

# CURRENT

QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF NORTH AMERICA

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**GENESIS**  
GOD'S BOOK OF  
BEGINNINGS

A PASTOR'S  
**HEARTACHES**

PENTICTON FPC

ENCOUNTERING THE  
**ARK**  
ENCOUNTER

ATONEMENT THROUGH  
THE BLOOD OF THE **CROSS**



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## A PASTOR'S HEARTACHES

by Rev. Ian Goligher

Sympathy is a big word in Christian circles. We preach Christ's sympathy for His people and we encourage pastors to have sympathy to care for their peoples' hurts. But have you ever stopped to think that pastors are also in need of sympathy? Let me plead for your sympathy toward your pastor, for out of necessity, due to the heart-rending nature of pastoral ministry, his heart must often ache over his congregation, and maybe at times his heart aches over you.

Whether he has walked into the pulpit to lead the service and preach the message which is upon His heart, or whether he stands at the doorway of the church to shake hands with his congregation, he is ever conscious that his work relates to the hurts of his people and the comfort of their souls. The chief instrument of his work is the Word of God. A protestant minister who glories in the gospel knows there is no other message that will deal with guilt, shame, insecurity, pride, and many other sorts of life's hurts. He knows that hope is found in Christ and in Christ alone, so he will be a man of the Word to preach the glories and sufficiency of Christ.

A pastor's heart will ache when he notices that his sheep are not feeding on the gospel. Absenteeism is a glaring concern, but deafness in the pew is also a sure symptom of some disease affecting the heart. Sheep eagerly feed from the hand of the shepherd in the frosty winter mornings, but in the growing season there is no need for sheep to be hand fed. They just graze where they wander. The pastor soon notices when his people lose their appetite for God's Word, and discerns that they are feeding elsewhere. There is a mystery of rapport between preacher and the listener in the pew. The dial of the listener's face is an open book that tells all. A distant look signals

a distant soul with little interest. The pastor feels that distance each moment of his sermon delivery and longs for power to break through to awaken hearts to take a deeper interest in the gospel he is called to preach.

A pastor's heart also aches over defiant sheep. Shepherds may be leaders of the sheep, but some sheep really know how to butt with their heads. They sometimes instinctively charge against the shepherd's commands. It is a conflict born out of a sheep's stubborn nature as if to say, "You may lead me, but you can't drive me." Then patience is required, and the gentleness of the shepherd will hopefully win over the hearts of the sheep. But the path of danger must be blocked up and the sheep must always be led to safety. It is heart-wrenching work to see sheep go hungry and weary, while there are green pastures abundant and a place of rest for their souls. Happy are the people in the Lord's church that follow a faithful shepherd to enjoy the riches of God's grace.

The greatest cause for heart-ache for the godly pastor is the spiritually-dead soul. As any shepherd will tell you, the mortality rate among sheep is shockingly high and death is often very sudden. The shepherd can hap upon his prized sheep lying cold and stiff, for death often strikes quickly and finally as a thief in the night. If a sheep were sick, care could revive it to life, but sudden death robs the most loving shepherd of all hope. There is nothing to do but lament. In our pews, we fear we have dead souls. The grip of sin is obvious and steals away any response to spiritual calls. The condition of spiritual inability in men and women, boys and girls, is much like a sheep rolled over on its back with its four feet in the air totally unable to turn itself, for then death is imminent. A pastor, who is a lover of souls, would love to

shake a sinner to life. He would long to bring a soul out of the power of spiritual death, but only the Holy Spirit can do that. As Christ called Lazarus out of the grave, so by the Spirit, He must call dead sinners to life. This drives the pastor, and all caring Christians, to pray for preaching that is life giving. We must have a ministry of life, which by the Spirit's power and blessing, calls sinners from the dead.

To conduct a faithful heart-stirring ministry week after week, year in and year out is the challenge of the local pastor. His greatest hope and consolation lie in the spiritual transformation of his people. Their conversion to Christ, their growth in grace, their contentment in the fellowship of the church, and their witness for Christ before the world are the yearning of his soul. The apostle Paul called on the believers at Philippi to stand fast in the Lord. His pastor's heart ached for them when he wrote, "Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, *my* dearly beloved" (Philippians 4:1).

So, don't be afraid to show some sympathy for your pastor who carries the cares of the congregation in his heart. Let him know you care, and do it in the best possible manner, through your earnest prayers in the church prayer meeting. I'd rather have five praying sympathizers than fifty comforters who offer nothing but hollow words. Go to the church prayer meeting and pray it out. Nothing will send your pastor home rejoicing more than your prayers added to the cries and sighs of true sympathizers with his own heartaches. ■



# ATONEMENT THROUGH THE BLOOD OF THE CROSS

The Psalmist wrote: "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." In Genesis chapter 3 a record is given of the Fall of man. Because of Adam's disobedience the entire human race was plunged into an estate of misery. As a result, man stands in need of a Savior from sin. Without such a Savior, he is forever lost! But how can fallen man be saved and escape punishment for his sin? Is there a way for sin to be forgiven? The answer is found in the atoning work of Christ. Ernest Kevan stated:

*Atonement is one of the difficult words in Scripture. It is found chiefly in the Old Testament and stands for the idea of 'covering'. Sin is thus said to be covered, or atoned for, by the O.T. sacrifices described in Exodus and Leviticus. These sacrifices were designed symbolically to make amends for sin, and they pointed towards the effects of the work of Christ. The claims of God's holy Law were satisfied by the Lord Jesus Christ, first in His life of obedience, and then in His suffering of the wages of sin in His own body on the tree, and so He made an atonement for man's sin.*

Atonement is a vital doctrine of the Christian Faith. Consider the following:

## 1. ATONEMENT WAS PROVIDED BY GOD

The salvation of God's people was purposed and planned by the Lord. Before there was a sin problem God had already planned our salvation (1 Peter 1:20; Acts 2:23). The hymn writer said: "*O the love that drew salvation's plan, O the grace that brought it down to man; O the mighty gulf that God did span, at Calvary.*" Abraham's word to Isaac in Genesis 22:8 was a prophetic reference to Christ. In Him, God would "provide Himself a lamb". This provision of an atonement for sin was made by a loving God (1 John 4:9, 10). The Bible never speaks of man setting out to atone for his own sin and rebellion. He could not make amends to God, even if he desired to do so. Fallen man has no desire, no inclination to make amends for his disobedience. Note again the words of Genesis chapter 3. Who makes the first move to deal with the sin problem? Is it Adam? In the aftermath of his sin, is he found looking for God, seeking reconciliation? Not at all. God, however, came looking for Adam: "Where art thou?" The maker of reconciliation is God Himself (2 Corinthians 5:18, 19) The death of

our Lord Jesus at the Cross is the answer to the problem of sin.

## 2. ATONEMENT WAS PICTURED BY GOD

In Abel's lamb and other sacrifices, the blood atonement of Christ was portrayed. In Israel of old, the Lord ordained certain events that serve as illustrations of what Christ would do when He came into the world. In the five books of Moses, there are many examples of sacrifices and offerings for sin. In both Exodus and Leviticus specific examples of sacrificial offerings are given. These are the Passover (Exodus 12) and the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16). In Exodus 12, throughout the chapter, the use of the singular should be noted when the Passover lamb is spoken of. We read about "*a lamb...the lamb...your lamb...*" but never does it mention "*lambs.*" Why? Because there is only one atoning sacrifice for sin, the Lamb of God Himself: John 1:29. Note also the mention of the "blood" in Exodus chapter 12. It is spoken of as a "sign", or "token" (v.13). As well as the sign of the blood, the shedding of the blood is mentioned. The lamb was slain and its blood put into a basin (v.22). The passage also refers to the striking of the blood: "...thou shalt strike it..." (v.7). It was applied to the lintel and side posts of the house (v.22). This speaks clearly of Christ our Passover (1 Corinthians 5:7). Then, in Leviticus chapter 16 (the Day of Atonement), there is a beautiful picture of the atoning work

of our Savior. There were two goats that constituted **one** sin-offering, "a" sin-offering (v.5). Carefully note that these are **not** two offerings, but a solitary sin-offering. There is a serious error taught by the Seventh Day Adventist Church in which they classify the two goats as two distinct offerings for sin. They claim the slain goat represents Christ, while the other — the scapegoat — is a type of Satan! At the end, the sins of believers will all be laid upon Satan. It is blasphemous to suggest such a thing. On the Cross of Calvary, our Savior did what these two goats portrayed and symbolized: He died for our sins. And in shedding His blood Christ turned away God's wrath from us. As typified by the scapegoat, Christ took away our sins, far out of God's sight (Psalm 85:2). God's wrath is turned away from believing souls, because their sins have been covered. Two tremendous truths are pictured by these events:

**[a] Substitution** (Romans 5:6,8; 1 Peter 3:18) Christ died in our guilty room and stead. He is the great "instead-of-me" sacrifice! He died *for* us, and yet He died *as* us. Believers are reckoned as having died in Him. Christ the innocent One died for us the guilty. The hymn writer said, "He took my place and died for me, O precious Lamb of Calvary! He took my place and died for me."

**[b] Propitiation** (Romans 3:25) The Greek word employed here for "propitiation" is translated "mercy-seat" in Hebrews 9:5. The "mercy-seat", or lid to the Ark of the Covenant, which had blood sprinkled upon it by the High Priest on the Day of Atonement, was literally "the propitiatory." Christ Himself is our mercy-seat. His blood has turned away the wrath of God from those who trust in the atoning blood. Bearing our guilt and sin the Lord Jesus suffered God's wrath in the place of His people. He fully paid the debt they owed to the broken law of God. Thus, He is the propitiation for our sins (1 John 2:2). God may now be *propitious* toward guilty sinners. The publican's prayer illustrates this (Luke 18:13). The sense of his prayer ("God be merciful to me a sinner") was, "Be propitious" or "Be appeased." It means, "Look upon me as when Thou lookest upon the blood." God is favorably inclined toward those who are covered by the atoning blood of Christ.

### 3. ATONEMENT WAS PROCURED BY GOD

It was procured by blood sacrifice. The atonement of the Lord Jesus is not merely potential, but actual and definite (Matthew 1:21). It was not merely a possibility of salvation that Jesus provided. His death achieved what it set out to achieve. The hymn writer said: "He died an atoning death..." (Mark 10:45). The ransom is paid and the captives *will* all be released! God's people are going to be saved, because Christ died an atoning death on their behalf (Ephesians 5:25; Acts 20:28; 2 Corinthians 5:19).

In the death of the Lord Jesus there is no mere potentiality, but a definiteness of purpose and of achievement! He *will* sanctify and cleanse His church. He has bought her for His own possession. He will never impute her trespasses to her. This is definite atonement! He shall save His people from their sins by His precious atoning blood.

**CHRIST HAS FOR SIN  
ATONEMENT MADE, WHAT  
A WONDERFUL SAVIOR!  
WE ARE REDEEMED, THE  
PRICE IS PAID, WHAT A  
WONDERFUL SAVIOR!  
I PRAISE HIM FOR HIS  
CLEANSING BLOOD, WHAT  
A WONDERFUL SAVIOR!  
THAT RECONCILED MY  
SOUL TO GOD, WHAT A  
WONDERFUL SAVIOR!**

In these days of bloodless theology, we must continue to emphasize that there can be **no** salvation from sin without looking to Jesus' blood. There is no cleansing from guilt without the application of His blood to the heart, by faith. The Bible is filled with this truth! And our worship

should reflect this. We ought to place much emphasis upon the theme of the precious blood. In our preaching, the atoning blood must be uplifted and exalted: "We preach Christ crucified..." In our praying, the blood ought ever to be before our minds and hearts (Hebrews 10:19–22). In our praise, in our singing, we ought to magnify the atoning blood. Thankfully, many great gospel hymns are replete with references to the "precious blood."

"Precious, precious blood of Jesus ever flowing free..."; "What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus."; "There is forgiveness God doth say, through the blood..."; "Would you be free from your burden of sin? There's power in the blood..."; "Blessed be the fountain of blood to a world of sinners revealed..."; "Are you washed in the blood?"; "When I see the blood..."; "Jesus Thy Blood and righteousness..."

It is good to sing about this wonderful subject here on Earth, since in a way we are thus "practicing" for Heaven! In glory, this is the theme of the song of the glorified. Then in the Lord's Supper, the precious blood is ever brought to our attention. Jesus called one of the elements (the cup) "the new testament in my blood." In this we are reminded of the great blessing referred by the Psalmist in Psalm 32:1 — Our transgression is forgiven, and our sins are covered, or literally "atoned for." Atonement has been made. Can you rejoice in the assurance that you have a personal interest in the atoning blood? ■



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# ENCOUNTERING THE ARK ENCOUNTER

Noah's Ark was a big boat. Take off its roof, fill it with water, and Columbus' *Nina*, *Pinta*, and *Santa Maria* could float around in it. Although impressive, to most people this kind of comparison means little. But your first sight of the ark in Williamston, Kentucky, will give you an unforgettable impression of the massive size of the Ark Noah spent 100 years building.

Answers in Genesis (AiG) raised the 24.5 million needed for its full size ark replica and the funds needed for related facilities, in about four years. The first wooden beams were set on the concrete foundation in mid-summer 2015. Amish woodworkers joined the construction crew to build the largest wood frame structure in the world by January. Internal finishing and installation of exhibits (constructed off site) were completed before the Ark Encounter's opening in June 2016.

Some may quibble over insignificant points. The exact length of the cubit Noah used can be debated. The Bible's description of Noah's Ark is a rectangular wooden box, with a side door and a window. The tapered bow, rounded stern, pitched roof and window placement in the replica may bother some, but AiG's research justifies the design they chose. In fact, their reasoning is far better than many who have tried to illustrate Noah's Ark.

Noah's Ark was made of gopher wood. We have no idea which tree produces gopher wood—possibly an antediluvian tree

nonexistent today? The hull of AiG's ark is made of radiata pine from New Zealand treated to withstand insects and rot.

Noah's Ark was covered inside and out with pitch. AiG's ark is pitch-less. Even to make it look pitched would take 450 gallons of stain and add over \$250,000 to the cost. It also would need re-staining every few years. The treated pine is weathering to a woody gray. If you must, think of this as a pre-pitched replica.

Noah's Ark needed pitch to be water tight and thus able to float. AiG's ark will not float. Its backside connects to concrete columns housing elevators, fire escapes, air conditioning ducts, modern restrooms: facilities not found in the original. While not seen from the outside by visitors, these additions are essential to a modern themed attraction.

AiG uses *themed attraction* to describe Ark Encounter and their future plans for the rest of the 800-acre tract. Already added is Ararat Ridge (a petting zoo featuring camel rides), zip lines, gardens, restaurants. Future developments include recreations of Bible-era villages and a Tower of Babel. Some have suggested this will never be finished. If the tower replica is biblically accurate, that is true; however, the themed attraction of it, if the Lord tarries, probably will be finished.

This projection is based on AiG's success with themed attractions. Their Creation Museum, which opened in 2007, has

exceeded attendance expectations. Some days it has 4000 guests. Over one million people visited within its first three years. Ark Encounter had a million visitors its first year. The Creation Museum has experienced increased attendance since Ark Encounter opened, even though the two attractions are 45 minutes apart by car. While you might be able to walk through both in a day, you would not experience much at that pace. It appears that people come and spend the time needed to visit both.

## THE ARK'S INHABITANTS

In the 1700s, Carl Linnaeus thought he was identifying the kinds God created as he classified organisms into his *species* (Latin for *kind*). Actually, he was placing organisms into similar groupings. This was ideal for identifying and naming them, but had little to do with what God created or what was on the Ark. If the Linnaean *species* is used to compute the Ark's population, the number is quite large: 35,000+ was often suggested. Consider that just the canines (dog, wolf, fox, etc.) on the Ark could have numbered over a hundred.

*Baramin*, a relatively new term, comes from two Hebrew words meaning "he created" and "kind." Baraminologists use modern genetic and other scientific data to group organisms into baramins. They suggest a single pair of canine baramin on the Ark and the present wolves, dogs, foxes and similar species are their descendents. Baraminology

greatly reduces the Ark's animal population. Over the years, AiG has dropped its estimate from 13,000 to about 7000.

Visitors enter the ark and pass by various cages and containers containing animal models. They look familiar, like distant relatives of known species. That is the point. AiG is, essentially, selecting various animals to illustrate baramins.

Later on the tour, visitors pass the accommodations for the Ark's human passengers. Rather than a uniform, generic decor as seen on modern ships, the ark's staterooms express different tastes for the four couples. AiG assumes that Noah's daughters-in-law came from different post-Babel groups. The wider human gene pool presumably enhanced postdiluvian diversity. These chambers are large and have a lavish feel. The Ark's human passengers may have served as crew and zoo staff, but apparently AiG feels their downtime was comfortable.

Feeding, watering, and "cleaning up" a self-contained, 7000-animal floating zoo for over a year with a limited staff (eight, to be precise) presents challenges. God told Noah to make "rooms" in the Ark and to take "of all food that is eaten. . . and it shall be food for thee, and for them" (Genesis 6:14,21). Details of how it was done are lacking. There are other problems. A watertight boat with a single window would have insufficient ventilation to keep Ark inhabitants alive. Supplying fresh water and dealing with waste disposal seems insurmountable. Skeptics have doubted the Bible's account of the Ark based on the impossibility of it.

To answer these and similar concerns, some Bible believers have relied on Genesis 8:1 "And God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the ark." They claim "remembering" suggests God was working a miracle. If He wanted live animals to come out of the Ark, they were not going to suffocate, starve, dehydrate, or kill each other, or their keepers while in Noah's care. Some have speculated that God had the animals hibernate during their year-long voyage.

While AiG recognizes the possibility of a miraculous explanation of the Ark's physical workings, it has sought to find other possible answers. Displays in their ark point to ingenious ways to answer the

skeptic's objections. These methods do not involve complicated machinery or modern technology. Remember, Noah had one hundred years to work out such details.

## WHY BUILD AN ARK?

Shortly after passing the animal cages, visitors are treated to a video of an antediluvian reporter and her team interviewing Noah. Humor engages and disarms the audience, but the penetrating questions and Noah's responses reveal much Biblical truth. God's purpose in having Noah build the Ark is presented and receives the scorn one would expect from the antediluvians described in Genesis. No sermon or tract could better communicate these concepts to a modern audience.



Later, another video features the same actors. This time a skeptical modern reporter seeks to interview the builder of the ark replica the audience is in. Again, penetrating questions and responses reveal Biblical truth, and the parallels between antediluvian and modern society become apparent. The video starts as an attention getter, but becomes a compelling, modern presentation of the gospel.

Before leaving the ark, the gospel message is again presented as visitors pass through an enlarged graphic novel. The story presented in this currently engaging format portrays modern, everyday people: some who reject the Bible's message and others who accept its offer of salvation, and the effects of their decisions.

AiG says it exists "to proclaim the authority of the Bible." They seek to

do this "using apologetics in . . . world-class attractions" and other media. Their stated goal is for believers to be "equipped to defend the Christian faith and nonbelievers . . . challenged with the truth of the Bible and its message of salvation."

Those who have visited AiG's themed attractions will have to agree that the money spent creating them was effectively used to accomplish these goals. Not everyone will agree with every AiG position. (Even getting two Christians to agree on all Biblical points is virtually impossible.) At their attractions, AiG's positions are clearly presented in understandable ways. Could their positions have been printed? Of course, and those books are available in the gift shop. But if only available in print, far fewer would be exposed to them.

Since themed attractions communicate with the young and the elderly, those with a passing interest and those seeking deeper understanding all at the same time, they are an effective modern communication method. Themed attractions of the world present everything from pantheistic ecology to sexual freedom in an effort to change visitor's thinking. AiG's themed attractions present Scripture and the gospel in an effort to change visitors.

A lengthy visit to Ark Encounter and the Creation Museum should be on every Christian's bucket list. You will learn and be inspired. Return visits will reveal points you previously missed and new exhibits will present even more. Since themed attractions are so popular, seek to bring unsaved friends and pray that this presentation of the gospel is the one which the Holy Spirit will use to reach them. ▀

For more information, see [answersingenesis.org](http://answersingenesis.org) or [arkencounter.com](http://arkencounter.com).



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## PENTICTON FPC

The first Lord's Day in February marked the twenty-second anniversary of the commencement of the congregation in Penticton. In January 1997, Rev. Andy Foster and his wife, Jill, arrived in Canada to begin the work of planting the church. They had paid a visit to western Canada in 1995 at Rev. Ian Goligher's invitation and the outcome of that visit was the call of God to return and begin the work in Penticton.

During these twenty-two years, there have been many things to be thankful for! For six years, the congregation met in a rented church facility and then in 2003 the Lord wonderfully provided their own church building. They have been blessed with a core group which, though small, is dedicated to the cause of Christ and rejoices in the separated stand the church takes. One of the highlights of their church life is the lunch they share each Lord's Day between the services. It has proved to be a blessing to share such fellowship together.

Mr. Steve Warchola is the only founding member still remaining. Sadly, because of poor health, Steve is no longer able to attend services, but still rejoices in the work.

Looking forward, let us pray that the Lord will raise up others who will share the vision they seek to promote. Pray that there will be an appetite for the Word of God among believers and a desire for Christ in the hearts of sinners. Pray also, for a new radio opportunity that is planned for the near future, since a local LTBS broadcast has not been possible for some years. ❏



# GENESIS

## GOD'S BOOK OF BEGINNINGS STUDY NOTES

### SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 1:

This chapter declares that God created the world out of nothing and organized it into a perfect world in six literal, twenty-four-hour days. It also declares that God created man in His own image and gave him dominion over the creatures. This is vital information about God, about the world He has created, and about man's origin, for it declares the true purpose of life. To know that God is the Creator and man is the creature is foundational to our fellowship with the true and living God. It was the apostle Paul's starting point when he taught the Athenians about the true character of the "unknown God" (Acts 17:22-31).

**Key verse:** "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). This text is fundamental to the book of Genesis as the book of beginnings and the whole Bible as God's revelation to man. It lays a foundation for the history of the world and of mankind.

This is the battleground between God's revelation and man's reason, or between faith in God's Word and science, so-called. God has spoken of His own work of creation. We are not left to speculate how the earth originated, nor how man originated.

### OBSERVATIONS ON THIS CHAPTER:

**1. God's direct creation of the world and all things in the world is the starting point of our knowledge of God and our worship of Him.** To reject God as Creator is to deny who He is; whereas to accept God as Creator acknowledges His essential attributes, including His supernatural power and His infinite wisdom. All theology comes back to the nature of the self-existent God who is distinct from His creation. Every reader of Genesis will discover that God's existence and nature

is entirely separate from His creative work. God's work of creation does not change the nature of God; it only reveals Him as the infinite Being, who is eternal, self-existent, and unchangeable.

**2. God's creation of the world in six days is the basis for a seven-day week and the principle of Sabbath rest.** Genesis chapter one sets out each day of God's creative work with profound clarity. It lists "first day", "second day", through to "sixth day". This itemizing of the days is deliberate and should sober deniers of God's literal six days of creation. The Hebrew word for day is *YOM*. It is used consistently in the Old Testament for a literal twenty-four-hour day. Read the account of God feeding His people in the wilderness with manna (Exodus 16:16-26). Note the statement of "morning and evening" and the word "day" (*YOM*). The Hebrew noun means "hot" as in the heat of each day's cycle with the sun shining by day. Genesis chapter one also carefully records, "The evening and the morning were the first day," and "the second day" through to the "sixth day." God wants the reader of this Creation account not to doubt that He created the world in six literal twenty-four-hour days.

**3. God created a perfect world.** Look for the statement after each day's creation, "And it was good" (v. 4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25), or "it was very good" (v. 31). Truly, God's work is perfect. He did not create a broken world. Instead, He created a universe that functioned flawlessly. Adam was created and placed in a perfect environment, which reflected God's glory in every detail. Even inanimate objects were declared good. Man was made morally upright and the earth, along with the whole universe, was made to function precisely as God designed them. Perfection underscored every aspect of God's created world.

**4. God created His creatures after their kind** (v. 12, 21, 24, 25). God put boundaries

around procreation. Plants, animals, birds, and fish could only produce offspring according to the special design of their own order. By this deliberate plan, God ruled out propagation between different species. Horses and donkeys can produce mules, but mules do not produce offspring! This is a heavy strike against evolution, which claims that higher orders evolved from lower forms of life.

**5. God created man in His own image to glorify Himself.** To be made in God's image meant dominion over every creature on sea, land, and air. Man was directly created as the highest order, and was given to rule over the earth and other creatures. To be made in God's "image" or "likeness" (v. 26) does not mean physical likeness, as God is a pure Spirit. Instead, it means moral and spiritual likeness. Man was given a conscience, a moral arbiter built into his nature, which distinguishes between right from wrong. From the first week of creation, Adam had the necessary faculties to experience fellowship with God. To know the joy of His approval or to experience shame and guilt through God's disapproval (Ecclesiastes 7:9, Ephesians 4:24). God's nature, or law, was written in his heart.

### Application: How does this apply to me?

You are a creature; God is your Creator. You must never forget this fact in your walk with God and in your worship of Him. To take the place of a creature honors God and this becomes the starting point for a satisfying life with purpose. To deny God as Creator is pride that must be renounced. The Bible gives many examples of true worship where man must humble himself to the dust, before the majesty of God. The first answer of the *Shorter Catechism* is the proper starting point of Christian doctrine, "Man's chief end [true purpose] is to glorify God and to enjoy Him for ever." To deny that is to be a lost soul.

Editor ✎

# PRESBYTERIANISM'S BIBLICAL FOUNDATION

Debates over the method of church government have absorbed much energy and time. Particularly, those who favor a congregational or independent model of church government have insisted throughout the decades that the New Testament presents no other model, and that if it does, the peculiarities of the apostolic age rendered that model unique to that time. Those who make that argument satisfy themselves that independency is the only way of governing the church that preserves the liberty of every believer to be his own priest.

Still, such arguments must concede the reality that there was a definite model of church government in place during the apostolic age, regardless of whether that model was to become extinct upon the deaths of the apostles. One of the apostles, John, continued to live, it appears, until the end of the first century or the beginning of the second. Thus, when it comes to the Biblical record, there can be no mistaking the evidence that the church of the apostolic age reflected the government by presbyters or elders that underscored the fact that churches existed in the bonds of a holy relationship that bound one congregation to the others.

Some rely on antiquity of an institution as an indicator of its historic validity and effectiveness. By that argument, the emphasis of the New Testament, relatively soon after the first missionary journey of Paul and Barnabas, was on the interdependency of the various congregations that had come into existence. The Council that met at Jerusalem, of which we read in Acts 15, featured the attendance of the “apostles and elders.” The account of the meeting of the Council indicates that the apostles and elders met on an equal basis. There is no indication that the apostles sought to overwhelm the elders in the decision making on the issue that was before the Council.

Statements by some of the apostles elsewhere in the New Testament reinforce the idea that there was an equality of authority and esteem

in the government of the church. Peter identified himself as being “also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed” (1 Peter 5:1). Both 2 John and 3 John begin with the apostle identifying himself as “the elder.” The argument that in some fashion the elders were subservient in the government of the church in the apostolic age finds little support in the statements of Peter and John. Paul wrote to Titus, one of his protégés, to remind him that one of the chief ways of establishing order in the churches in Crete was for Titus to ordain elders in every city of the island. Such an approach was to emphasize as well that the elders were to be local figures for whom the members of local congregations voted to be their representatives. Nevertheless, the implication of the ordination was that the elders were functioning in addition as representatives of Christ in the congregations. The importance of that relationship appeared in the exhortations of Hebrews 13:7 and 17 in which the people of the congregations were to subject themselves to the rule by the elders. Thus, the existence of a plurality of elders was plainly apparent during the time in which most of the apostles were still living.

The New Testament also demonstrates that there is no room for the concept of independency or autonomy among the churches of the New Testament world. The various congregations did not have the option of dissenting from the decision of the Council of Jerusalem. “And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem” (Acts 16:4). The decision of the Council was the result of collaboration, and it focused on fundamental issues on which all the churches had to agree. This collective decision

on matters of fundamental policy lies at the heart of the way in which Presbyterianism functions. The individual congregations, under the rule of their elders, retain the ability to design activities and to render decisions as fits their local situation. But they are not at liberty to ignore or dissent from decisions that are binding on all of the congregations for the sake of their collective testimony.

The importance of that collective testimony lies at the foundation of another function of Presbyterianism to which the New Testament bears witness. The presbytery alone exercises the power to ordain men to the ministry of the gospel, whether in preaching the Word or in assuming the rule over a congregation. The apostle Paul reminded Timothy that his induction into the gospel ministry was the result of the collective action of the presbytery. “Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery” (1 Timothy 4:14). It is true that Paul’s use of the word is the only occurrence of the term “presbytery” in the New Testament. Nevertheless, it is clear that Paul meant that some representation of the whole church acted in setting Timothy apart to the ministry of the gospel.

The presbytery reflects the need for the various far flung congregations to be accountable to each other so that the message of the gospel of Christ should not fall into disrepute. It is a body of men whom Christ has called to be His under-shepherds that operates under the solemn charge to care for the souls under its charge. There is a regional or even continental aspect of that responsibility, and there is a local aspect of the responsibility as well. Each congregation expresses its testimony through its vital connection to the other congregations whose elders provide representation in the presbytery. The elders are also responsible in each congregation to watch over the souls under their immediate care so that the whole church may advance in the holiness and fear of God. ■



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# HOME-MAKING

by J.R. Miller

Protecting the family is one of the highest priorities set forth in the Holy Scriptures. The Lord promises the blessing of an enduring stability and joy to families that carefully obey His Word. That is the only sure immunity from the epidemic of divorce and ruin that is now devastating many professing Christian families. Numerous pastors' hearts are broken over families that had maintained a good testimony for decades, yet now are destroyed by separation and divorce. Of course, the head of the family bears the primary responsibility for maintaining family unity by leading through a godly example and loving instruction. Although many godly fathers are doing an excellent job of caring for their families, an increasing number are failing miserably. A wise church elder recently commented that many husbands blame their relationship with their wife as the source of the problem; however, he went on to say that the real source of the problem is the husband's relationship with the living God. Truly, the key to success in all relationships is real and vibrant: daily fellowship with the Lord. That is why Dr. J. R. Miller's book "Home-Making" is so useful today. Like Richard Baxter's "The Christian Directory", Dr. Miller's book is full of scriptural answers without humanistic psychology.

Dr. J. R. Miller was an admirable minister of Christ in Pennsylvania during the mid-

to-late nineteenth century. His deeply spiritual, pastoral ministry is reflected in his many devotional writings. His book with the unusual title, "Home-Making", was first published in 1882. With such a title, some might think that the book is dealing only with the wife and mother's duties; however, the twentieth century term "home economics" in its literal sense would aptly describe the book. *Economics* means the "law of the house" and the consistently spiritual application of God's holy law transforms a house into a truly happy home. Such a home is the product of the contributions of all the family members.

Without the loving and consistent application of God's holy law, a house is merely a scene of chaos. Sadly, the "Christian West" has shifted over the last 100 years to the position of antinomianism which has brought ruin to many homes. Antinomianism is the mistaken idea that the moral law is no longer applicable as the rule of conduct for the believer. The chaos of the West is demonstrated by a divorce rate that is indeed epidemic. Now over fifty per cent of all marriages in the U.S. end in divorce. How devastating not only for the estranged spouses, but also for the helpless children who are thrown into a tug of war between their parents.

Dr. Miller's book applies God's Word to each family member. Of course, he begins with the home's foundation: Christian marriage. He devotes a chapter to the duties of the husband. As the leader and head of the home, the husband bears the primary responsibility for proper Biblical leadership. The following chapter on the duties of the wife is just as important, unfolding the wife's biblical response of support to her loving husband. The very atmosphere and attitude of the home are created by the wife. Her faithful keeping of the home, her decorating the rooms with good taste, and her relationship with the Lord combine to make a house into a home. The chapter on parenting is also essential because of God's plan to fill the earth with a godly seed through Christian parents. God's will is generally for children to come into the home and to be nurtured in that loving atmosphere so that they will come to know and to serve Christ. What a thrilling chapter Dr. Miller wrote concerning siblings in the home. One of the goals

of parenting is to guide the children into becoming best friends. Why should the children seek their best friends from families other than their own? Friends are won by kindness, thoughtfulness, and unselfishness.

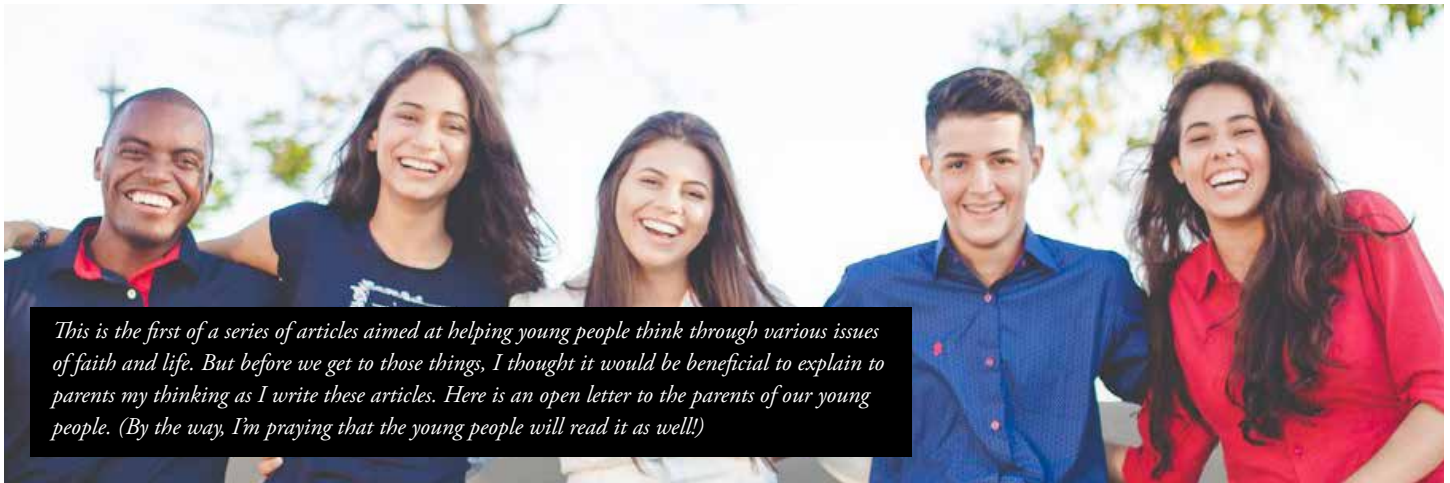
"Let no one suppose that home friendships can be won and kept in any other way. We cannot depend on nature or instinct to do this for us. We must live for each other. We must gain each other's heart by giving just what we expect to receive. We must cherish the friendship that we have won. Unless we do, it will not grow. We must watch our words and our conduct. We must seek to please and take pains never to wound or grieve. We must deny self and live for one another. We must confide in one another. We must cultivate in our own homes and lives whatever is beautiful, whatever is tender, whatever is holy, whatever is true. Friendships in our own home, to be deep and true and heart-satisfying, must be formed by the patient knitting of soul to soul and the growing of life into life, just as in other friendships."

Brothers and sisters should cultivate home friendships among themselves. Thus, they plant the lovely flowers of lasting affection. The home shall thereby be transformed into "the days of heaven upon the earth" (Deuteronomy 11:21). "If Christ be remembered daily and hourly in the home, if his presence be consciously realized and its transforming power felt in each heart, and if everything be done and every word spoken in his name, the household life will be pervaded by the spirit of heaven, and the home memories will be tender with all the hallowed tenderness of the warmest love."

What a wonderfully helpful resource Dr. Miller produced for families living in this chaotic era! Surely the wholesale ruin had barely begun to show its ugly features during his lifetime. "Home-Making", despite its outdated-sounding title, is a relevant help for Christian homes in today's society. ❧



**Rev. Myron Mooney**  
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Decatur, Alabama



Dear parent,

I've been asked to write some articles for the *Current* on topics relating to young people. I haven't been given the topics, but some matters quickly came to mind. As a parent, I know these are troubling days. It would seem that our children are being tempted into sin more fiercely than ever before. It seems that traditional Christian views on worship, faith, and morality are eroding rapidly before our eyes. How will our young people survive in such a day? How can they stand for Christ in the public privacy of social media? Will they want to proclaim Christ when such proclamation may hinder popularity and progress in a given career? I know that there is nothing new under the sun, but old sins hold tremendous power in our times.

It's time to tell our kids how to live. I think you'll agree that I need to write about marriage and dating, social media, modern entertainment, the Contemporary Christian Music scene, taking a stand for Christ, and more. Our kids need to be told! Or do they? Of course they do. Thinking this over, I came to the renewed conclusion that our young people are not helped if they do what they're told without having the right foundation for doing right. What's more is that they will not and cannot do right without the right foundation.

If our young people have an understanding and hold convictions regarding the holiness of God, then our concerns will be addressed. Consider these simple statements:

- God is holy (Isaiah 6:3; 57:15). The term speaks of God as One singularly set apart from everything else. He alone is eternal and He

is distinct, set apart from all of creation. "Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" (Exodus 15:11). To say that God is holy is to state that He is incomparable in His majesty and morality. He is of "purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity" (Habakuk 1:13). Simply, there is none like God in terms of glory and moral excellence.

- Man is not holy. Men are "unholy and profane" (1 Timothy 1:9). We are creatures, God is Creator. We are sinful, God is not!

We need to pray that the Lord will open the eyes and hearts of our children that they would hear these things and believe them to be true. If our young people grasp these simple things, then everything changes. Let me explain:

- When they see their sin in light of God's holiness, they will see their need of a Savior — Christ. We know that our children cannot stand before God in the filth of their sin. We know that they need to be cleansed by the blood of Christ. May **they** come to know this.
- When they see the gospel in light of the holiness of God, they will be burdened for the souls of men. They will make Christ known to the masses of humanity who await the judgment of a holy God.
- When they see themselves in light of the holiness of God, they will be cautious, contrite, and reverent when they approach

God in worship (Isaiah 57:15; Ecclesiastes 5:1-2). An awareness of God's holiness will prevent our young people from embracing casual, contemporary worship. "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire" (Hebrews 12:28-29).

- When they see their conduct in the light of God's holiness they will not play fast and loose with sin. God saves His people unto holiness (2 Timothy 1:9; Hebrews 12:10). God is Himself the standard of our conduct (1 Peter 1:15-16) and of the holiness without which no man shall see the Lord (Hebrews 12:14).

When we stop and think about it, what young people need first of all is to see themselves in the light of God. They do need direction how to live in this present age, but those directions will fall on deaf ears unless they come to *know* God. As I write articles for your young people, let's pray together that there would be those who, knowing their God, "shall be strong, and do exploits" (Daniel 11:32).

Yours in Christ,

Stephen Pollock



**Dr. Stephen Pollock**  
is minister of Malvern  
FPC, Malvern, PA.

# SATANIC HINDRANCES TO THE CHRISTIAN'S PRAYER LIFE



While most Christians sing in complete sympathy with hymnodist William Cooper when he wrote, “Lord, it is my chief complaint that my love is weak and faint,” they have often felt the same line would be an apt description of their prayer life. Their complaint is not only about their weakness as far as praying in faith is concerned, or their faintness when it comes to consistency in prayer. But the common lament of many Christians is that they find it hard just to *get to* the place of prayer. Why is that? When you think about the privilege of prayer; the spiritual power that can be obtained through prayer; the many promises that God has given to encourage prayer; and the numerous times in Scripture when you find the Lord pleading with His people to pray, *why do we often find it so difficult to go and pray?*

From what Paul writes in Ephesians 6, the greatest adversary of any Christian's prayer life is Satan. The apostle urges us to put on the whole armor of God in order that we “might be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.” His great concluding statement on this whole section of the Christian's warfare with the devil is telling: “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints” (v. 18). Perhaps in no other area of their walk with God do Christians encounter more of the devil's wiles than

in the area of prayer. Since prayer brings you into fellowship with God, and fellowship with God translates into spiritual power to resist and overcome the devil, Satan is constantly trying to make the prayer life of every Christian non-existent.

Albert Barnes, a nineteenth-century Presbyterian minister in America made this insightful comment on verse 18: “No matter how complete the armor; no matter how skilled we may be in the science of war; no matter how courageous we may be, we may be certain that without prayer we shall be defeated. God alone can give the victory; and when the Christian soldier goes forth armed completely for the spiritual conflict, if he looks to God by prayer, he may be sure of a triumph.”

Surely that was the sentiment of Cowper when he wrote in another of his hymns,

“Restraining prayer, we cease to fight;  
Prayer makes the Christian's armor bright;  
And Satan trembles when he sees  
The weakest saint upon his knees.”

So, what is the devil's method of attack to bring that about? He has basically three approaches: 1) prevent you from praying, 2) interrupt you while you are praying,

or 3) defeat the prayers he couldn't prevent or interrupt.

**“You don't feel well. You should wait until you feel better before you pray.”**

One of his oft-used tactics to keep us from praying is that of *some physical issue*. He comes to us with this idea: “You need to wait until you feel better before you pray.” But the interesting thing is that, in spite of not feeling well, you seem to be able to take care of your worldly affairs. Christians will get up and go to work with a headache and will do so even though they had a sleepless night. But the headache and the tiredness seem to be legitimate reasons not to pray. William Gurnall, a seventeenth-century Anglican minister, asked this searching question to those who listen to this suggestion from the devil: “Art thou well enough to go into thy shop, and not to pray in thy closet? Canst thou waddle so far as to the market, and not pray at home?” Surely the LORD deserves your company more than the world, even when you may not feel well!

Not only will Satan make use of bodily weakness or sickness to keep you from praying, but he will also use *the deadness of your own heart* as an argument not to pray. You lack the desire to pray. Your heart feels cold, full of spiritual apathy, and empty of any real interest in prayer. So, the devil suggests that you should pray *when you are*

*in a better frame of heart.* But think carefully about that twisted and deceptive logic: “By neglecting prayer *now* you will be better prepared to pray *later*.” Really? You become *better* at prayer by *not* praying? That is like saying that the best way to deal with a lack of desire to work (i.e., laziness) is by being idle.

The fact of the matter is that when you feel that your heart is not in a fit frame to pray, that’s the very time when you need *most* to pray! If you don’t, one of two things will happen. First, you will eventually see and feel your sin and come back to the Lord in shame and sorrow for neglecting prayer. But it’s far better to pray now even with a backwardness for prayer than to pray under those conditions. The other possibility is that you will find that the neglect of prayer becomes easier and easier. You’ll then reach a state where you feel that having any kind of a real prayer life is hopeless.

**“You don’t have time to pray.”**

One of Satan’s most successful tactics to prevent the believer from praying is “You don’t have time.” How many prayers never get uttered because we listen to the devil’s suggestion that we need to pray *later* because there is something more pressing right *now*. In his book, *Freedom from the Tyranny of the Urgent*, Charles Hummel writes:

“Our greatest danger is letting the urgent things crowd out the important ones. ... We live in constant tension between the urgent and the important. The problem is that many important tasks need not be done today, or even this week. Additional hours for prayer and Bible study, a visit to an elderly friend, reading an important book: these activities can usually wait a while longer. But often urgent, though less important tasks, call for *immediate* response and gobble up our time. Endless demands pressure every waking hour. ... Their appeal seems irresistible, and they devour our energy. But in the light of eternity

their momentary prominence fades. With a sense of loss we recall the important tasks that have been shunted aside. We realize that we have become slaves to the tyranny of the urgent.”

The greatest tyrant of the urgent, when it comes to this all-important matter of prayer, is the devil. He loves to fill our hands with urgent things — even with “good” things — as long as they keep us from the one thing that is needful. If you are too busy to pray, then the reality is that you are too engaged in the world’s business.

## WE COULD NOT EASILY [LACK] TIME TO PRAY IN, IF OUR HEARTS WOULD BUT PERSUADE OUR HEADS TO DEVISE AND STUDY HOW OUR OTHER AFFAIRS MIGHT BE DISPOSED OF WITHOUT PREJUDICE TO OUR DEVOTIONS.

A vital part of overcoming Satan’s tactics to keep us from the throne of grace is making sure that our times of prayer will not be interfered with by the time we must spend in the world. As Gurnall put it so incisively, “We could not easily [lack] time to pray in, if our hearts would but persuade our heads to devise and study how our other affairs might be disposed of without prejudice to our devotions.”

The thing that our heart and head must be persuaded of is the *priority* of prayer. Yes, there are times and events that take place that lawfully prevent the believer from getting alone with God. But we must be

very careful that we don’t label something as a “necessary duty” when, in actuality, it is just an excuse for not praying. Martin Lloyd Jones said: “The ultimate test of the Christian life is the amount of time we give to prayer. Prayer...should be the ultimate expression of the Christian life.”

Prayer is about enjoying a living relationship with a living Christ who wants our continual fellowship. That is the very thing the devil wants to steal from us and so he strives to keep us from prayer. It is here that we must believe and plead the truth of Christ: “Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.” God’s promise still holds true: “Resist the devil and he will flee from you.” ☒



**Rev. John Wagner**  
is the minister of Columbia  
FPC, South Carolina

# GOD'S INCREASE IN JAMAICA

I recently had the pleasure of accompanying Dr. Larry Saunders on a visit to the Let the Bible Speak Church in Little London, Jamaica. During my flight home, I was organizing my thoughts for a presentation to our own congregation in Winston Salem. The Lord impressed on my mind Paul's words to the church in Corinth where he said, "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase" (I Corinthians 3:6). The point of this verse is that the work of God is bigger than any one man, but in the providence of God, He uses the collective efforts of men to accomplish His purposes. When I contemplate the work in Jamaica, I see this verse illustrated.

The Free Presbyterian mission work in Little London, Jamaica began with the burden of Mrs. Barbara Nichols for the children of the community. She began holding children's Bible classes under a large tree located on the front of her property. Through her connection with the Free Presbyterian Church in Toronto, eventually a mission work was formed on the same piece of land. Drs. Frank McClelland and Larry Saunders have been instrumental in guiding the work. For the past thirty years or so, various missionaries have come and gone. Some have ministered for a matter of months while others remained in the work for years. The longest serving missionary to work in Jamaica was Rev. Paul Fitzsimons. Pastor Paul, as he is called by the folks there, served in Jamaica for three different periods of time. The people in the church fondly speak of the "three missionary journeys" of Pastor Paul.

Mr. Richard Craig and Mr. Randy Gunnings are the two men who oversee the work now. Pastor Paul had a tremendous spiritual impact in the lives of both of these men. Richard has the responsibility for doing most of the preaching now. While I was there, it was a blessing to hear him speak about Pastor Paul's ministry and

the influence he had. During one of our conversations, Dr. Saunders asked Richard what first drew him to the church. Richard immediately said that it was the preaching. He said that Pastor Paul's preaching was very different from what he had known previously growing up in the local Anglican church. When I had the opportunity to speak with several of the older ladies in the congregation, Miss Ina, Mrs. Jean, and Mrs. Wallace, they all spoke of their spiritual growth under Pastor Paul's ministry.

From my perspective, the work is in a period of transition now away from a "mission work" to a real Jamaican congregation of believers. Richard and Randy are native Jamaicans and have grown up in the work. Richard Craig has recently started ministerial training under the care of the Presbytery. He has a burden for the work of God, and for many years has been laboring faithfully among the people. Richard has carried a heavy load, balancing church work with his secular work and family responsibilities. Without a foreign missionary present, the work needs a local pastor. For all practical purposes, Richard has been fulfilling that role, and with the Lord's help has been doing an excellent job. Recently, the Mission Board has made some financial provisions for Richard so that he will be able to devote a much larger portion of his time to the work of the ministry. Please pray for Richard as he continues his training in the Seminary. Currently, he is being mentored in his studies by Rev. Geoff Banister from the Free Presbyterian Church in Indianapolis.

Mr. Randy Gunnings assists with some of the church responsibilities, and between these two men, the ministry continues. They both minister in some of the local schools and are able to freely present the gospel to the students there. Randy's testimony and vision for the future of the work is to see a larger ministry among

the children develop. In the past, under the leadership of Pastor Paul, the children's ministry was a large part of the work. The current church leadership came from that ministry, and no doubt the future leadership will develop from it as well. As with all of our congregations, it is vital that the Lord do a work of grace in the heart of our children.

In addition to the spiritual needs in the congregation, there are physical needs as well. The primary need now is for a new bus. Richard and Randy drive to pick up well over half of the congregation to bring them to the services. The bus they use has been good over the years, but it is badly in need of replacement. As I rode in the bus down the rough streets of Jamaica, I could see the pavement beneath my feet through the rusty holes in the floorboard. We also had to put the sliding door back in its track several times after it fell off. The vehicle is in constant need of repair, so the best thing to do is simply replace it. The Mission Board is putting out an appeal to all of our congregations to raise approximately \$40,000 USD to purchase a larger capacity and more reliable bus. If the Lord burdens your heart to contribute to this need, you can give a donation through your local congregation and direct the funds to the FPCNA Mission Board for the Jamaica Bus Fund.

Pray for Jamaica that God would give the increase. Since the beginning of the work, many have planted and many have watered, but only God can give the increase. Here are some other items for you to uphold in prayer:

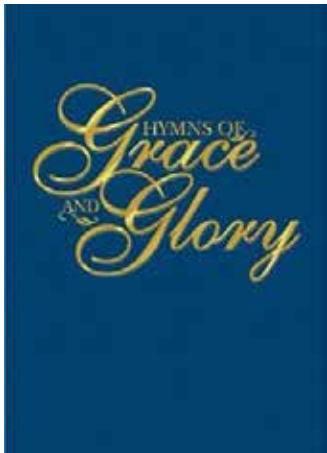
1. The salvation of many souls
2. Spiritual growth among the children
3. Protection for the people due to the rise of violence in the area
4. Richard Craig and his ministerial studies
5. Randy Gunnings and his assistance in the congregation
6. For the fear of God to descend upon Jamaica 🏴



**Rev. Derrick Bowman**  
is associate minister at Grace  
FPC, Winston Salem, NC.

# PUBLICATIONS

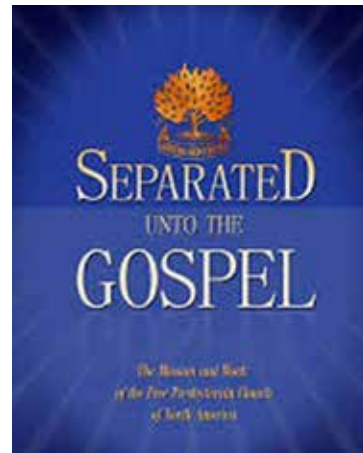
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## Installation Service for Rev. Andrew Simpson

On Friday evening, January 25, the presbytery held a special service to install Rev. Andrew Simpson as the new minister of Heritage FPC, Prince George, British Columbia. Visitors attended from Pennsylvania, Toronto, Cloverdale, Williams Lake, and Quesnel. Some local visitors came from the city of Prince George.

Rev. Andrew Foster of Penticton FPC led the service, and Rev. Stephen Hamilton of Lehigh Valley FPC, PA led in prayer. The Clerk of Presbytery, Rev. David Mook, read the prescribed questions to the minister elect, and Rev. Simpson signed the presbytery record book. Subsequently, the moderator, Rev. Ian Goligher, offered the installation prayer, calling upon the Lord to witness the vows taken by the new minister to uphold the doctrines and practice of

the FPCNA. The moderator also prayed for great grace to be given to Rev. Simpson and the Prince George people as they establish a gospel church by preaching Christ to saints and sinners.

Rev. Goligher brought a charge to the congregation and its new minister from the Word of God, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts" (Zechariah 4:6). He expounded the picture of the olive trees feeding oil to the lampstand to provide constant light. He emphasized that this as a picture of God working by grace. Rev. Goligher stated, "God builds His church by His own power. Minister and people must learn to totally rely on the sufficiency of God's grace to add His blessing to the work of building, pastoring, and preaching." The weather was co-operative and a meal was served by the congregation prior to the meeting, so that those who travelled to Prince George for the event could enjoy refreshments and fellowship.



## New Minister Installed in Faith FPC

On January 4, Rev. Armen Thomassian was installed as the new minister of Faith Free Presbyterian Church in Greenville, South Carolina. At the 2018 spring Week of Prayer, Rev. Thomassian accepted a call from Faith Free Presbyterian Church to become its new minister. After clearing the various hurdles with immigration, Rev. Thomassian—along with his wife (Melanie) and their three children (Elissa,

Lois, and Naomi)—left the snow-covered plains of Alberta, Canada in December to take up the work in South Carolina. As Providence would have it, they arrived to see snow-covered roads in Greenville as upstate South Carolina had been hit with a major snow storm just before their arrival.

But by January 4, the snow had gone and temperatures returned to their mild seasonal norm as people gathered to witness this special presbytery event. Rev. John Wagner, minister of Covenant FPC, and interim-moderator of Faith FPC, led the meeting. Rev. Myron Mooney, minister of Trinity FPC, opened in prayer and brought greetings from various ministers.

In the absence of the clerk of presbytery, Rev. David Mook, who was attending the Ministers' Week of Prayer in N. Ireland, Deputy Clerk Rev. Stephen Pollock put the prescribed questions to Rev. Thomassian wherein he declared his commitment to the Scriptures, the *Westminster Standards*, and the stand of the Free Presbyterian Church of North America.

Rev. Ian Goligher, the presbytery moderator, led the congregation in the installation prayer as he called upon God to bless Rev. Thomassian, to use him mightily, to guard his heart and home and to make his family a blessing to the entire congregation. Rev. Goligher then preached the charge to the newly-installed minister from Isaiah 66:1-2 as he spoke of the kind of man that God uses, and the kind of congregation that is needed, to stand behind God's man.

Rev. Thomassian was then asked to address the congregation. First, he thanked Rev. Goligher for reminding him of the weightiness of the ministry to which the Lord had called him. He shared his own salvation experience, his call to the gospel ministry, and his previous labors in Australia and Calgary. He also expressed his deep gratitude for the gracious welcome he and his family had received from the congregation, especially the Christian love shown to his wife and children.

Rev. Sanghoon Han, the minister of Korean FPC in Greenville, brought the meeting to a close with prayer for God's blessing and power to rest upon the new minister.



# Parable of the Vineyard and Slain Son

Naomi Simpson

Do you know what a “husbandman” is in the Bible? *Hint: it has nothing to do with being married!* A husbandman rented from a landowner, tending his crops. When harvest came, the husbandman gave his landowner a large portion of the crop.

Matthew 21 speaks about religious leaders in Jerusalem’s temple who rejected Jesus’ teachings. They interrupted Him in the middle of a sermon, asking who gave Him authority to teach in the temple. Can you imagine interrupting your pastor on Sundays? How much worse to interrupt Jesus! To answer these rude men, Jesus used a parable to teach them about Himself. He told the story of a man who owned a vineyard – where grapes grow – and how wicked husbandmen greedily wanted all the profit from that year’s crop. When reaping time came, the landowner sent three servants to his vineyard so they could collect the landowner’s portion of grapes.

The greedy husbandmen weren’t content with just their share, so they beat up one servant, stoned the other, and killed the third. When the owner found out what happened to his servants, he sent three more, but the husbandmen did the same to these servants.

Finally, the landowner decided to send his own son to claim the harvest saying, “They will reverence my son.” When the husbandmen saw the owner’s son coming, rather than showing him respect, they plotted to kill him. They wanted to claim the entire vineyard for themselves, stealing the son’s inheritance. What terrible actions a greedy heart can cause!

Jesus ended his parable with the son’s murder and then asked the temple rulers what the owner should do to these husbandmen. These prideful rulers answered that the owner should kill them and rent out his vineyard to good husbandmen who would give him the rightful portion of his crop. Jesus scolded them, quoting Psalm 118: 22: “The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.” This is difficult to understand, isn’t it? What lesson was Jesus teaching these rulers? To understand this parable, we must understand who each person represents. The vineyard owner is a type of God the Father, the vineyard is His Kingdom, the husbandmen are people who reject God, the servants are faithful followers of God, and the son is a type of Jesus Christ, God’s beloved Son Who

shed His blood on the cross. He is the “head stone” or foundation of our faith when we trust in Him. Sadly, these temple rulers (“builders”) had refused Christ just as the wicked husbandmen refused the vineyard owner’s son.

How does this parable apply to you? You are either one of God’s faithful servants who has come to Jesus Christ the Son for salvation or you are like the wicked husbandmen who refuse the Son. You want all the pleasures of the world just like these husbandmen wanted the entire vineyard for themselves. In the end, their greediness and sin led to their destruction.

This Easter, we celebrate our Saviour rising from the dead after dying on the cross for sin. Have you trusted Him as your Savior, or do you continue to reject His great salvation? ☑



**Rachel Huffman**  
teaches at a high school  
in South Carolina and is a  
member of Greenville FPC.



## A WORD WORTH KNOWING

### Parable

A simple story about people, used to illustrate a moral or spiritual lesson, as told by Jesus in the Gospels.



### Winter 2019

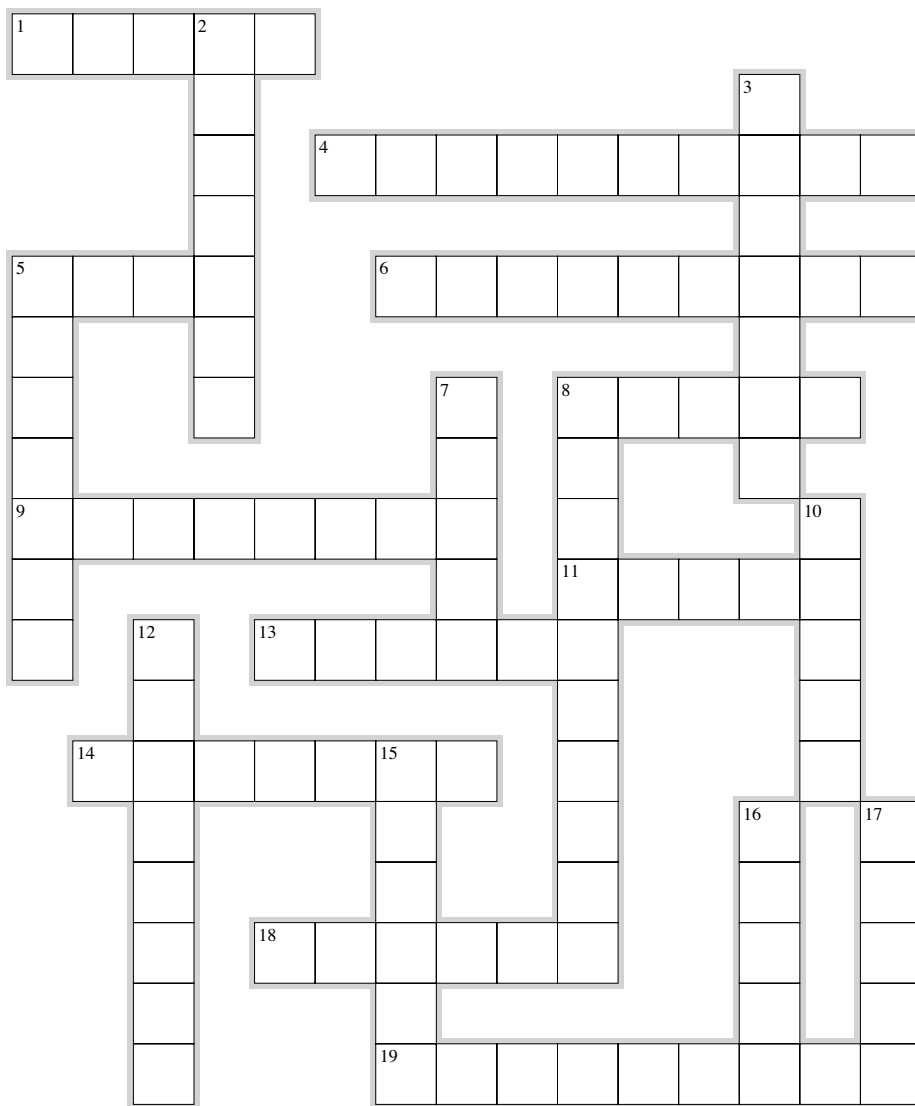
- ★ **Annalise Nymann**  
Indianapolis FPC (Indianapolis, IN)
- ★ **Cameron Pike**  
Malvern FPC (Malvern, PA)
- ★ **Jonathan Trimble**  
Malvern FPC (Malvern, PA)

# Kids' Crossword Puzzle

All answers are found in Matthew 27 & 28 (KJV)

## Across

1. Day on which Christ rose from the dead.
4. Natural disaster that happened at the crucifixion and the resurrection.
5. Torn top to bottom when Jesus died.
6. He said, "Truly this was the Son of God."
8. The first to hear that Christ was risen.
9. Place of crucifixion.
11. Carried the cross for Jesus.
13. Buried the body of Jesus.
14. Among those who mocked Jesus.
18. Jesus said, "Be not \_\_\_\_."
19. Place where Jesus was buried.
12. Person released when Jesus was condemned.
15. Jesus' crown was made of these.
16. The hour when darkness came over the land.
17. The darkness lasted this many hours.



## Down

2. Color of the robe soldiers put on Jesus.
3. The place to go to see the risen Christ.
5. Drink offered to Jesus.
7. What did the keepers at the grave do?
8. What the disciples did when they saw Jesus.
10. Announced to the women that Jesus had risen.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Please send your completed puzzle to Current Kids' Corner, C/o Judy Brown, 651 Ponden Dr., Greer, SC 29650, or by email to [ljbrown2@gmail.com](mailto:ljbrown2@gmail.com) by May 31, 2019. Include your name, address, age, and the name of the church you attend. Five winners will be drawn from all correct submissions received. The contest is open to young people ages 5–12. Winners will receive a \$10 cash prize.



# CALENDAR

## OF EVENTS

APRIL 15-20

Mexico FPC Youth Camp

APRIL 21

Easter Sunday

MAY 13-17

Presbytery Week of Prayer Hosted by Toronto FPC

# How Can it Be?

Like most Christians, it would be difficult for me to choose one hymn as a favorite because there are so many that I love. For me, the "Praise" section of our hymnbook is where I would turn mostly when I sit down to play the piano or organ. The great hymns of praise like "Praise my Soul the King of Heaven"; "How Great Thou Art"; "Holy, Holy, Holy"; and "Immortal, Invisible" are so full of praise and adoration to our great God. They have been etched in my mind since childhood. They elevate our thinking to the wonder and awesomeness of our great Creator and Redeemer.

As I have grown older, I am appreciating the value of being taught hymns as a child in Sunday school. The words of the children's hymns come back to me with freshness and I thank God for the good theology that was written in them. Also, I am encouraged when I visit senior's homes to see the residents, even some with dementia, still able to sing along with the hymns they learned as children. They can't read any more, but the words hidden in their hearts from their youth are still alive in them.

There is one hymn that has become a favorite of mine in recent years: "How Can It be?" written by Avis Christiansen (1895-1985). The writer, in contemplating the wonders of

creation, the enormity of the universe, the infinity of God, and by comparison the smallness of our planetary home, and the infinitesimal nature of humanity cries out, "How can it be?" Then the mind is truly staggered when it dwells on the infinite love of God, so much shown for so little.

O Savior, as my eyes behold,  
The wonders of Thy might  
untold,  
The heavens in glorious light  
arrayed,  
The vast creation Thou hast  
made –  
And yet to think Thou lovest  
me –  
My heart cries out, "How can  
it be?"  
Chorus:  
How can it be?  
How can it be?  
That God should love a soul like  
me,  
O how can it be?

The author then moves from a contemplation of God's power in creation to a consideration of the astounding work of Christ on the cross. If creation awes us, then the cross leaves us speechless when we think of the "unspeakable gift" of God (2 Corinthians 9:15). Once more from a penitential heart comes

the question, "How can it be? ... That God should love a soul like me."

As at the cross I humbly bow  
And gaze upon Thy thorn-crowned  
brow,  
And view the precious bleeding  
form  
By cruel nails so bruised and torn,  
Knowing Thy suffering was for me,  
In grief I cry, "How can it be?"

I recently had the privilege of hearing "The Messiah" downtown Toronto. I listened to the 130-voice Mendelssohn Choir sing, "Worthy is the Lamb" and then the audience of 2000 standing to honor the *Hallelujah Chorus*: "King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, and He shall reign for ever and ever". I could not help but think of the glorious moment when we shall see Him face to face, and we will join the heavenly chorus in ceaseless praise. Then, much more, shall we ask the question, "Lord, how can it be?" ☩



**Mrs. May McClelland**  
is the wife of Dr. Frank  
McClelland, founding  
minister of Toronto FPC.