mark Wheat (2011–2022) emphasized God’s purpose in building his church from Psalm 107. Pastor Jonathan Bartlett preached from 1 Corinthians 3:6, “God Gave the Growth.” Elder Joe Hendrex gave an overview of God’s acts in the congregation’s history. Visitors from the presbytery joined the congregation and interested members of the community. The session wishes to express public thanksgiving for God’s steadfast love over the past twenty-five years. To God be the glory!

At the twenty-fifth anniversary of Sovereign Grace in Hughson, CA



UPDATE

MINISTERS

- On June 29, **Jonathan Boyd** was ordained and installed as pastor at Cornerstone OPC in Jersey Village, TX.
- On June 29, the Presbytery of Connecticut and Southern New York granted the request of **Jonathan Holst** to dissolve his pastoral relationship with Westminster OPC in Hamden, CT, and transferred him to the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church.
- On July 5, **Francisco Jefferson Lima de Oliveira** was installed as an evangelist of the Presbytery of Ohio.
- On July 26, **Dr. David G. Graves** was installed as an evangelist of Living Stone Fellowship, a mission work in Wichita Falls, TX.
- On August 24, **Dr. Eric B. Watkins** was installed as an evangelist of the Presbytery of the South.

MILESTONES

- **Lou Ann Shafer**, 63, died on July 12. She was music editor for the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal*.
- **Mildred “Millie” Quinette**, 98, a charter member of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Harrisville, PA, died on August 7.
- **William (Bill) C. Krispin**, 81, died on August 15. An OP minister in the Philadelphia area for over three decades, he served as director for the Center for Urban Theological Studies.
- **Robert Meeker**, 95, died on August 19. He served for fifty-three years as ruling elder at Calvary OPC in Glenside, PA.
- Retired OP minister **Jay M. Milojevich**, 74, died on August 25.

REVIEWS

How Should We Then Die?: A Christian Response to Physician-Assisted Death, by Ewan C. Goligher. Lexham, 2024. Paperback, 160 pages, \$18.99. Reviewed by OP pastor Calvin R. Goligher.

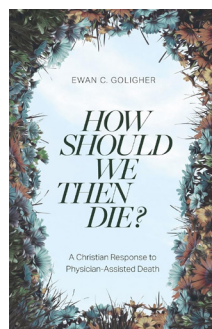
In the year 2022, Canadian doctors deliberately and legally killed more than thirteen thousand patients, accounting for 4.1 percent of all deaths in the country that year. These numbers represent a spiritual crisis that must be met with discernment, compassion, and firm resolve. Ewan Goligher is well positioned to help us face this challenge. Besides being my elder brother, he is a Presbyterian ruling elder and an experienced physician. His writing weaves together moving personal recollections with insight honed through years of addressing these issues for himself.

After introducing the issues, the book sets out in the second chapter to clarify terms. Physician-assisted death (PAD) occurs when a doctor intentionally kills a patient. That intentionality distinguishes it from merely withdrawing life-sustaining treatment that is no longer

effective. Surprisingly, most people do not seek PAD out of pain or poverty, but out of a sense of purposelessness (14).

The basic point of the third chapter is that PAD undermines the intrinsic value of humans. Telling patients that they are eligible for PAD means telling them that they might be better off dead. Advocates of PAD frame this as a win for personal autonomy and dignity. The fact remains, though, that approving PAD implies that it is better for certain people to be dead. This chapter concludes by showing how the gospel proclaims the intrinsic value of humans, made in the image of God, and worth “more than many sparrows” (Matt. 10:31 niv).

Chapter 4 argues that PAD is unscientific because it depends on an unprovable idea of what death is like. Advocates of PAD assume that death is nothing but the absence of life. This fits well with the materialistic premises of modern thought, but it is without evidence. Ironically, PAD leads physicians to act “as priests of a modern, secularized religion that . . . offers death as the means of salvation from suffering” (65). This is the most philosophical part of the book, and it will repay careful reading. The chapter concludes with a lovely meditation on the Christian view of death, which in Christ is a way to eternal life.



Chapter 5 moves from refuting PAD to showing “a more excellent way” (1 Cor 12:31 niv) of caring for those mired in suffering and despair. People seek PAD because of meaninglessness, so we must learn to point them to what is meaningful. This meaning must depend on something

bigger than ourselves. Creation itself is filled with such wonder and meaning, but even deeper meaning is offered in the gospel. “In the kingdom,” Goligher writes, “our suffering is not useless” (108). His exposition of Jesus’s ministry to Lazarus’s family in John 11 is moving and soul-satisfying. Whereas PAD is all about avoiding suffering, the gospel reveals meaning even

in the middle of suffering. “Through suffering, we see more clearly our need for God, and we discover meaning and satisfaction in God himself” (108).

The final chapter summarizes the book’s argument in ten theses. This is a helpful distillation of the book’s content and will provide a useful reference. Pastors, elders, and teachers could use these ten points to structure lessons or discussions.

The final thesis thoughtfully moves from nature to Scripture. “We know by nature that we matter, but we only clearly behold the true meaning and significance of our lives in the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ” (134). This movement from nature to grace is found throughout the book, and it is a big part of making the argument work in a pluralistic, multicultural society. Goligher’s arguments from natural reason show that he is not just writing for already-convinced Christians. On the other hand, by linking these natural arguments to the gospel, he takes them farther than nature could go on its own. As Goligher says at the end of the book, “Christians are those who have discovered that Christ reveals the true logic behind all things” (135). Nature finds its proper home in the grace of Christ, who satisfies us in life, suffering, and death, with a Creator’s love.

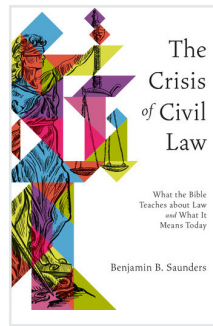
***The Crisis in Civil Law: What the Bible Teaches about Law and What It Means Today*, by Benjamin B. Saunders. Lexham, 2024. Paperback, 220 pages, \$22.99. Reviewed by OP pastor Todd V. Wagenmaker.**

Is the crisis in civil law because the state does not promote the first table of God’s law, commandments one through four, or the second table of God’s law, commandments five through six (or both)? Benjamin Saunders gives a nice overview of the basis of moral law, quoting the Westminster Standards many times. Many Western Christians are anxious because the state increasingly does not promote the second table of the law and this leads to moral

crisis (121). The author says that natural law may provide a basis for promoting some of the second table of the law. But, he then says that Christians’ efforts to promote not only the second table but also the first table are reasonable (128).

The author’s “salad bowl” approach to the topic is, in the end, not very helpful. He spends pages using what is known as “two kingdoms theology” to critique attempts at implementing the moral law, and he also argues that natural law is more important than what we think. But then, he blows up his support for a two kingdoms approach by saying that it is not helpful (182–183) and suggesting that Christians perhaps should work to implement not only the second table but even the first table of the law. Saunders would better serve the reader by picking a cogent option, and not trying to identify the kernels of truth in the different approaches. His attempt at reconciling disparate views falls flat (193).

Jesus and Paul did not seem to think that there was a crisis in civil law, even though the magistrates of their day were aggressively pagan—the Roman emperor actively promoted idolatry, blood sports, infanticide, promiscuity and perversion, and slavery. Although



the state of affairs in our governments is sobering, we should embrace Christ’s otherworldly kingdom like Daniel and his three friends did. Daniel prayed for and promoted the peace of Babylon, realizing that Babylon was not a this-worldly theocracy. Yet, he disobeyed the king when evil laws demanded that he sin against our Great King.

***Zwingli the Pastor: A Life in Conflict*, by Stephen Brett Eccher. Lexham, 2024. Paperback, 228 pages, \$23.99. Reviewed by OP pastor Harrison Perkins.**

Huldreich Zwingli (1484–1531), who served as a first-generation Reformer in Zurich, is likely most famous for instances of violence associated with his ministry. That connection is almost unavoidable since he died on the battlefield, wielding an axe. Beyond that most known trivia, the next most familiar aspect of Zwingli’s ministry was his opposition to rising Anabaptist presence in Zurich, which resulted in the

POSITIONS AVAILABLE

Associate Pastor: Redeemer Presbyterian in Ada, Michigan, has an immediate opening for an associate pastor. For a job description and instructions on how to apply, visit www.redeemer-opc.org/associate-pastor.

Pastor: Westminster OPC in Hamden, Connecticut, seeks a full-time pastor. Interested applicants should send their CV to the Westminster OPC Pastoral Search Committee, 565 Shepard Avenue, Hamden, CT 06514 or by email to whbacon@snet.net.

Pastor: Westminster Presbyterian in Corvallis, Oregon, seeks a pastor with a heart for ministering the Word in a relatively unreached home mission field. We are a medium-sized congregation in a family-friendly college town. Preaching, shepherding, and evangelism are top priorities. Direct inquiries to elders@wpcorvallis.org.

Pastor: Christ Presbyterian in Janesville, Wisconsin, is a congregation of eighty in a city of sixty thousand. We seek a pastor to lead worship, faithfully preach the Word, administer sacraments, shepherd the flock, pray, teach, and administrate. Interested candidates can submit their MIF to pastor_search@christ-opc.org or call Guy Fish at 608-751-2514.

executions of many Anabaptist adherents. With such ferocity at play, was Zwingli just a firebrand out for a fight? Or was there something more and something deeper to Zwingli?

Stephen Brett Eccher's new volume about Zwingli unearths a wealth of information regarding the Swiss Reformer's theological growth, biblical concerns, and pastoral care. Although it incorporates biographical research alongside investigation of historical theology, this book's main focus is on Zwingli's pastoral identity and his emphasis to bring the church to greater reform. In this respect, this work makes an amazing contribution to the literature on Zwingli, highlighting new aspects of Zwingli's ministry for understanding him in a more full-orbed way.

One great strength of this book is that it clearly grounds its explorations of Zwingli's theological development in his real historical context. He was a man facing great challenges in his culture, in his own pastorate, in the context of the burgeoning Reformation movement, and in his own personal life. Despite an easy caricature of Zwingli as dull but aggressive, given his links to the already mentioned violence, Eccher manages to show us a portrait of a thoughtful pastor trying to navigate his way through difficult situations.

The main weakness in this work is Eccher's approach to his conclusion. In his closing reflections, he switches from a focus on historical investigation to application for today. That move itself is not problematic in a book meant to benefit the church. However, Eccher aims his conclusion primarily at critiquing Zwingli and the things about Zwingli's ministry that he does not appreciate. Since Eccher is a Baptist theologian, he stresses a number of issues in which he faults Zwingli for not preemptively agreeing with modern Baptist approaches to ministry and social engagement. Although I sympathize with several of Eccher's points, especially con-

cerning the modern aversion to having the magistrate execute those whose theology falls outside our denominational lines, I am not sure that his conclusion is the most effective way to end this otherwise very fine book. I would much rather see some reflection on what could be gained positively from the rich explorations of Zwingli's life and ministry.

The fittingness of such a preferred conclusion is highlighted by the book's emphasis on Zwingli as a pastor. This provides an incredibly helpful window on Zwingli's contribution to the Reformation. Even in areas where I would personally disagree with Zwingli's doctrinal positions, Eccher shows how he was always working to implement his theology to benefit the church. Although we might assess some of Zwingli's views and ministerial decisions as ultimately mistaken, this book helps us to see how he tried to implement pastoral wisdom at every turn. That picture of Zwingli as a thoughtful shepherd, striving to make careful moves forward for the sake of reform, fills this book with rich historical insight and provides deep fodder for pastoral reflection. This work is worth not only reading but rereading.

***A Storm of Images: Iconoclasm and Religious Reformation in the Byzantine World*, by Philip Jenkins. Baylor University Press, 2023. Hardcover, 287 pages, \$42.99. Reviewed by OP pastor Ben Franks.**

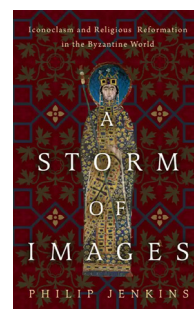
A Storm of Images examines a fascinating period of controversy that sheds light on why some Christians have embraced images and others (such as churches in the OPC) have rejected them. Philip Jenkins's book focuses on the *ikonomachia*—the war of the images—which gripped the Eastern Roman Empire (what we commonly call the Byzantine Empire) during the eighth

and ninth centuries. Since church and state were inextricably intertwined in this period, the conflict was equal parts politics and theology. The story is a fascinating one, filled with imperial plots, military coups, executions, tortures, climate catastrophes, and vehement theological conflict. On the one side stood the iconodules (those who argued for the legitimacy and necessity of images of Christ and the saints—and specifically their veneration and use in worship) and on the other stood the iconoclasts (those who rejected the use and veneration of such images).

Jenkins aims to walk the reader through the history of this sweeping, century-long conflict in chapters 2–3 and 7–9. Chapters 4–6 discuss the biblical and theological roots of the conflict (and explore the impact which Judaism and Islam may have had upon it), while chapters 10 and 11 explore the far-reaching impact of this chapter of church history on the later shape of Christian worship, piety, and ecclesiastical relationships down to the present day.

The story is a complex one. The records of this period require careful historical sifting because virtually all of the remaining accounts are heavily partisan retellings from the side of the iconodules. Jenkins introduces us to these texts and does his best to separate fact from fiction while also interacting with various questions and debates which have shaped contemporary scholarship on this period.

One insight of interest for Reformed readers is the recognition that (as Jenkins notes in his first chapter) recent scholarship has concluded that the creation and veneration of images (particularly of Christ) was a relatively late innovation in the history of the early church, with the widespread use of images not emerging until the fifth century and the practice of veneration not becoming common until the late sixth or early seventh century

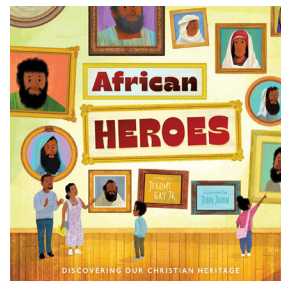


(though Jenkins argues for a date on the earlier side of this range, he still has to concede that the veneration of icons was not a major feature of Christianity for the first five to six hundred years). This means that those who are concerned about the use (and misuse) of images have roots which run much deeper than just the time of the Reformation—indeed, they represent the mainstream view of the church fathers for the first few hundred years of the church’s history. Additionally, many of the arguments and concerns raised by the iconoclasts (which Jenkins surveys in chapter 5) closely mirror those found in the Reformed tradition centuries later.

While Jenkins quite clearly leans toward the use of images (and his sympathies shine through when he commends the theological arguments of the iconodules over and against those of the iconoclasts), his historical discussion helps advocates of either view to better understand the historical roots of debates for and against images in late antiquity. Less helpful is his final chapter in which he tries to connect the narrower question of the propriety of making or venerating *sacred* images with other broader iconoclastic impulses through history (such as the removal of secular monuments). Not all his conclusions seem to follow from the facts that he has recounted, and Reformed readers will wish that Jenkins displayed a greater sympathy and understanding of the nuances of the iconoclast position. Nevertheless, *Storm of Images* is worthwhile for the serious student of church history.

***African Heroes: Discovering Our Christian Heritage*, by Jerome Gay Jr. New Growth, 2023. Hardcover, 64 pages, \$16.99 (Amazon). Reviewed by OP member Diane L. Olinger.**

This is a children’s picture book written by an African American pastor. It begins with a Christian family sharing a picnic after a worship service. A conversation about the children’s Sunday school lesson transitions to a discussion of heroes of the faith who “lived back when the Christian faith was almost brand new.” The father tells the children that “there are many heroes of the faith—and remarkable theologians—many from Africa.” The children’s request to hear the heroes’ stories is followed by vignettes of eleven African Christians who lived in the second to fifth centuries AD: Tertullian, Origen of Alexandria, Perpetua, Felicity, Athanasius, Cyprian of Carthage, Lactantius, Pachomius the Great, Cyril of Alexandria, Augustine, and Shenoute of Atripe. Each vignette is about four pages and features a Christian virtue or doctrine associated with the hero. For Athanasius, the virtue is courage, and the verse is Joshua 1:9 (NIRV), “Be strong and brave. Do not be afraid. Do not lose hope. I am the LORD your God. I will be with you everywhere you go.” Each vignette is accompanied by a portrait of the Christian hero and an illustration of some scene from his or her life. For example, Athanasius is shown at the Council of Nicaea surrounded by



churchmen and arguing heatedly. The text tells us that Athanasius was upset that someone was spreading lies about Jesus. “The man spreading lies was named Arius, and he was trying to convince people that Jesus was just a regular person—not the Son of God. . . . Athanasius knew he had to do something. He began asking God for courage.” The book ends as it began with the picnicking family. The mother puts

these stories from church history in context, telling the children that the stories are “nothing” compared to the true story of Jesus, who is the “reason all these heroes and legacies exist.” A child responds, “They were following after Jesus!”

In the May 2019 issue of *New Horizons*, PCA minister Terry L. Johnson reminded us that classic ecumenical Christianity is “not a European import”; the ideas and influence that shaped historic Christianity moved from the Middle East and North Africa to Europe, and not the other way around. Learning more about this helps us to appreciate the true catholicity of the church and to counter any who would limit Christianity as a European cultural product. Written for ages four to seven, *African Heroes* doesn’t delve into all that, but sharing this book with our children will encourage them to think more broadly about the history of the church. And this is a good thing, for surely God is gathering a great multitude from every tribe and nation who will stand together before the throne of the Lamb.