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CURRENT

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LITTLE BOATS FOR A
BIG RESCUE

A MUSICAL
MINEFIELD

IN THE VALLEY OF THE
SHADOW

A PRECIOUS
PARADOX FOR
THE NEW YEAR

Dealing with
Depression



Contents

3 A Precious Paradox for the New Year

4 Dealing with Depression

6 In Their Own Words: Dr. Larry Saunders

9 Ministers Meet in the Valley of the Shadow

11 Ordination of a Seminary Professor

12 Church News

14 A Musical Minefield

16 Teen Talk: How We Live as Children and Teenagers

18 Kids' Corner



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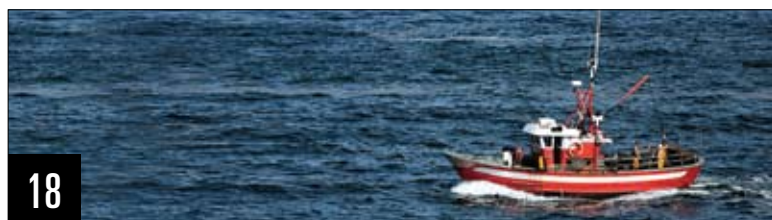
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The Free Presbyterian Church of North America is a conservative, Protestant, and Reformed denomination with churches in Canada and the United States. We maintain a biblical position of separation from false ecumenism while seeking to stand with all who stand for Christ and the historic Protestant faith. While unashamedly Reformed in our theology, our Calvinism is never a hindrance to our preaching the free offer of the gospel since we always seek to keep our Calvinism Christ-centered and evangelistic. Our great desire is to preach "the unsearchable riches of Christ" (Ephesians 3:18) in our churches and throughout the world.

For a complete listing of our congregations, contact information, and instructions on how to listen online to sermons from our ministers, please go to www.fpcna.org.





A Precious Paradox for the NEW YEAR

Christians are a strange lot. While this observation would be eagerly acknowledged by unbelievers because they are strangers to grace and God, it is one that the child of God comes to realize more and more as he discovers that the Christian is a paradox. He believes that he is precious in the sight of God, yet in his own sight he is “less than the least of all the saints.” He knows that salvation is all of grace and all of God, yet he strives to work out his own salvation with fear and trembling. He freely admits that he can do nothing, yet at the same time affirms that he can do all things. He believes with all of his heart that he will not be saved by good works, yet attempts to do all the good works he can and believes he won’t be saved without them. He prays with all of his heart not to be led into trial, yet rejoices when he falls into it. When he is weak, then he is strong.

There’s another paradox that highlights an important truth in the Christian’s life, especially as he begins a new year: the way to move forward is to stay where he is. The word of God that came to the children of Israel as they stood at the Red Sea still comes to the children of God today: “Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward” (Exodus 14:15). The bondage of the land of Egypt was behind them and the blessings of the land of Canaan were before them. But those blessings would be enjoyed only if they went forward. So it is for every Christian. If the Lord has redeemed you from sin’s bondage, He’s calling you to make progress in your spiritual life. Whatever failures you experienced last year in your walk with God are in the past. They may or may not have long-lasting consequences for you, but the fact remains that living in regret about last year’s failures is pointless and profitless. “Go forward!” is the Lord’s command. The failure to do that will leave you sitting in the valley of gloom, powerless and joyless. If that is where you are just now—discouraged, defeated and depressed—please read Dr. Lindsay Wilson’s article “Dealing with Depression.” In this first part of a two-part series, he gives good counsel on how to overcome the paralyzing power of depression.

Here is where the paradox comes in: the way to move forward is by staying where you are. Paul brings this out when he exhorts the Corinthian church to “be steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord” (1 Corinthians 15:58). The way to abound and make progress in the Lord’s work is by being steadfast and unmovable. The Lord is calling us to abound spiritually, not just eke out a bare Christian existence. Christ Jesus said that He came into this world in

order that His people might live an abundant life (John 10:10). But what is so critical to our abounding is our abiding. We go forward as we stand firm and hold our position. Of course that presupposes that we’re in the right position, which is determined for us by the Word of God. If we’re going to make substantive spiritual progress, the best thing we can do is to purpose in our hearts that we’re going to get down to the business of serious Bible study. How else will we be able to hold our position if we don’t know what it should be? And once we know what we are to believe and why we believe it, we then hold that position no matter what the cost.

There is a growing spirit in many Christian circles today that advocates for “redeeming the culture.” The thinking is that instead of viewing the culture (by and large) as an expression of the world that lies in darkness and is ruled by the prince of darkness, we need to take its art forms, its interests, its worldview and redeem these things by “Christianizing” them. This is a hot topic just now in the area of music. During a recent Q&A at a Reformed conference on worship, the panel was asked whether there was a place for “Reformed rap” in the church. To one degree or another, all of the

panelists spoke against the notion. The video clip of that segment of the panel discussion went viral on the Internet and a flood of opposition in defense of “Christian hip-hop” arose against the panelists. The argument is that music form doesn’t matter. As long as the words convey the truths of the gospel, it is a way to redeem the culture. The president of a conservative Southern Baptist seminary encouraged these Reformed rap musicians to “rap on” because they were reaching a group of people with the gospel that he could never reach. Such is the sad and inevitable result of failing to hold your position on what the Word of God says about how God is to be worshipped. If this is something about which you’d like to read more, then check out Rev. Colin Mercer’s article “A Musical Minefield.” The bibliography is an excellent resource for any who want to dig deeper.

We trust and pray that the Lord will use this little quarterly magazine to lead you on in your walk with God. If you have found it to be helpful in some way, please pass it on to others after you have finished reading it. Better yet, buy someone a subscription. You just never know how the Lord will use your gift to take someone else forward with God. ■



Dealing with Depression

Part One

The man who said the Christian life is a bed of roses could not have been further from the truth. It is certainly neither what the Scriptures teach nor what experience bears out. “Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble” (Job 14:1). I think we can all agree with Job.

The Saviour said, “In the world ye shall have tribulation” (John 16:33). The saints in the Bible were bombarded with troubles, trials, and afflictions on every hand. We think again of Job. Almost every conceivable trouble that could have befallen him, did. David was hunted and hounded around the country by the king. A look at that long list in 2 Corinthians 11 of the calamities the apostle Paul endured shows that the most eminent of saints have not escaped Christ’s promise of tribulation.

Bring it a little closer to home, and surely we can all testify to the fact that we are more often than not in distress and trouble, whether it be in the family, at work, or simply in our hearts. Such things easily drag us down, rob us of our joy, and make peace little more than a dream.

Many of God’s people feel down, even depressed. The world and their circumstances are closing in around them, to the point that they are in despair. They have resigned themselves to the belief that things will always be so until they get to glory. This position is as erroneous as the statement that the Christian life is a bed of roses.

The Lord Jesus came that we might have life and that we might have it more abundantly. The saints whose trials are catalogued in Scripture are also the ones who speak of the fullness of joy in *this* life, not just in that to come. They talk of rejoicing with joy unspeakable and full of glory. We read these verses and many more. We say we believe them and yet, if we are honest, we rarely if ever experience this life and joy.

There are many who struggle, unable to reconcile how the child of God is destined for trouble and yet he is supposed to be experiencing joy and gladness. Most have the idea that if only this trouble or trial was over, then they would have peace. If only this problem were solved, then they would have the joy the Word of God describes. So they pray earnestly and maybe the trial goes away. For a moment some semblance of peace

enters their hearts, only to be shattered by another affliction, and they are back to square one.

The truth we all must learn, and learn well, is that the peace of God is not simply the absence of troubles, trials, or afflictions, but the conscious presence of Christ ruling and abiding in the heart no matter what problems surround us. We need to learn that we can have peace in the midst of the storm, not just in the short calm that precedes the next storm.

The apostle Peter knew the literal storm in the boat with the other disciples on the Sea of Galilee. He was in the will of God. The Lord had constrained them to enter the boat and to set out across the sea that evening. Peter, a seasoned fisherman familiar with that stretch of water, was terrified with all the other disciples. They despaired of life itself, but when Peter saw Christ walking toward them upon the waves, his fears were dispelled, his faith soared, and he too walked upon the water to meet the Lord.

Only a man at perfect peace would venture to step out of a boat in the middle of a lake, but Peter stepped out when the wind was howling and the waves which had threatened to sink their boat were still raging. Peter had peace in the midst of his storm. He was not saying, if only this storm would go away I would have peace. While the wind roared and the waves crashed around him, Peter was at peace, sufficiently so to calmly leave the relative safety of the boat. Peter learned a lesson that day. He learned that he could have peace even while the storm was raging.

If you study the passage in Matthew 14 you will see that the storm ceased only when the Lord and Peter

had entered the boat. The key to Peter's peace was his perspective. While he looked around at the waves there was no peace. When he looked into his heart, there was abject panic. But when he fixed his eyes on Christ, he saw the Master of the sea; he saw the creator of the waves and gravity and everything else that made him fearful. Christ was walking upon the water in absolute control.

The significant point is that Peter now had his eyes fixed upon Christ and suddenly he had a completely different perspective on his troubles. Of course we all know Peter's faith lapsed. He took his eyes off the Lord. He started looking around himself again at his circumstances from a human perspective, and he began to sink. But when he looked again to Christ, there was an outstretched hand to lift him up. Storms, troubles, and trials are terrible when looked at from our point of view, but when Christ is in the picture the waves that trouble and frighten us can be stepping stones to faith and victory.

What Peter faced that night on the Sea of Galilee, however, was a passing storm. What do you do when the storm stretches into days and weeks and months, maybe even a year of darkness and tumult to which there seems to be no end? That brings us to that awful thing called depression. The child of God is not immune to depression so we do well to know something of what causes it and how it can be overcome.

Depression is a condition where the mood is continually low, sleep is disturbed, and concentration is poor. A depressed person tends to withdraw from company, and a gloomy or pessimistic outlook on the future prevails. Medically speaking it falls into two main categories: reactive depression and biological depression. There is also another type which cannot be overlooked, spiritual depression.

Reactive depression is, as you might expect, a reaction to problems or difficulties. It happens to most of us, at least to some degree, especially after the death of a loved one, but it can be triggered by guilt, health problems, family problems, or other difficult circumstances. There are two ways that peace can be

restored in such a case: resolve the problem or learn to live with the problem.

For some of these things, like guilt, learning to live with it is not an option. The guilt of sin must be dealt with, and the child of God has glorious access to the only means of dealing with guilt fully and finally. If we confess our sins, the blood of Christ cleanses from all sin. With this forgiveness comes a blotting out of our wrongs, never to be remembered against us ever again. The Lord by an act of His will forgets our sins. On the cross, the Lord not only bore the punishment of our sins, but also the guilt, so in Christ we are freed from guilt as well as punishment. Availing of the forgiveness found in Christ and dwelling on this wonderful truth is the answer to guilt.

This is not to say that we will not remember our sins, nor that Satan, the accuser of the brethren, won't continuously bring them before us, disturbing our peace. The power of cancelled sin, or sin already forgiven, is formidable. Many believers seem to be tormented by this, even to the stage of depression. Even though they have confessed their sins, they can't seem to get peace, and all because they haven't fully grasped the full extent of Christ's atonement, the plain truth that the Lord has said, "Your sins and iniquities will I remember no more." Charles Wesley captures this truth in one of his great hymns: "He breaks the power of cancelled sin and sets the prisoner free; His blood can make the foulest clean, His blood avails for me."

Now as to the myriad of other circumstances relating to the family, employment, or whatever else that has caused the child of God to fall into depression, what is to be done? Many of these circumstances are well beyond our power to change or resolve, so our recourse then ought to be to the God of the impossible. If it be the Lord's will to resolve them, well and good, but what if that doesn't happen immediately, or what if it is not His will to resolve them at all? What can we do then?

This is where peace in the midst of the storm comes in. The peace that comes from having our eyes fixed upon Christ in the knowledge that He is the master of all our troubled seas, that He as God is in absolute control of all our circumstances, carefully working all things out for our good, even though often we cannot see the reason. The reason is always to bless us. If Peter had not experienced that storm he would not have learned to depend so completely upon Christ and to step out of that boat on stormy seas. What a blessing that was for Peter at that time and what bolstering of his faith, for difficult times yet to come.

The apostle Paul gives us the solution when prayer for relief is unanswered. Three times this man prayed for deliverance from his "thorn in the flesh." It was not of the Lord to remove it, but He promised Paul sufficient grace to bear it: "My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9). In all his afflictions, and Paul knew more than most, he counsels us in Philippians 4 to rejoice in spite of the circumstances and urges us not to worry: "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God, and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus (verse 6). Corrie ten Boom, who suffered so terribly in a Nazi concentration camp, sums it up well: "If you look at the world, you'll be distressed. If you look within, you will be depressed. If you look at God, you will be at rest."

Next time, God willing, we will consider clinical depression and spiritual depression. In the meantime, may we keep our eyes firmly fixed on Christ, the author and finisher of our faith. ■



Rev. Lindsay Wilson,
minister of Castlederg FPC
in Northern Ireland, is also
a medical doctor.

Questions & Answers

with
Dr. Larry Saunders

In last month's edition we interviewed one of our ministers from the "deep South." For this winter edition of Current we've turned our spotlight on one of our ministers from the cold climes of Toronto, Canada. Dr. Larry Saunders is the minister of Toronto FPC and the son-in-law of its founding minister (now retired), Dr. Frank McClelland. Dr. Saunders serves as the chairman of the presbytery's Foreign Missions and Publication Committees.



CURRENT: Please tell us about your conversion to Christ.

LS: Being born into a Christian home was a great blessing, and some of my earliest memories include my father's godly example and teaching. As a child, I attended the Salvation Army where my Dad served as a Sunday school superintendent for many years. I was eight years old when my brother Les encouraged me to accept Christ after he had professed faith in Christ at a youth weekend. My conversion was simple: I just knelt by my bed, confessed my sin, and asked the Lord to save me. I believe He answered me, although in those early days I struggled with assurance until my father reminded me that my salvation did not depend on whether I felt saved, but it depended on Jesus keeping His promise: "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." I will always look back to that day being crucial to my faith.

After a period of backsliding, you were restored to Christ through an evangelistic campaign around the time Toronto FPC was formed. Tell our readers what happened.

To my shame, I rebelled in my teen years and went deep into the world of sinful pleasure with drugs, alcohol, rock music, and partying. I remember one occasion sitting in a bar under the influence of alcohol actually witnessing to a friend of his need of Christ. I, who had known God's mercy and grace, had foolishly allowed worldliness to attract and then consume me. I was a hypocrite, but God, who is rich in mercy, would not let me go. He graciously restored me when I was nineteen through a special gospel campaign in 1976. Rev. Frank McClelland had invited Dr. Ian Paisley to be the guest evangelist at the inaugural services of the Toronto church. My dad tried to get the whole family to attend, and we all complied just to keep him happy; however, God's sovereignty was also at work. The Lord convicted me through the messages and I knew it was time to finally surrender my life to His control. My whole family was affected by those meetings and perhaps the greatest impact was seen in the salvation of my mother and two sisters.

God had more plans for me at that campaign. That's where I first met the girl who would five years later become my wife. She was the pastor's

daughter, which scared me! But Jill was very different from the girls I knew because of her love for the Lord. I wanted to see her, so that was another reason I needed to be at every meeting. Her steadfastness in spiritual things inspired me and subsequently helped me to get my life back on track again.

How did you know the Free Presbyterian Church was the right church ministry for you, the place where the Lord wanted you to worship and serve Him?

The Free Church in Toronto was an outgrowth of the Bible Presbyterian Church, which started in Toronto in 1968. There was a nucleus of about twenty faithful Bible Presbyterian believers, of which my father was one. He believed he could no longer remain in the Salvation Army and be faithful to God because of its growing compromise. This was a very unpopular move which cost him the support of his immediate and extended family, especially his father, a former mayor of Toronto, who was deeply involved in the Army and critical of his son taking such an intolerant stand. But Dad honored God in his lonely defense of truth and became a faithful FPC member. God honored him in the eventual salvation of his wife and four children and their spouses and many of their children.

After God dealt with me in the 1976 FPC commencement, I was in no doubt where I would attend. As my own personal convictions

began to develop, I realized more and more that this ministry was truly a Bible-centered, Christ-centered work. I believed the Free Church had a biblical balance of being fundamental, unashamedly Protestant, and evangelical. I believed it honored God.

You served as youth leader prior to full-time ministry. How did you get started in that and did it help you to develop in Christian service?

The youth fellowship had an immense impact on my Christian life. From the challenging Bible studies to the structured Bible-based inter-fellowship quiz competitions from Ulster, there was an environment to learn and fellowship with other Christian youth. The Lord gave me the opportunity to lead the Young People's Fellowship for ten years and in many ways that became a practical training ground for the pastorate in assisting, organizing, and shepherding people in the service of God. Our youth meetings were times of worship and Bible study, which helped us grow in grace. We also enjoyed special outings for sports, camping, white-water rafting, snow and water skiing. These were times of good, clean fun, which proved to all of us that Christianity was not just lived out at church, but it encompassed the whole life.

What advice would you give young men on how to discern the call of God to become a minister of the gospel?

Many sermons have been preached and books written on the subject of the will of God. It is one thing to talk about it in theory and quite another to put into practice. But there is nothing of greater importance in our lives because we must be sure of God's will, or we risk the frightening alternative of being "outside" His plan and in danger of wandering astray and negatively impacting others.



Whitefield College of the Bible international students, 1987

In Ephesians, Paul writes about "doing the will of God from the heart." This is the starting place for our hearts must be willing before God can lead us into His perfect way. In my own experience, I thought my life was fully surrendered, but as I was asking specifically for the leading of God, I still had an inner resistance. I realized that I was not really "willing" for the "will" of God. As soon as we are totally honest with ourselves, the walls of resistance will come down, the masks will come off, and we will see if our hearts are truly open to the working of the Holy Spirit. Otherwise, the charade will continue. Surrender to God means total and unreserved submission to His way, especially when we do not know what comes next.

There must also be the evidence of some gifts for ministry—even in basic form. Then I believe there must be the confirmation of the Word of God. Much care must be taken here that we don't read into the Bible what we want it to say for our lives. The Word of God is a lamp to our feet, so we must allow God's light to illuminate our path with His Word in order to know His mind. There are many promises that apply to all God's children and some are specific to a time and place; however, God is able to impress a promise or phrase from the Word upon our hearts that is personal and relevant to our situation. Honesty and openness of heart is vital, for God promises to be found of us when we seek Him with all our hearts (2 Chronicles 15:2).

Has growing up in the Toronto area been a help to you now that you are minister of Toronto FPC?

I always knew God's call was for me to serve in Canada, but I did not know that I would end up in Toronto. I served as an assistant to Dr. McClelland for sixteen years, while the school ministry was being established. My desire was to help where I could, but when God revealed to me privately that I would succeed Dr. McClelland as the pastor of the church, I was fearful of the task ahead, especially considering that it was my home church and I would be taking up the mantle of a man that had been the beloved pastor for 32 years. As well as that, most of my elders are peers with whom I grew up. The Lord



Wedding day, September 5, 1981

has given them special grace to accept me. There have been blessings and challenges for both of us. We have to focus on the greater picture of building the kingdom of Christ in Toronto for His glory.

As Canada's largest city with just over five million people, Toronto has become a city of diverse peoples. What is the impact of this on evangelism in general and your church ministry in particular?

Visitors to Toronto are immediately struck by its multicultural dynamic. We literally have a mission field on our doorstep. This is also reflected in our congregation where we currently have people from 26 countries. Providentially, the Lord confirmed my call to the ministry many years ago with Ephesians 3:8 ("to preach among the Gentiles") where the word *Gentiles* means "nations." God has brought the nations right into our pews. We have been encouraged recently with new members joining us from Spain, Sri Lanka, India, and Northern Ireland. We have some of God's choicest saints among us. I count it a privilege to be their pastor.

What is your vision to reach the people of the Greater Toronto area with the gospel?

With multiculturalism comes enormous religious diversity. That, combined with the greater Toronto area's expanse of 7000 square kilometers and its six million people, makes it a daunting task to try to evangelize effectively and make any impact for Christ. As a congregation, we have blanketed the fifteen thousand homes surrounding the church for five consecutive years with gospel literature and have seen some fruit, but we long to see these white fields harvested for God's glory.



January 18 2008, Installation Service

You have had long-term direct involvement with missions in Jamaica and with serving on our Mission Board. How has that missionary exposure influenced your convictions about taking the gospel to the nations of the world?

I had the privilege of being in Jamaica in 1989 at the start of our mission work. This has had a lasting impression on me and kindled a burden for that land ever since. It has been my joy to visit Jamaica several times over the years, and each time my heart is again burdened for the spiritual and practical needs of the people. The small congregation in Little London has not had it easy, especially with the murder of Brian Morris in June 2012. Despite that and many other challenges God's grace is very evident in the lives of those dear people.



The Saunders family, from left to right: Stephen, Esther, & Olivia Moorehead, Larry, Jill, Daniel, & David

Whenever there is exposure to a third-world developing country and you see its need of the gospel, it ignites a fire in the soul. I believe the local church should be active in supporting the mission fields of the world. I am thankful for the missionary fervor in our people in Toronto, who give generously to support our missionaries and who encourage me when I am able to visit Jamaica and our mission station in the Czech Republic once a year.

As the minister of Canada's largest Free Presbyterian congregation, what encouragement would you give to ministers and people in smaller congregations?

Every ministry is looking for growth, numerically, financially, but most of all, spiritually. The size of a church building or the number of attendees is not the issue, neither should it be our focus. It is of far greater importance that the gospel is being faithfully preached, souls are being saved, edified, and built up in their faith, and that Christ Jesus is being glorified. It is a temptation to look at other seemingly prosperous works with envy, but we must serve God in our sovereignly-appointed place, whether it be great or small. The hymn writer was right: "Little is much when God is in it." The grass may look greener over the fence, but be sure if the lawn is bigger, there is more grass to cut and that will mean more weeds and bugs too! Let us all be content with such things as we have, for it matters not what others have or what others do.

Your daughter recently underwent successful surgery for thyroid cancer. What truth brought you the most comfort during this trial and how has this impacted your life and ministry?

Undoubtedly, it was a great trial of our faith when Esther discovered she had thyroid cancer one month after baby Olivia was born. But the Lord graciously carried us through and we felt the weight of the prayers of our brothers and sisters in Christ worldwide. We were incredibly encouraged and were taught the value of Christian love more than ever. We are also thankful that surgery removed Esther's cancer and she is recovering well.

What do you consider the most challenging aspect of a minister's life and why?

I believe the most difficult issue to deal with is self. The old nature so often rears its ugly head when we engage in sacred work. Feeding the flock is an overwhelming challenge because of the immense responsibility to rightly divide the Word of truth. Since the flesh hates spiritual things it makes the work of the ministry hard. Our only remedy

is to daily "crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts" and endeavor to walk in close communion with Jesus, depending on His strength for all things.

Another challenge for FPC ministers today is to remain faithful in the current global spiritual confusion where truth and error are being re-evaluated. It is increasingly unpopular to be set for the defense of the gospel and to preach the whole counsel of God.

What is your chief interest outside of church life?

Being with my family is my greatest desire outside of church life. I am thankful for opportunities to be with my wife, with Esther and her husband, Steve, with my two sons, Daniel and David, and during these last few months, with precious little Olivia, who has brought us much joy. It is an oasis for me in the midst of an extremely demanding schedule. As a family, we always enjoy those special times when we can be together. ☒

FREE PRESBYTERIAN INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS

Belfast, Northern Ireland



"So walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving." Colossians 2:6-7

23 - 27
JUNE
MONDAY - FRIDAY
EACH NIGHT AT 8:00

THEME: The Christian Armour
SPEAKERS:

- Rev. John Armstrong (Portavogie, Northern Ireland)
- Rev. Ian Goligher (Vancouver, Canada)
- Rev. John Greer (Ballymena, Northern Ireland)
- Rev. David McClelland (New Hampshire, USA)
- Rev. John Morrow (Omagh, Northern Ireland)

The services each night commence at 8 and will feature a 10-minute DVD presentation of various mission fields connected with the Free Presbyterian Church worldwide. There will be special music and opportunities to fellowship each night.

Accommodation is in the luxurious four-star Stormont Hotel in Belfast. Hotel prices include a full Irish breakfast and numerous trips to various places of interest. Trips have been planned for the award-winning Crumlin Road Gaol, the Titanic Centre, the Somme Centre, and the Famine Village in County Donegal.

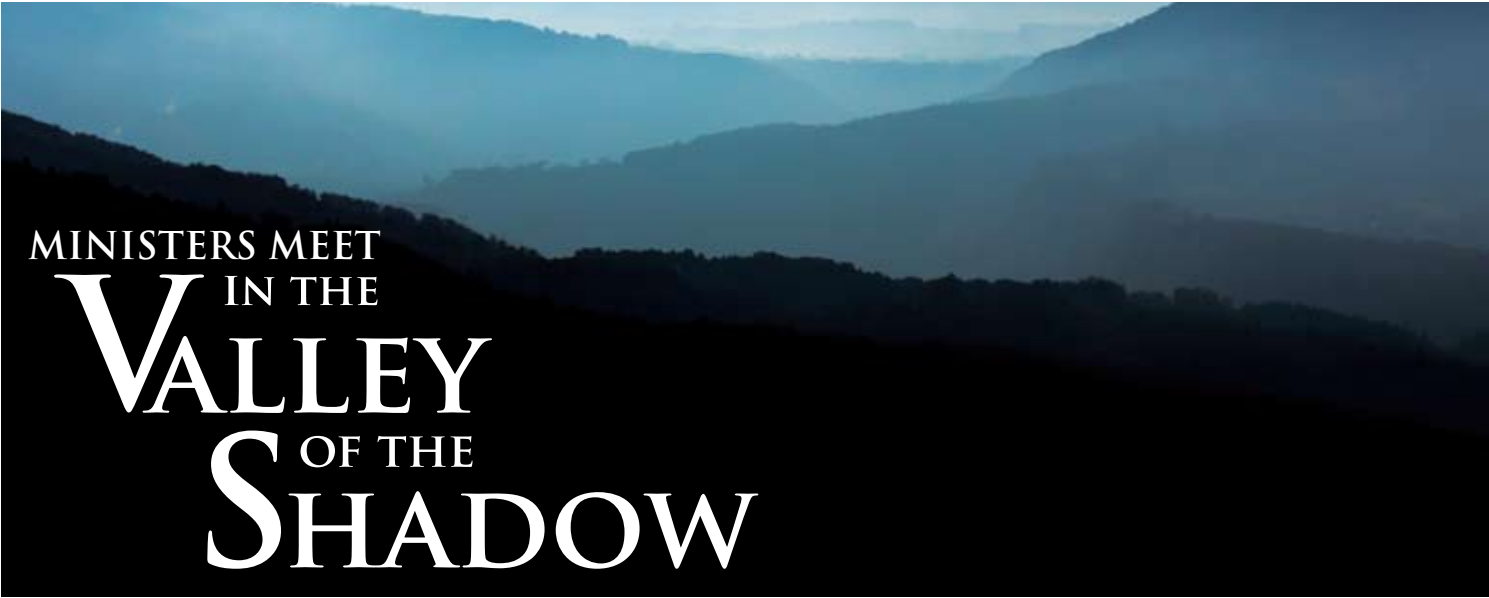
Those travelling from North America may find flights into Dublin Airport less expensive. Transportation can be arranged from Dublin to Belfast. Those planning to attend the Congress can contact Rev. Colin Mercer for further details. Email: cmercer@faithfpc.org. Telephone: 864-244-2408 / 864-268-9341 / 864-414-5426.

PRICES:

\$1480.00 per person (based on a single room) + flight

\$1049.00 per person (based on two sharing a room) + flight

\$947.00 per person (based on three sharing a room) + flight



MINISTERS MEET IN THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW

When the spring Week of Prayer concluded in May, everyone was anticipating meeting for the fall Week of Prayer in the facilities of Korean FPC in Greer, South Carolina, the week of October 7–11. However, during the summer, Rev. David Lee's health declined dramatically, and he requested on behalf of the church to be relieved from the responsibility of hosting the Week of Prayer. The members of the Executive Committee of the presbytery desired to keep the location nearby to preserve the opportunity for Mr. Lee and his congregation to have some connection with the event, if possible.

Accordingly, the officers approached the session of Faith FPC that hosted the Week of Prayer in May with the request to consider hosting a more limited version of the Week of Prayer for October. The session graciously agreed to this request, and the officers sent notice of the change to all the members of the presbytery. As the summer progressed, Mr. Lee advised the presbytery that his condition was continuing to decline.

Thus it was that the Week of Prayer unfolded in the face of the reality that Mr. Lee was not likely to recover his health, and that his death was impending. On the afternoon of October 7, the day on which the Week of Prayer was to convene, Rev. Colin Mercer and Rev. David Mook visited Mr. Lee at his home, and other senior ministers, including Rev. Reggie Kimbro, the moderator, visited him on a subsequent day in the week. All had to admit that they found him to be extremely weak, but all testified to his impressive testimony of desiring to be with Christ and emphasizing his readiness to be absent from his body and to be present with the Lord. Those ministers who were not from the Greenville area sensed that it was the last time they would see Mr. Lee in this world. He died on November 15, and several ministers and elders attended his funeral and burial on November 23. In the previous issue of this magazine, you may read the eloquent tribute that Mr. Sammy Lee paid to his father on that occasion.

The sobering nature of the recognition that one with whom they had labored for years was about to leave his labors behind

cast a perceptible shadow over the seasons of prayer as well as the regular meeting of the presbytery and all of the committee meetings that also transpired during the week. In all those occasions, there was the consciousness that Mr. Lee, their beloved and esteemed colleague, whose home was less than a mile from the facilities of Faith FPC, was nearing the end of his life. One minister spoke for others when he described his visit with Mr. Lee as humbling and sobering. The entire situation, including the labors of Mrs. Lee and her family, weighed heavily on every message and every time of prayer throughout the week.

The session and congregation of Faith FPC displayed their customary hospitality in providing lunches for the members of the presbytery beginning on Tuesday afternoon, a kindness for which all the members were deeply grateful. In addition, some of the families in the congregation opened their homes to host various ministers and elders during the week while others stayed in nearby hotels.

When the presbytery convened on the afternoon of October 8 with Rev. Reggie Kimbro, moderator, presiding, the agenda was somewhat less extensive than it had been at the May meeting. Still, some aspects of the work led the presbytery to continue its meeting well into Thursday evening before adjourning.

One highlight of the meeting was the ordination on Wednesday evening of Mr. Richard Winston to the position of professor in Geneva Reformed Seminary. A report of that special service appears on page 11 of the magazine. Rev. Geoff Banister, chairman of the Seminary Committee, conducted that service after reporting earlier to the presbytery concerning the progress of the students presently enrolled and the benefit that Mr. Winston was providing in his new capacity. The committee indicated its ongoing approval of the work of Dr. Charles Barrett, interim president.

The Mission Board delivered a summary of the fields for which it has responsibility, but devoted much of its report to the reaction in Liberia to the violent robbery at the mission

compound in late July. The need for increased security was causing changes to the construction schedule for the rest of the building project as well as requiring the raising of additional funds.

In presenting the Finance Committee's proposed budget for 2014, Mr. George Robinson, presbytery treasurer, gave praise to the Lord for His gracious undertaking in the presbytery's financial situation. Such was the nature of that provision that the presbytery is in a much stronger position than it was two years earlier.

The Constitutional Documents Committee presented draft language for changes to the *Book of Church Order* that were required to establish the new offices of deputy moderator and deputy clerk. The presbytery adopted those changes, clearing the way for the first elections of those officers in May 2014.

The Liaison Committee for the International Congress of Free Presbyterians distributed copies of a publicity brochure to be used in generating registrations for the third meeting of the Congress to be held in Belfast, Northern Ireland, the week of June 23–27, 2014. Rev. Ian Goligher and Rev. David McClelland are the preachers whom the presbytery has appointed to the Congress program for 2014.

With the awareness of the suffering of Rev. David Lee, the moderator declared the meeting adjourned on the evening of October 10, and asked the members to uphold their brother and his family in prayer. The next regular meeting of the presbytery will take place in connection with the Week of Prayer at Trinity Free Presbyterian Church, Trinity, Alabama, the week of May 12–16, 2014. ■



Rev. David G. Mook

is the minister of Phoenix Free Presbyterian Church in Phoenix, Arizona. He serves as clerk of the presbytery of the FPCNA, chairman of the Constitutional Documents Committee, and is an adjunct professor in the field of practical theology at Geneva Reformed Seminary.



Ordination of a Seminary Professor

Under the requirements of the *Book of Church Order*, the presbytery convened a special service on the evening of October 9, 2013, in Faith Free Presbyterian Church, Greenville, South Carolina.

The purpose of the service was to ordain to the Free Presbyterian ministry Mr. Richard Winston, to whom the presbytery issued a call in May to become a full-time resident professor in Geneva Reformed Seminary. According to the BCO, only ordained ministers can serve as professors on the faculty, and the work of a seminary professor is a ministry to which the presbytery may call a man. Mr. Winston, as a licensed minister, was already serving as an assistant on the faculty for the teaching of courses in the areas of his special expertise.

The service took place during the fall Week of Prayer and regular meeting of the presbytery, and there was, accordingly, a very good attendance by ministers and elders of the denomination, together with the local congregation and friends and family members of Mr. Winston. The Executive Committee of the presbytery invited Rev. Geoff Banister (Indianapolis) to preside at the service since he also serves as chairman of the Seminary Committee. Other members of the presbytery, including Dr. Charles Barrett, interim president of GRS, also took part. Rev. David Mook, clerk, put the prescribed questions to Mr. Winston and supervised his subscription of the denominational substandards.

Rev. Reggie Kimbro, moderator, conducted the ordination ceremony and delivered the charge to the newly ordained minister. Mr. Winston's wife, Beth, and their children along with other family members were also present. Following the service, the congregation provided a reception in the church's fellowship hall for those in attendance. Mr. Winston serves as well on the pastoral staff of Faith FPC as an assistant to Rev. Colin Mercer. ■

for GOD and TRUTH

ALABAMA

Trinity Free Presbyterian Church will be hosting the second For God & Truth Conference August 14-15. The theme is "Christ for the Whole Man" and will deal with the impact of the gospel on the personal and public means of grace, on vocation, on economics, and on education. Early morning devotional and prayer times as well as roundtable discussions will be part of the schedule. For more information, send email to forgodandtruth@gmail.com or visit the website www.forgodandtruth.com.

Reformed Runners is dedicating its 2014 Tennessee Ragnar Relay to raise funds for Geneva Reformed Seminary. This 200-mile, 12-man relay is scheduled for October 24-25, beginning in Chattanooga and ending in Nashville. They are actively recruiting runners, van drivers, and financial support. For more information, please contact them at reformedrunners@gmail.com or visit the website at www.reformedrunners.com.



Dr. Mark Allison, Rev. Stephen Hamilton, & Dr. David Allen

ALLENTOWN

Dr. David Allen of the Trinitarian Bible Society recently spoke at Lehigh Valley FPC on the excellence of the Authorized Version of the scriptures. He also gave an encouraging report on the work of the society. TBS is currently involved in producing a new translation of the Spanish Bible. Dr. and Mrs. Mark Allison (Malvern FPC) also attended the meeting and time of fellowship with Dr. Allen.

CLOVERDALE

PRESBYTERY OUTREACH INITIATIVE 2014

The Cloverdale church will host this year's Presbytery Outreach Initiative July 24-August 1. Training and supervision will be provided. One day will be set aside to

see the sights of Vancouver and Whistler, British Columbia's popular skiing destination with its peak-to-peak gondola rides.

By organizing annual outreach projects the presbytery seeks to create opportunities for young Free Presbyterians to get involved in church activities to present the gospel. The projects are intended to foster interest in Christian service and to assist churches that may have special outreach projects. Please pray for the Lord's blessing on each young person involved in this year's outreach project.

If you are interested in signing up for this year's outreach you should obtain a recommendation from your minister and session and then contact Rev. Colin Mercer (cmercerc@faithfpc.org) or Rev. Ian Goligher (cloverdalefpc@telus.net) to sign up. Please provide your church's name and your own personal contact information. Further details will be forwarded to you.



The congregation in Mexico City

GREENVILLE

Rev. Colin Mercer and Dr. Charles Barrett (GRS) visited with Jason and Danielle Boyle, missionaries in Mexico City, in the early part of December 2013. During the six-day trip they had opportunity to travel with Jason as he conducted various services and classes connected with his congregation. Dr. Barrett brought a brief message at the Wednesday evening prayer meeting, and Mr. Mercer preached the Word at the Sunday service. Approximately 55 people gathered on the Lord's Day morning, with some coming earlier for the adult Bible class. A congregational dinner followed the service.

Following the trip, Mr. Mercer noted, "It was a delight to see firsthand the progress of the work and to fellowship with Jason and Danielle, who are able to speak Spanish fluently. It was obvious that a bond of love has developed between the believers in the congregation and that the Lord is blessing the preaching and teaching of his Word." During the trip there was opportunity to meet with another missionary family from Veracruz. They are working among the Aztec people and were very interested in the missionary work of the FPCNA. It was thrilling to hear of how the Lord has used them in the spread of the gospel. The ministers also met with a young man from Greenville who is seeking to establish a gospel witness in

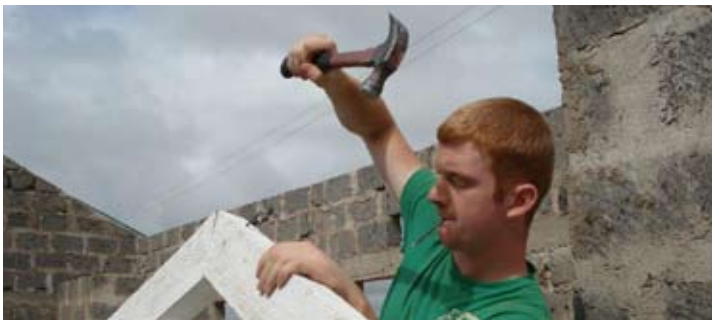
another part of Mexico City. Do continue to pray for Jason and Danielle as they labor in Mexico for Christ.

Mr. Mercer was given the opportunity recently to write a monthly devotional of 800 words for the *Times Examiner* newspaper in Greenville. This conservative paper is popular in South Carolina, and the Greenville church is thankful for this additional opportunity to present the unsearchable riches of Christ.

REFORMING FAMILIES CONFERENCE

INDIANAPOLIS

The Indianapolis church is encouraged by the initial response to the announcement of the 2014 Reforming Families Conference to be held at the Creation Museum in Cincinnati, Ohio, July 31–August 2. Within the first week of the registration period almost 200 people signed up to attend. See the full-page ad for the conference on the back page of the magazine.



TORONTO

Sixteen-year old Matthew Cunningham, whose parents are members of the Toronto church, is currently serving the Lord in Kenya with Friends of Africa Endeavour (F.A.M.E.). The mission work, which was started in 1996 by Matthew's grandfather, Rev. Alan Dunlop (father of Rev. Aaron Dunlop), operates a medical clinic and orphanage and engages in famine relief as means for evangelization. Matthew went out with a team from Northern Ireland for a few weeks to do manual labor at the mission. You will find more information about the mission at its website: <http://www.fame.uk.net/>.



Dr. Larry Saunders and Mr. James Fraser, elder of Toronto FPC, will be conducting special meetings in Little London, Jamaica, in February. Please pray for much fruit in the work of God in Jamaica.



VICTORIA

Thinkgospel.com is working on a translation of *A New Beginning* into the Telugu language. Telugu is spoken by some 75 million people in India. Pray that the Lord will use the booklet for His glory in the salvation of souls. It will be available online first, but efforts are being made to also get it into print soon.



A MUSICAL MINEFIELD

We live in a very musical world. It is almost impossible to visit a store, use public transportation, sit in a waiting room, or dine in a restaurant without hearing some kind of music playing in the background. We have music in our homes, schools, hospitals, and cars, and if that isn't enough we carry iPods or iPhones with us and listen to our own choice of music wherever we go. Music transcends age groups, cultures, and social classes. In more recent times the issue of music has become a hot topic in the church. There are few subjects that have caused more controversy than music in worship. In many communities churches offer traditional, contemporary, or modern services at different times each Lord's Day morning. I suspect the difference in each service relates to the style of music. For some this is a welcome development—moving with the times and giving people what they want—while for others it is an intrusion of worldliness into the church.

It appears that the divide in thinking is usually, though not exclusively, age related. It is not uncommon to hear those born post 1980 arguing that the church needs to reconsider and revamp its worship. Old hymns and old music are often described

as boring or lifeless and it is argued they should be exchanged for something new. On occasion a particular church is chosen, not for the quality of the preaching, its theological position, its proper administration of the sacraments, or its biblical exercise of church discipline but for the music it uses. People move from church to church sometimes solely because of music. In these cases music trumps everything else.

The issue of music in the church has become a minefield littered with bitterness, controversy, suspicion, worldliness, and unwise and unbiblical judgments. Part of the problem is that music in worship has often been viewed, even by conservatives, merely as a matter of personal preference. The selfishness that exists in all of us extends to worship and if something makes us feel good and we like it, we assume it must be appropriate. We frequently reason, "If we like it, surely God will like it too." Our self-centeredness takes priority over other considerations. This is not a new thing, for in the days of the judges there was a tendency for every man to do that which was right in his own eyes (Judges 21:25). This approach led to many wrong and sinful choices by God's people.

The Christian's chief concern should be to do that which pleases God. The apostle Paul stressed, "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31). By referring to eating and drinking Paul was not confining our interest in God's glory to the consumption of food and drink; rather, he was underscoring that God's glory should be our interest in every aspect of life and by extension that includes our use of music. This does not completely remove the aspect of personal preference, but it does mean that our preferences must always be within the realm of what is acceptable and pleasing to God. Our desire to glorify God, even in the realm of music, demands that we consider God's Word on the subject.

As with every other issue in life the Scriptures must be our final authority. God sets the rules. In his book *Sound*

Worship, Scott Aniol says, “The Bible does not explicitly tell us what kind of music pleases the Lord or what kind of music does not or even if such categories exist. The Bible does not explicitly tell us how music works or how we relate to music. But this does not mean that our musical choices are left to mere whim or preference. Just like with many other issues, we may draw certain implications from biblical statements about music and examples of music.... We must test everything and hold fast what is good” (page 32).

There will also be times when it is necessary to consider information not found in Scripture in order to help us apply scriptural principles. In the final analysis the sincere Christian will be willing to submit to the teaching of the Word of God even in the area of musical choices. Failure to do so reveals a much deeper spiritual problem. God’s people should approach this subject with a humble and prayerful spirit asking the Lord to teach them and make them willing to obey.

When writing to the Ephesian Christians the apostle Paul said, “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in

less from our hymns and songs. It is often claimed, and sadly often true, that “good hymnology is not always good theology.” According to Colossians 3, “the word of Christ” should be taught in our hymns and we should be admonished by these truths as we sing them. This will mean that the words will draw attention to the triune God and not to sinful man. The core truths of the gospel—the life, death, resurrection, ascension, glory, and majesty of Christ—should be prominent in our praise. It must be acknowledged that some older hymns are weak on this point and some newer hymns are strong. These better texts must be welcomed.

While there is broad agreement among many on the use of suitable lyrics, controversy rages over the music that accompanies them. The pivotal question in the music debate is whether music is moral or amoral. Sometimes the same question is asked this way: “Is music—even without text—an effective mode of communication?” Some argue that music is neutral, that it does not communicate specific moral tone by itself, that only words can communicate that. While the moral-versus-amoral aspect of music has been discussed for many decades by philosophers and music scholars, it is only within the last fifty or sixty years that it

has been debated in Christian circles. Up until the 1950s and 1960s it was widely accepted by musicians (Christians and non-Christians) and by secular philosophers that music communicated a moral message even when words were not present.

Scripture affirms this position. When Saul was affected by an evil (or heavy) spirit from God David played his harp and the evil spirit departed from him and he was refreshed (1 Samuel 16:23). The psalmist exhorted, “Praise the

LORD with harp: sing unto him with the psaltery and an instrument of ten strings” (Psalm 33:2). There are many other references that teach this moral nature of music (e.g., Isaiah 23:16; 24:8; Job 21:12). Therefore we are compelled

Suggested Further Reading

- **Can We Rock the Gospel?: Rock Music's Impact on Worship and Evangelism**
John Blanchard and Dan Lucarini. Darlington, U.K.: Evangelical Press, 2006.
- **New Heart, New Spirit, New Song**
Douglas Bachorik. Maitland, Florida: Xulon Press, 2012.
- **Singing and Making Music: Issues in Church Music Today**
Paul S. Jones. Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P & R Publishing, 2006.
- **Sound Worship: A Guide to Making Musical Choices in a Noisy World**
Scott Aniol. Fort Worth, Texas: Religious Affections Ministries, 2010.
- **Why Johnny Can't Sing Hymns: How Pop Culture Rewrote the Hymnal**
David T. Gordon. Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P & R Publishing, 2010.
- **Worship in Song: A Biblical Approach to Music and Worship**
Scott Aniol. Winona Lake, Indiana: BMH books, 2009.

Note: The inclusion of a book on this list should not be viewed as an endorsement of every sentiment it expresses.

The Christian's chief concern should be to do that which pleases God.

psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 5:18–20). Similar words are found in Colossians 3:16. In both texts the emphasis is upon the importance of the words that we sing. Our hymns and spiritual songs should be rich in spiritual truth.

We expect a sermon to be biblically accurate and we should expect nothing

to acknowledge that music is not neutral. It is interesting to note that many non-Christian musicians recognize this aspect of music. In an interview for the October 3, 1969, issue of *Life* magazine rock musician Jimi Hendrix said, “Atmospheres are going to come through music, because the music is a spiritual thing of its own. You can hypnotize people with the music and when you get them at their weakest point you can preach into the sub-conscious what you want to say.” Music can stir up a range of emotions and feelings, some appropriate

continued on page 17

How We Live as Children and Teenagers

Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. —Exodus 20:12

Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. —Colossians 3:20

Imagine as a ten-year-old seeing your three-year-old baby sister trying to open a jar of rat poison. She really wants the “candies” inside! You quickly take the jar out of her hands and put it up on a high shelf out of her reach. She is very upset and cries. She thinks you are really mean for not letting her eat some of the “candy” she found. But you are older and you know better. You know that if she ate the rat poison pellets there would be serious consequences; she would become very sick or maybe even die.

Obedying your parents can be like this at times. Sometimes your parents tell you that you cannot do something that you really want to do, or they take away something that you want to have. You are upset, and maybe even think that your parents are cruel. But your parents are older and more experienced than you are. They see dangers and potential for harm in what you want to do or to have. Trust and obey your parents. Respect the father and mother that God has given to you. They know you better and love you more than any other adult in the whole world. Obey your parents promptly, willingly, out of a spirit of love and respect, not simply because you must. God sees your heart, your will.

Obedying and respecting your parents can become even more challenging when you become a teenager. Why? Because the lines of responsibility between parents and children cross during the teen years. When you were born, your parents did virtually everything for you. They fed you, clothed you, and changed your diapers. As a child, you learned to do more independently. For example, you learned to feed and clothe yourself, to ride a tricycle and then a bicycle. But you still made very few directional

decisions for your life; your parents made almost all of them.

Now as a teen, as you mature into a young adult, you enter a time of transition. You increasingly make more decisions: how to spend your time, how and where to drive once you have your license, how to deal with a friend who has wronged you, how to spend your money, and whether to apply for a job or not. You increasingly become the primary decision-maker and your parents step back to let you mature into adulthood in a healthy way.

Two challenges often present themselves during this time of transition.

1. *Teens tend to overestimate their own abilities and want too much independence too quickly.* As a teen, you may think that you can handle more independence sooner than you are capable. Many teens are overconfident because they have not yet experienced very much of life’s realities and consequences. In

other words, teens may want to play with and eat “poison pellets” of temptation and sin because they do not see the dangerous consequences and think confidently, “I know how to take care of myself.”

2. *Parents tend to resist and give too little independence too slowly to their teenage children.* This resistance to “let go” arises from parents’ deep love and concern for their children’s safety and welfare. Also, God has commanded them to bring up their children in the fear of God (Ephesians 6:4) and they must give an account to God for how they have parented their children.

As a teen, how can you help your parents confidently give you more independence and freedom? By building trust. The more your parents trust you, the easier it will be for them to agree to your requests and to grant you more freedom to do things on your own. Building trust with your parents is critical for a positive and healthy relationship. Because they love you so

much and have invested so much in you, they cannot agree to your requests unless they know that you will conduct yourself responsibly. Build trust.

How can you build trust with your parents?

- *Be honest* with them, even when you have done wrong.
- *Ask for their permission* to do things or when a change of plan occurs.
- *Convey your love* for them. Remember that to love and to show love are two different things — show it.
- *Communicate* with them; readily share with them and be a good listener.
- *Try to understand* them, thinking about their God-given responsibility and their deep love for you and your welfare.
- *Pray* for them, even that God would help them overcome their weaknesses and faults.

What word is important? *Trust*.

1. *Trust* your parents; willingly respect and obey them.
2. Build *trust* so that your parents can trust you more.
3. *Trust* that the Lord Jesus can help you to do this; pray much to God for this.

As you do this, by God's grace, you will be blessed as children, as teenagers, all the days of your life on earth, and even eternally! Trust that God's Word and promises are true. ■

James W. Beeke, "How We Live as Children and Teenagers," *Banner of Sovereign Grace Truth* (Sept. 2013), p. 193. Used by permission.



James W. Beeke, a member of the Heritage Reformed Church of Chiliwack, British Columbia, is an international educational consultant.

continued from page 15

and some not. Our music should promote holiness of thought and life. It should certainly not be something that excites lust or unholy feelings and passions within us.

This leads on to another important matter. Since music communicates, what takes place when music and biblical truths are combined? There are two possibilities: either the biblical truths are combined with appropriate music and thus both the music and the words convey the message in a powerful, effective way for the glory of God, or the biblical words are combined with music that stirs up conflicting emotions and the message of the words is adversely affected. As believers we must strive to avoid the latter scenario. In his book *New Heart, New Spirit, New Song* Douglas Bachorik puts it this way: "Is there a problem if I sing, or listen to right words with music that stirs up feelings not fitting for the truth expressed? Over time, if I continue to do this I will begin to interpret those words in the light of that music. The musical accompaniment to those words will influence what I think about those words without my even realizing it" (page 24).

This compels us to recognize that there are styles of music that are inappropriate for public and private worship because they convey a message that is incompatible with the truths of God's Word. This brings me to the realm of rock music. When used in its broadest sense, the term *rock music* encompasses many music forms such as hip-hop, rap, folk rock, hard rock, rhythm and blues and others. Rock music is immensely popular and is well known as the music of rebellion, sexual indulgence, and revolution. Pop music critic Ann Powers in a 2001 article in the *New York Times* said, "Popular music has always been a major cultural force for freer attitudes about sexuality, lending symbolic force to earthy appetites" (February 18). There are common elements in all musical expression: melody, harmony (in many cases), rhythm, dynamic

intensity, and timbre. However, rock's rhythmic characteristics, (e.g., back-beat and beat anticipation) are predominant, and, when used in combination with other common elements (amplification, distinctive harmonic progressions, and vocal styles), often evoke a fleshly response offensive to a holy God. This response can be experienced whether the mechanics of the music are understood or not.

Some writers of modern worship songs and hymns have adopted the techniques employed in rock music. Although the words of their pieces may be scriptural and their intent sincere, the impact of the music cannot be denied. That poses the question: should the kind of music employed in rock and its sub-genres be used to convey a message about the triune God? The answer must be no. The message of the words will be obscured by the message from the music. Moreover, the rock culture and its sub-genres are so entwined with sex, drugs, rebellion, etc., that it is almost impossible to hear that music without thinking of that culture. This is not appropriate for worship or indeed for a life that is earnest about sanctification and separation from the world.

Music does not have to be a minefield. God's Word is replete with instructions for holy living and that involves every aspect of our lives, including our musical choices. We should strive for the highest standard. Our hymns and spiritual songs should be sung fervently, thoughtfully, and always for God's glory. This will demand lyrics in agreement with Scripture, appropriate music, and a genuine spiritual desire to worship God. We have no room for complacency in this area of Christianity. God is worthy to be praised—and to be praised reverently, appropriately, and joyfully. ■



Rev. Colin Mercer is the minister of Faith Free Presbyterian Church, Greenville, South Carolina.



Little Boats for a **BIG RESCUE**

by Brian Forrester



“God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty.” —1 Corinthians 1:27

It was late spring in the year 1940. Roses were beginning to bloom in North America, and baseball season was in full swing. The fireworks of Empire Day (now called Victoria Day) were fresh in the memory of Canadian children, and mothers across the U.S. were ironing uniforms for young, flag-bearing scouts who would march in parades on Decoration Day (now called Memorial Day). But far away, on the other side of the ocean, the scene was not one of celebration. Great Britain was in the grip of fear, and King George called for a day of prayer for its troops. World War II was raging, and British soldiers were in great danger on the other side of the English Channel. Cornered on the shores of Dunkirk, France, they were in position to be devoured by Adolf Hitler’s army.

While most British citizens knew the war was not going well, they didn’t know hundreds of thousands of their soldiers were trapped between the sea and the enemy. And even fewer of them knew that the fate of all those men rested on a naval officer called the Invisible Man. Tucked away in the tunnels

of an old castle, Vice-Admiral Bertram Home Ramsay put together a master plan for a daring rescue called Operation Dynamo.

The plan was to send ships across the Channel to pick up the soldiers and bring them back to England. But a remarkable twist changed the story of Operation Dynamo into a true legend remembered with wonder and thanksgiving to this day. You see, the Rescue of Dunkirk did not succeed simply because a large fleet of warships were used as taxis. Some very small boats became key to its miraculous ending.

The shores of Dunkirk were badly damaged from battle. In many places this prevented big ships from being able to dock. Consequently, hundreds of small boats, owned and manned by British fishermen were launched to assist in the rescue. These boats could easily work their way up to the war-torn beach. Imagine the surprise of the soldiers, when tiny vessels with civilian volunteers arrived to pick them up! Some probably doubted the little boats were up to the task of getting them to safety. But in such

serious danger, no one could afford to be choosy about the means of rescue!

Hundreds of thousands of men went from being prey for the Nazis, to complete safety in the Dunkirk rescue. Many were saved by these unlikely vessels. No one doubted the value of those humble fishing boats in the days that followed—not the soldiers themselves—and certainly not their mothers, fathers, wives, and children.

This story of God’s work of deliverance is called the Miracle of Dunkirk for many reasons. But it is the Lord’s use of small vessels that holds a special lesson for young people today. You may be considered an ordinary and unpromising vessel by the rest of the world. But when you know the gospel, you become a vessel equipped to rescue. You need not be shy about sharing what the Lord has done for you, though you may be ignored or even made fun of. Many a grateful saint now testifies that he first heard the life-giving gospel from someone simple, humble, and quite obscure. ■

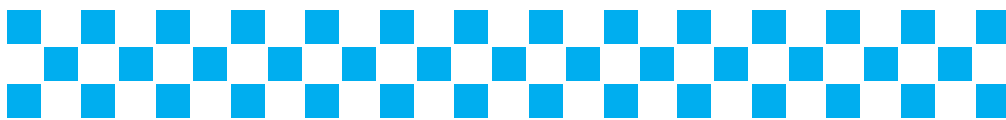
A WORD WORTH KNOWING

Obscure

Not noticeable, undistinguished, humble, unknown.

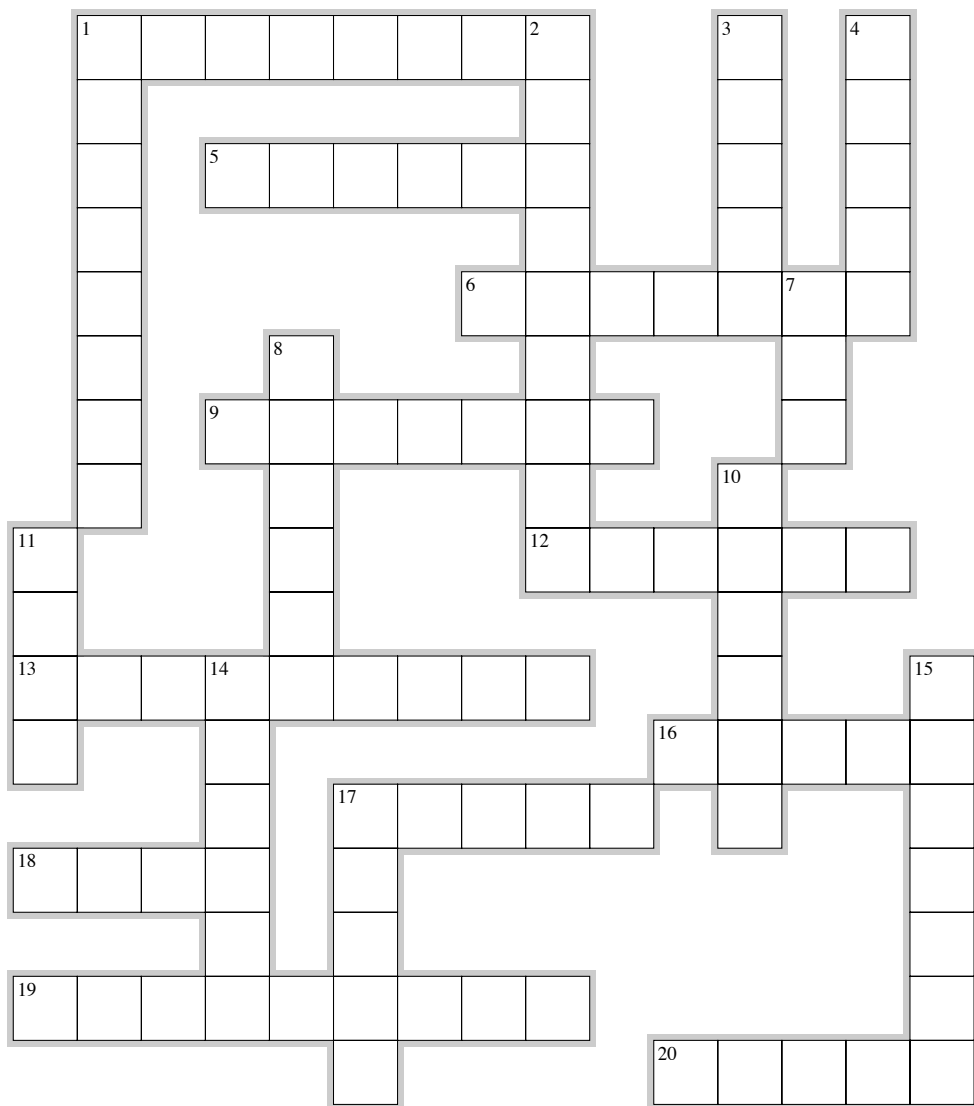


Winners of the fall crossword will be announced in the Spring issue of *Current*.



Across

1. "We took ship; and they ____ home again." (Acts 21:6)
5. "The ____ of the sea, shall come down." (Ezekiel 27:29)
6. "I will make you ____ of men." (Mathew 4:19)
9. "We have this treasure in earthen ____." (2 Corinthians 4:7)
12. "The arms of his hands were made ____." (Genesis 49:24)
13. "The labour of the ____ tendeth to life." (Proverbs 10:16)
16. "That ... the ____ may be of God." (2 Corinthians 4:7)
17. "Mine ____ doth not triumph over me." (Psalm 41:11)
18. "Jesus constrained his disciples to get ____ a ship." (Matthew 14:22)
19. "Desire ____ gifts." (1 Corinthians 14:1)
20. "I am the ____ in my father's house." (Judges 6:15)
8. "Look not ... on the ____ of his stature." (1 Samuel 16:7)
10. "Go, ____ thee vessels abroad." (2 Kings 4:3)
11. "I press toward the ____." (Philippians 3:14)
14. "____ the LORD with thy substance." (Proverbs 3:9)
15. "They perceived that this work was ____ of our God." (Nehemiah 6:16)
17. "There are ... vessels ... of wood and of ____." (2 Timothy 2:20)



Down

1. "They willingly ____ him into the ship." (John 6:21)
2. "And the other ____ came in a little ship." (John 21:8)
3. "Except these ____ in the ship, ye cannot be saved." (Acts 27:31)
4. "Behold also the ____." (James 3:4)
7. "Thou shalt take this ____ in thine hand." (Exodus 4:17)

PLEASE NOTE: Please send your completed puzzle to *Current Kids' Corner*, Attn: Mrs. Rachel Carper, 3 Elmira St., Greenville, SC 29615, or by email to rcarper@bjue.edu by March 15, 2014. 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, and winners will receive a \$10 cash prize.

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