

# CURRENT

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CHRISTIAN  
**LOVE**

EVIDENCE OF  
**NOAH'S FLOOD**

CATCHING UP AFTER  
**EBOLA**

CONSECRATION  
IS NOT **OPTIONAL**

YOUTH  
**OUTREACH  
INITIATIVE**



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# CONSECRATION IS NOT OPTIONAL

by Rev. Ian Goligher

The gospel of Christ radically changes lives, homes, and even nations for it demands death to the old life and enables believers in Christ to live in the power of a resurrection life unto God. In our last issue of *Current* we focused on spiritual awakenings in America when multitudes of ungodly sinners were converted to Christ. Their experience of God's presence and power was so real to them that they became overcomers in this sinful world. Converts who come to Christ during a spiritual revival often show exceptional depth. Like deep water that is still and quiet they demonstrate a life that possesses the fullness of God's Spirit and the graces that flow from union and communion with Christ. Through their life of surrender they wait on their God in the midst of the rush of life knowing the Lord is in control. When you enter the company of such Christians you know they truly live in the presence of God. They personify the very meaning of consecration for they are content to be set apart for God.

Sadly, it seems that kind of Christian living is not much valued today. But consecrated living is not just for past times or just for certain Christians. Every one of the Lord's redeemed people is called to live a consecrated life. Note how Paul pleaded with readers of his epistle to the Romans: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1).

In the first eleven chapters of his letter to the Romans, Paul expounded the righteousness that God provides for sinners through the life and death of His Son to save them from the wrath of God. Then in chapter twelve he argued that it is reasonable, or logical, for recipients of undeserved mercy to surrender their all to Christ as living sacrifices. Surely all Christians who delight in the love of God displayed at Calvary will gladly embrace the apostle's rationale for surrendering their all to the Lord.

In his devotional writings James Smith asks, "And do we talk about self-denial? Do we say, 'It is hard to give up all!' I am ashamed to use such

language, and ashamed to hear it used. What did Christ give up for us? Let that question blot out 'self-denial' from the Christian's vocabulary. When you think the Gospel makes severe requisitions by requiring your all, go up to Mount Calvary and weep over such suggestions. See the blood of your Immanuel so freely gushing from a heart that never exercised towards you any emotion but love—love unspeakable—love unsought—and love for the guilty vile! Go hide your head in shame and penitence at such a thought."

The Christian, therefore, is to offer his whole life as a living sacrifice unto the Lord. He will not have half of us; He calls us to give our all or nothing. As a newly grafted branch must be bound tightly to the vine to draw life into its limbs so believers in Christ must be tightly bound to Christ for His life to flow into them. A consecrated life is the secret to enjoying the fullness of the Lord's life flowing through us.

We lament that many professing Christians today settle for a shallow form of Christianity. Many claim to be saved from the guilt of sin through their justification by faith in Christ while they neglect the sanctification that saves them from the power of sin. That should not be and puts a question on their testimony and on their profession of faith in Christ. When we study revivals—and we should include the book of Acts as a model of the transforming power of the gospel—we note that converts experience deep sorrow over sin and that their repentance over the lusts of the world is thorough. They declare both their freedom from the guilt of sin and their freedom from the grip of sin.

For many years it amazed me how the early church had mature Christians who could hold office as deacons and elders so soon after their conversions. That is until I heard Mr. George McConnell, the missionary secretary of the Ulster Mission Board speak at our 2010 Congress in Toronto. He told a large group of men that to watch the new converts in Nepal grow in grace was like re-reading the book

of Acts. From his visits to Nepal he witnessed firsthand how God's transforming power made men into pillars of the church, just as in the days of the Acts of the Apostles.

Another aspect of the fruit of revival is the number of people who offer themselves up for full-time Christian service. Mission boards that were so desperate for workers suddenly received more offers from candidates for service than they could handle. Churches with too few preachers soon feared they would have too many. Those dedicated preachers and missionaries have truly gone into all the world to preach the gospel. Their experience of the power of God in revival meant they were willing to obey God's call to serve Him as living sacrifices for Christ. Consecrated men and women possess a spirit of other-worldliness. They possess a holy allegiance to God and a holy dependence on Him that sets them apart.

Today, many professing Christians unfortunately settle for a shallow experience of Christ and fail to enjoy the victory of a Spirit-filled life. They sacrifice the joys of the Lord for the pottage of the world.

It is said that the Emperor William refused a request for an audience prepared by a German-American. The Emperor declared that Germans born in Germany but naturalized in America became Americans: "I know Americans; I know Germans; but German-Americans I do not know." Likewise, the Lord "knows" no Christian-worldlings. He calls His people to serve with total consecration. We cannot settle for hyphenated Christians who still love the world. All born again believers have ceased to be worldlings by their new birth. They are dead to the world and alive unto God through Christ. For this reason Paul exhorted the Christians at Rome, "Likewise, reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:11).

With this topic in mind for the first issue of the New Year I have asked Rev. John Wagner and Rev. Armen Thomassian to write for us on the believer's need for total consecration to the Lord. I pray these articles will be as the Lord's voice calling you to surrender your life unto Him. ■



# In Their Own Words

## Questions & Answers

with  
**Rev. Geoff Banister**



*Rev. Geoff Banister is an all-American guy when you consider his accent, his birthplace, and his love of American football. Above all he is convinced that he is called of God to preach the gospel and is on record as saying, "My work is to ensure Christians know how blessed they are as the redeemed of God."*

*Rev. Geoff Banister has been the minister of our Indianapolis congregation for fourteen years. He had already been a ruling elder serving in the Indianapolis church when that pulpit became vacant in 2001. He was also a fully trained minister having studied at our seminary in Greenville, South Carolina, under the leadership of Dr. Alan Cairns. In the providence of God the Indianapolis congregation called him to be its full-time minister.*

*Mr. Banister presently serves on two presbytery committees. He is the chairman of the seminary committee and also serves on the examination committee, which oversees the intake of students to the seminary and ensures the students are eligible for licensing at the end of their training. We felt it was time for us to interview Mr. Banister so we may learn about his life and work.*



**Current: Geoff, where is that accent of yours from?**

GB: It's actually not an accent at all but the pure American Midwest dialect of the state of Wisconsin from which everything else deviates!

**Tell us about your school years and of your earliest convictions about Christianity.**

In high school I was very active in band and devoted myself to drumming. That led to my attending the University of Wisconsin for about a year and a half as a percussion major. Eventually I was unable to continue in college because of the expenses involved, but I did continue to participate in a drum and bugle corps. It was during my last year in that corps when I was 21 years old that I heard the gospel and gained a saving interest in Christ. The gospel was shared with me by a layman who worked in the same factory where I worked. He was very succinct and rather blunt in telling me I was a hopeless sinner bound for hell but that Christ could save me if I would call on Him. The Lord used that simple and direct word to command the light to shine in my darkened heart.

**Who had the greatest influence on your life before your years of marriage?**

I don't know that I could point out any single individual. I can say, however, that the years I spent in the drum and bugle corps had a profound impact on my life in terms of instilling in me the desire and discipline to apply myself to a task with all my heart. That desire and discipline served me well when I eventually got saved and attended Bob Jones University majoring in Bible. I poured myself into my studies and labored in the power of gratitude for the open door the Lord had given me to devote myself to the study of His Word.

**How did you meet your wife and how were you convinced she was the one you must marry?**

I met Sandy during the years I was in the drum and bugle corps. You might say she was my first convert. We came to Christ together and from that day there was never any doubt in my mind but that she was the one for me.

**Give us a little insight into your family circle and how you and your wife can still be parents to them now that they are beyond the rule of your home.**

We have four grown children and nine grandchildren (with number 10 on the way). We are blessed to have them all nearby here in Indianapolis. The role I play in their lives as a parent is minimal and consists mostly of praying for them and encouraging them as opportunities arise. Sandy, on the other hand, still plays a major role in their lives mostly by her help and ministry to the grandkids. One of my daughters admitted in a Facebook post some while back that she couldn't be a mom without the help and support of her mom.



Banister family with Dr. Paisley



Rev. Banister at his desk preparing for the morning service

**As a father of four children and now a grandfather, what is your number one piece of advice to parents?**

Never stop pleading the promises of God for your children and never lose hope that God's grace is sufficient for every need and challenge. Isaiah 54:13 comes readily to mind: "And all thy children shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children." I still plead that promise for my children and now my grandchildren.

**You have proven over the years that you have a pastor's heart. What is the foremost gift or grace that a pastor needs to assist people with their spiritual needs?**

Perhaps the greatest gift a pastor needs is the simple gift of life experience. It's with good reason that novices do not qualify for the ministry. When I think of the years I served as a layman working in the printing industry before the Lord called me to be the pastor here, I see those experiences of working in the world while facing the challenges of providing for a family as immensely valuable for the ministry today. I feel I'm able to empathize with our folks because in many respects I've been where they are now.

**In your experience, what is the number one spiritual problem Christians run into and need pastoral help with?**

Romans 5:17 addresses that need and challenge. In that verse Paul addresses the topic of the Christian reigning in life. Two things are stated in that verse that are required



The extended Banister family on vacation in Gulf Shores, Alabama

in order for the Christian to reign in life: abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness. Where those two things are appreciated and appropriated by faith, the Christian reigns in life. That doesn't mean that life is easy or comfortable at all times, but it is tantamount to saying that he's on top of life instead of life being on top of him. Joseph in the Old Testament comes readily to mind. He's referred to in Genesis 39 as a prosperous man. His prosperity was not found in easy and comfortable circumstances but rather as a slave in Potiphar's house and later as a prisoner in an Egyptian dungeon. In spite of his circumstances he nevertheless reigned in life because he was aware of the Lord being with him.

**What do you think is the chief reason that people who at first show signs of zeal for the Lord's church lose out and eventually depart from a congregation?**

Like most churches we have had our share of departures. Some are understandable; some are clearly the Lord's leading. The ones that I find most painful are the ones that take place because misgivings come to rule hearts more than the blessings of Christ. Those kinds of departures drive me to my knees not only out of a sense of concern for those who leave in that condition but out of a sense of my own lack of power in the ministry of the gospel. The need for Holy Spirit unction is constant.

**Name a few ways you and your church leaders strive to retain the young generation in the fellowship of the church through to adulthood.**

Basically it's through the apostolic method of Acts 6:4: prayer and the ministry of the Word. I might add that it's been very encouraging to see a number of our young people step up to serve Christ in unusual ways. This past summer, for example, one of our young men helped take Bibles into a country where the Bible is not allowed; another of our young men, who is a medical student, served in a medical mission in Uganda while one of our young ladies spent time in Kenya through Friends of Africa Missionary Endeavor (FAME). Others who stay closer to home step up to help their neighbors or reach out to help other families in the church with various needs. It's also encouraging to see our young people come together through monthly fellowships in order to encourage each other.

**A few years ago you had some serious health problems. How have you been able to overcome them and how should readers pray for you in your ministry?**

A couple of years ago I had very mild symptoms of a heart attack. When the heart catheterization was done there was no evidence of any damage to my heart. I thought initially it was a false alarm. But when the blood work came back from the lab it showed clearly that something had happened. The cardiologist theorized that there may have been blockage that cleared itself. It was a very gentle way for the Lord to convey to me the need to take some things more seriously than I had in terms of diet and exercise. I would very much appreciate the prayers of the Lord's people that I will be enabled in His grace to be conscientious in the areas of my health, both physical and spiritual. ■





# CONSECRATION: NOT JUST ANOTHER NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION

With a new year stretching out before us, we would gladly and earnestly endorse the sentiments of C. H. Spurgeon when he told his congregation one Lord's Day morning at the start of the new year: "This first Sabbath of a new year, what time more suitable for beginning aright!" Because they want their walk with God to be better than it was last year—more consistent, more holy—many Christians have already made various New Year's resolutions. They have resolved to pray more, to read their Bibles more, to be more faithful in witnessing, and, in short, to live a life of greater consecration to God.

In and of itself, the making of holy resolutions is a good thing. The Scriptures give numerous examples of believers who did that very thing. Daniel "purposed in his heart" not to eat the king's food. Paul resolved that his one great aim in life was to "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." We're not surprised, therefore, when reading through the diaries and writings of men such as John Calvin, Jonathan Edwards, C. H. Spurgeon, Robert Murray McCheyne, and Andrew Bonar to find them making holy resolutions as they entered a new year.

But we should never forget that Satan isn't the least bit troubled by our resolves for renewed consecration to God. It's the follow through that he fears. It's when the Lord's people not

only resolve to live a life consecrated to God, but when they actually do it, that his kingdom suffers and Christ's kingdom prospers. So whatever you have resolved to do differently or better in some area or areas of your Christian life this incoming year, remember that consecration is more than a resolution. It is a way of life that is lived out one day at a time.

The Scripture not only encourages Christians to consecrate their lives to God by giving them examples of those who did, but it directly calls upon them to live such a life. One of the clearest and most familiar examples of this is found in Romans 12:1–2: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." These two verses show what it is to consecrate ourselves unto God. What does that look like in practice?

## **Presenting our bodies**

First, consecration means that we dedicate our bodies to God. Romans 12 is the beginning of Paul's application of the gospel doctrine he's been teaching for the last eleven chapters. In basic terms Paul says because God has blessed you so abundantly through the gospel, He calls on you to live entirely for Him. It is noteworthy that he

begins this call to consecration with our bodies, which are to be presented to the Lord as a "living sacrifice." Remember that back in chapter six he exhorted us to "yield ... [our] members as instruments of righteousness unto God" and not "as members of unrighteousness unto sin" (6:13). The word *yield* is the same Greek word translated "present" here in 12:1. The word speaks of anything but passivity, or, as some have framed it, of "letting go and letting God." When we dedicate ourselves to the Lord, we actively present our entire bodies to Him as living-slain sacrifices in which we view the members of our bodies as alive to God but dead to sin.

That means we are telling God that our eyes, our ears, our tongues, our hands, our feet, our whole bodies are completely and unreservedly His. It's not surprising that Paul begins with the consecration of our bodies in light of what he said about it back in chapter seven. He wrote of "a law of sin" that lived in his "members," that fought against anything and everything that was pleasing to God. Therefore the best thing we can do with our bodies is to consecrate them entirely to the Lord.

If our eyes are devoted to Him then we won't deliberately set them on that which God's Word has forbidden. There's precious little put out by the movie and television industry that is fit for human (let alone) Christian consumption. How dim the believer's spiritual vision becomes when



he's watched or read that which God detests. The sad reality is that it hinders his ability to see Christ, to know Him, and hold close fellowship with Him.

If our ears are consecrated to the Lord then we will want, as much as we are able, to listen only to that which He approves. The message of Satan—whether it comes through the medium of music, vile and violent language, false teachers of the Word of God, etc.,—must be rejected outright. God's people are not to listen to any voice or anything that would grieve the Holy Spirit and draw them away from the Lord. Consecrated ears will be deaf to the cries of the world as it calls believers to pursue its ambitions and pleasures. They will, on the other hand, listen for the voice of their Master because listening to Him—and rendering unstinting obedience to His commands—is the mark of a true servant. We will spare our churches, our homes, and our families a great deal of grief if we are “all ears” when it comes to listening for and doing His will.

If our tongues are the Lord's, then the words that come out of our mouths will be very pleasant to listen to. They will not be marked by anger, bitterness, meanness, cursing, blasphemy, off-color jokes, fault-finding, disrespect, gossip, unkindness, or arrogance, to name a few things that make the tongue the “unruly evil” James speaks of (3:8). But when God has our

tongues, then “the words of [our] mouth” will be “acceptable in [His] sight” (Psalm 19:14). For an exercise, take each negative word in the list above and write down its antonym to find out what a consecrated tongue sounds like. Best of all, when our tongues are consecrated to the Lord we will use them to praise Him, to talk with Him, and to tell others about Him.

Presenting our bodies to God as a living sacrifice also means that we are consecrating our hands to Him. Clearly our hands are never to touch anything that God says is unclean and are not to be used to do anything that is sinful. But the hand in Scripture speaks primarily of a man's labor or activity. So the psalmist asked God to “establish ... the work of [his] hands” (Psalm 90:17). Our hands are to be devoted exclusively to working for the Lord. It doesn't mean that every Christian is supposed to leave his or her job to enter into what is commonly called full-time service. But it does mean that the consecrated Christian will not categorize his labors into “secular and sacred.” Whether it's working at the factory or laboring in teaching a Sunday school class, our chief aim is to glorify Christ. It is when we fail to do this that we begin laboring for the things of this world. Christians are never to labor in order to be rich (Proverbs 23:4). If God blesses you in your job with success and gives you wealth, thank Him for it, use it for His kingdom, and never forget the source of your wealth. But Christ said, “Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life” (John 6:27). Consecrated hands don't see a division between the secular and the sacred. Whatever work they do their great aim is to manifest the glories of the Saviour.

Finally, the Word of God also speaks of our feet being set apart for God's service. It's interesting that when an Old Testament priest was consecrated to the Lord for service, the blood from the ram of consecration was applied to his great toe (Exodus 29:20). The truth being taught is that no pathway in life is to be followed, no goal is to be pursued, no place is to be visited, no advice is to be taken that would lead us to walk away from our Lord and our service to Him. He presented Himself as the sacrifice for our sin in order to set apart our walk for Him.

### Repudiating the world

What else will this total consecration to God look like in a Christian's life? The very next verse indicates that this consecration will lead a Christian to repudiate the world: “And be not conformed to this world.” If we have truly abandoned our lives to God, then we will

steadfastly resist the urge to be like the world. Contrary to what the devil would have us believe, the world is not our friend, but our enemy, and so much so that the Holy Spirit states that “whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God” (James 4:4). The world and all of its riches, pleasures, fashions, and everything else in which it glories are passing away. But the pattern to which every believer is called to conform is that given us in the life of Christ Jesus.

### Renewing our minds

That brings us to see finally that consecration brings about a transformation of our lives by the renewing of our minds: “But be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.” This really gets to the heart of the matter because it deals with the renovation of our inner man, especially our minds. Which of us would not like to see a real and lasting change in our walk with God this incoming year? The only way that will happen is if our mind—our thinking—is renovated. It is as our thinking is conformed to the Word of God that our behavior is conformed to the Word of God. Solomon said this about man in Proverbs 23:7: “For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he.” It's not what he professes to be that reveals what he really is, but what he thinks. Therefore, what better thing could we do at the start of this new year than to pray God to give us “the mind of Christ.” (1 Corinthians 2:16). It is then that we will think more and live more like Christ.

I would be remiss if I did not ask you this: Have you ever consecrated yourself to the Lord? Has there ever been a time when you said in so many words, “Lord, I consecrate my entire life to Thee and Thy service this day”? If not, would that not be the best way to begin this new year?

Perhaps you consecrated yourself to the Lord many years ago, but you've let the world come into your life and you've forgotten all about that day long ago. If that's true, then now is the perfect time to renew your consecration to the Lord. Let not another year go by with you living at a distance from the Lord who has never stopped loving you. Heed Paul's admonition in Romans 12:1–2 and what a truly happy new year it will be! ■



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# Christian Love:

## A Reflection of True Consecration

I once read of a woman who said, “I want a man who will love me for who I am. Is that too much to ask of a millionaire?” While such a statement may amuse us, it reflects quite succinctly how the concept of love can be distorted. Indeed, due to our Adamic nature, we are all inclined to distort love in some way. But for Christians, it is absolutely essential that we grasp what love really is, first, as it is directed to God, and second, as it is directed to our neighbor.

Before we get into this, I must confess that it took me a few years to understand how one could claim to be a Christian and not be sold out to God without any reservations. I still remember the first quotation I memorized shortly after my conversion at nineteen years of age. It was the well known words of Charles Studd: “If Jesus Christ be God and died for me, then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for Him.” That was his response to those who would question the wisdom of going to a foreign mission field. When I first heard it, its simple logic helped to lay a foundation of consecration in my own heart and life, leaving me somewhat bewildered that a professing Christian could live any other way. While I have since matured in my understanding (even through the waywardness of my own heart), it still baffles me why more

don’t seem to grasp that our professed love for Jesus Christ is woefully deficient if we cannot bring ourselves to present our bodies as a living sacrifice to Him (Romans 12:1).

That is what consecration is, believer. It is a natural response from a heart that truly loves. With no consecration there is no proof of love. And without love, Paul tells us that we are nothing. To put it another way, without true Christian love, our best efforts for God are worthless. That is strong language. Frightful language, actually. But it’s clearly what Paul meant in 1 Corinthians 13:1–3.

Since all of humanity experiences love to some degree, how are we to understand the love Paul speaks of in 1 Corinthians 13? First, let’s understand what this love is not. It is not merely summed up in the word *agape*, since that word is used for the experience of unbelievers toward each other in Luke 6:32. Furthermore, this love Paul talks about cannot be measured by mere action according to 1 Corinthians 13:3. Also, it is not something that comes naturally. Since love is the chief grace in the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22), we must conclude that one must be converted and walk in the Spirit in order to manifest it. Adding to all that, I would suggest that this kind of love must fulfill what Paul says

in 1 Corinthians 10:31: “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”

But, what does it look like? I think the apostle’s exhortation in Ephesians 5:25 may help us somewhat: “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.” There’s the picture. And if we bring this all together, I think we may define true Christian love as simply self-sacrifice for God’s glory. It cannot be mere self-sacrifice as Paul makes clear in 1 Corinthians 13:3. If it is truly of the Spirit, its motivation and end must be for the glory of God.

The proof of this is seen quite simply in John 3:16. The Father gave His Son, and the Son gave Himself to do the will of the Father. At the heart of the work of redemption is this love—self-sacrifice for God’s glory. When we understand this, we understand what Christian consecration is all about.

It is no mistake that love comes first in the list of virtues of the Spirit in Galatians 5. It is the first and primary grace, and where there is true conversion, it always results in self-sacrifice for God’s glory. Take the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. How does he respond to the grace of salvation? It is with the words, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” (Acts 9:6). In that moment, all of his

life’s ambitions were tossed away. He laid his life before Christ as an act of loving response to His mercy, sacrificing everything that was once valuable to him.

It is very easy to tell ourselves that we love Christ and to say that we are consecrated to Him. But is it seen in our daily lives? In Matthew 23:34–40 the Saviour shows us that our treatment of others is a reflection of our treatment of Him. He sums it up in verse 40: “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” Does your consecration to Christ manifest itself in your love toward the brethren? How we think and speak of other people is often a better reflection of our love for Christ than we care to admit. As Christ prepared Peter to feed the sheep, the threefold challenge to him was, “Lovest thou me?” (John 21:15–17). The point was that unless Peter truly loved Christ, he would not be in a position to serve the flock of God.

I have learned over time that my consecration and love to Christ aren’t seen just in my willingness to leave home to preach the gospel. Where the rubber meets the road is in how I treat others, whether they be God’s people or my enemies. My consecration is seen in how I love those that are difficult to love. C. T. Studd was right when he said, “No sacrifice can be too great for me to make for Him.” That means that when my ego tries to justify me for not loving my enemies, I will reject its attempts. It also means that when the greater Son of David, the Lord Jesus, asks, “Who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the Lord?” I will respond positively, even when it hurts. How can we refuse to give our all to Christ when He has given so much for us? ❧



**Rev. Armen Thomassian** is the minister of Calgary FPC in Calgary, Alberta.



# Catching up after **EBOLA**



On May 8th, Joanne Greer and I returned to Liberia after nine months of being out of the country following our evacuation because of the Ebola outbreak. We traveled by van from Northern Ireland through Scotland, England, France, and Belgium in order to accommodate the security dog that had been donated for the mission compound. We then flew from Brussels to Monrovia (see “Missionaries Return Safely to Liberia” at [fpcnamissions.org](http://fpcnamissions.org)).

Most in Liberia were happy to have us back, especially those who had been given medical help from the mission board during the difficult Ebola crisis. Some felt they should have gotten more relief because they saw other American churches give more to their people. We were quite generous in helping with medical needs and that used up most of our funds. Since our remaining funds were limited and we didn't know how long the Ebola crisis would last, we gave only enough for basic necessities to those who were healthy and regular attendees of the church. Those who received significant and life-sustaining help were thankful that God's people in North America and Ulster supported them through their time of severe trial.

On my return to Liberia I jumped back into the construction project, attempting to line up the plumber, carpenter, tile layer, and electrician, in order to finish the second house for Joanne to move into. Although the house still needs about \$30,000 USD additional funds for bedroom doors, additional toilets, bathroom sinks, light fixtures, front and back porches, and furniture, Joanne was able to move in on September 25th, just over four months after our return (see “Liberia: Second House Almost Livable” at [fpcnamissions.org](http://fpcnamissions.org)).

While I was overseeing the construction, Joanne began gathering the children together and getting back to teaching her Sunday school class and Bible clubs. While she was away, Nathan Barco taught the Bible club and Sunday school for the Paynesville church and Abraham Kotee did the work in Ballah Creek.

During the summer months Joanne held an annual Children's Day program in the Ballah Creek church with prize giving for memory work learned over the past year. She also held an annual Independence Day program for a combined group of 136 children from the Paynesville and Ballah Creek churches.

She explains, “In August we had two separate vacation Bible school (VBS) programs with over one hundred attending in Paynesville and nearly two hundred in Ballah Creek. I had been worried that we would not be able to hold VBS this year because the Ministry of Education had been sending out very mixed messages about school closure, due to the Ebola epidemic and the fact that the school year started in March instead of September, but it was finally announced after much debate that school would close on July 31st, and so we quickly planned for VBS.”

Martin Gbahn, the manager for the bookstore and my administrative assistant, did a super job overseeing the Dwazon property, paying employees and their taxes, and running the bookstore during the Ebola crisis.

Since getting back I have returned to the full duties of preaching each Lord's Day mainly in the Paynesville church with about five visits to the Ballah Creek church. I'm also teaching Sunday school to the youth each Sunday morning. I certainly appreciate Moses Dahn filling the

Paynesville pulpit during the entire nine months I was away. I felt that I should give him a much-needed break from preaching, so he's preached only a few times since I returned. It has been very encouraging to have people coming to the church who have found out about it through the *Let the Bible Speak* radio broadcasts and the bookstore.

I have also been attempting to handle government paperwork for the organization, the Free Presbyterian Mission Church of Liberia. It amazes me how much it takes to operate a mission. Every year the missionaries need resident/work permits and re-entry permits. We have to go through a cumbersome yearly vehicle registration and insurance renewal process for each mission vehicle. The headquarters is required to have a yearly fire inspection and replacement of all fire extinguishers and yearly sanitation inspections from the Ministry of Health. It must file and pay a \$400-per-year non-profit business permit to the national government for the bookstore. The Liberia Revenue Authority requires monthly tax filing in person for both missionaries and the eight employees registered with our mission.



## MISSIONS

Since Liberia has no mail service and all filing and correspondence must be delivered in person, payments to the government must be done at overcrowded banks where obtaining official, printed government receipts is essential to avoid being accused of paying a bribe or extortion payment, a very common problem in Liberia.

The mission in Liberia is not a church in the eyes of the Liberian government but an NGO (non-governmental organization). NGOs in Liberia are required to be accredited, something we were not informed of at first. We have been attempting since 2010 to get the accreditation, but have met with one obstacle after another. We seem to finally be making some progress, however. The next step requires that a government official visit the headquarters, where the bookstore and church are located, to make sure that our NGO does in fact have an official location with a proper sign. Hopefully it will all get sorted out soon.

For the last four years Martin, the office manager, has had to travel regularly to the Liberia Electrical Corporation and the Liberia Water and Sewage Corporation, attempting to maintain these two required government services to the mission headquarters. The power company regularly shuts off our power, and the water company has been battling with us for four years over an inflated water bill that does not belong to us. Our bill was \$600 USD more than what the meter showed, and we have been unable to rectify the situation to date. I sometimes wonder if I should have gone to law school instead of seminary!

The missionary housing compound on three acres of land in Dwazon, about ten miles outside Monrovia, the capital city of Liberia, is maintained by two full-time workers, Armstrong Gonkpala and Emmanuel Cooper. The level of maintenance for an oceanfront property is mind-boggling because rust eats everything.

The two employees take care of all the landscaping needs, care for the dogs, change the over 250 light bulbs on the property, regularly paint and replace rusted items on the property—including disintegrated barbed wire around the fences, window bars on both houses, hinges, and locks—and coordinate the repairs on the vehicles.

Joanne and I both wish to thank the Lord and His people for the continued prayer and financial support for the work. We are praying that in the future doors will open for a Christian school, a radio station, and an additional bookstore as means of evangelism so that a new generation of Liberians might be saved and some called to the gospel ministry. ■



**Rev. David DiCanio**  
serves under the Mission Board of the  
FPCNA.



## PRESBYTERY NEWS



### PROPOSED FPCNA MISSION TRIP TO LIBERIA MAY 2016

Rev. Colin Mercer is hosting a mission trip to Liberia in May 2016. Applicants must be seventeen years or older and must have the recommendation of their church session. A limited number of applicants will be accepted. The cost of the trip will be partially subsidized by the presbytery. Various vaccinations and a visa for entry into the country will be required. Any person interested in this Liberian mission trip should contact Rev. Colin Mercer at [cmercerc@faithfpc.org](mailto:cmercerc@faithfpc.org) or (864) 414-5426. Application forms will be provided.



### PRESBYTERY OUTREACH INITIATIVE TO GREENVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA

The fifth annual presbytery Outreach Initiative will be hosted by our Greenville congregation June 18–25, 2016. The weeklong outreach program will involve participation in vacation Bible school, downtown outreach, nursing home ministries, and tract distribution. Applicants must be sixteen years or older and must have the recommendation of their church session. For additional information contact Rev. Colin Mercer at [cmercerc@faithfpc.org](mailto:cmercerc@faithfpc.org) or (864) 414-5426. Application forms will be provided.



## HISTORIC RAINFALL BEFORE COLUMBIA WEEK OF PRAYER

The weekend prior to the Week of Prayer at Covenant FPC near Columbia, South Carolina, became memorable in the Midlands and Lowcountry of South Carolina for one of the heaviest rainstorms in the state's history. From the Columbia area to the coast between Charleston and Myrtle Beach, rainfall totals ranged from ten to more than twenty-four inches, triggering in some areas catastrophic flooding. The men who arrived in Columbia on Monday evening, October 5, encountered largely deserted streets, closed businesses, and continuing light rain. Thankfully, the area around the church escaped the worst of the flooding, even though a building on the church's property did sustain some water damage.



By Tuesday, however, sunshine returned to the area, and the saturated ground began the process of drying. Meanwhile, in the facilities of Covenant FPC, the members of the presbytery assembled again for a week of daily prayer sessions and the regular meeting of the presbytery. It was the first such assembly in Columbia since 2006, and again on this occasion, the members of the presbytery enjoyed the wonderful hospitality and care from the congregation, and especially from Rev. John Wagner, the church's minister, and his wife, Kim. With the congregation providing a meal each day for those in attendance and making the church's other facilities available to the presbytery for its various functions, the activities of the week proceeded in a very efficient manner.

Beginning Monday evening and continuing each morning thereafter through Friday, the men in attendance heard the preaching of the Word and spent extended times in prayer.

On Tuesday afternoon, October 6, Dr. Larry Saunders, moderator, called the regular meeting of the presbytery to order. Among the items of business, the presbytery acted to adopt a budget for 2016 as proposed by the Finance Committee.

The Seminary Committee, as one of its chief items, placed before the presbytery the recommendation to issue a call to Dr. Mark Allison to become the president of Geneva Reformed Seminary, effective immediately. Dr. Allison accepted the call, and indicated that he would prepare to relocate to Greenville early in 2016.

One of the results of Dr. Allison's appointment was the necessity for him to step down as minister of the FPC of Malvern, a position he has held since 2000. The presbytery approved a request from the session of the church to receive moderation for the purpose of calling a congregational meeting at some point to issue a call to a new

minister. In addition, the presbytery appointed Rev. Stephen Hamilton of the Lehigh Valley church to be the interim moderator of the church, with his duties beginning after Dr. Allison's departure during the early months of 2016.

One of the highlights of the presbytery meeting was the report of the Examination Committee concerning applications from two men to be received under the presbytery's care. Renton Rathbun and Ethan Bolyard preached in front of the presbytery, and the presbytery voted to receive both men under its care.

The Mission Board updated the presbytery on the progress of the construction project at the mission compound in Liberia. Less than two weeks before the presbytery's meeting, Joanne Greer was able to move into the second of the houses being built on the compound. Work will continue inside that structure, since only Miss Greer's living area was completed when she moved in.

The Constitutional Documents Committee reported continuing progress toward the completion of the remaining sections of the *Book of Church Order*. While the goal of completing all the drafting of new material by the end of 2015 will not be realized, the committee remains confident of being able to move toward final publication by the end of 2016 or early 2017.

In dealing with some personnel matters, the presbytery acknowledged that it had accepted the resignation of Dr. Richard Winston from the presbytery at the end of August, and agreed to release Dr. Michael

Barrett from his membership in the presbytery. Both men wished to affiliate with other denominations outside the Free Presbyterian family of churches.

The presbytery devoted a major portion of its time to the consideration of a lengthy report from a fact-finding commission the members had appointed in May to explore the basis for the distinctives of the denomination. The report detailed a lengthy history in connection with the establishment and defense of those distinctives, especially in the areas of voluntary abstinence from the use of beverage alcohol, the use of headcoverings in public worship for ladies in the membership of the churches, and the requirement that only the Authorized Version (KJV) of the Scriptures be employed in the public worship of the churches and English-speaking missions under the presbytery's care.

Following lengthy discussions on the commission's report, the presbytery voted to reaffirm its adherence to those distinctives in particular, and also reasserted the obligation of the various sessions to uphold those distinctive positions in the churches.

Due to a very extensive agenda, some aspects of committee reports had to be deferred to provide time for the discussion of the commission's report. Prior to adjournment, however, the moderator expressed his happiness at the manner in which the presbytery had conducted its business, and reminded the members that the presbytery's next regular meeting will be held in connection with the Week of Prayer at Faith FPC, Greenville, South Carolina, May 9–13, 2016. ■



**Rev. David G. Mook** is the minister of Phoenix Free Presbyterian Church in Peoria, 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.



## PRAYING FOR REVIVAL

Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?

Psalm 85:6

The history of Pentecost with its ten-day prayer meeting in the upper room prior to the outpouring of God's Spirit and the history of the Great Awakenings with their prayer meetings in homes, offices, and churches teach us that if we earnestly desire revival we must give ourselves to prayer. This is not easy, however. Many have begun to pray for God to move by His Spirit but have given up or gone astray. We need the mind of God to pray for revival and we need the burden of the Lord that goes along with it. To pray for revival in a sound and God-honoring way we should pattern our prayers after the prayers of the Bible.

In God's Word, especially in the Psalms (which are basically prayers), we find a number of instances of the psalmist praying for revival. So in Psalm 85:6 we have this petition: "Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?" No less than nine times in Psalm 119 the psalmist prays for quickening. Here is a sampling of those references:

- "My soul cleaveth unto the dust: quicken thou me according to thy word" (v. 25).

- "Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way" (v. 37, a great text to keep near a television set or a computer monitor).

- "Quicken me after thy lovingkindness; so shall I keep the testimony of thy mouth" (v. 88).

The word *quicken* literally means to give life, to revive, or to refresh. Based on these petitions, then, the Christian may conclude that he has the scriptural warrant for praying for revival. This scriptural warrant will align itself with the deepest desires of the Christian's heart. No Christian can be content to go for a long period of time in a state of spiritual apathy and coldness. He longs for that closer walk with God that he used to know. And no Christian can look around him and see abounding sin and wickedness without heaving a sigh toward heaven that begs God to pour forth His Spirit and turn back the flood tide of iniquity through revival.

For every true spiritual desire there is a corresponding promise from God's Word. And those promises must be brought before God's throne in prayer in order to see them realized. One well known promise from the Isle of Lewis revival is found in Isaiah 44:3: "For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring." The second half of this verse provides the spiritual meaning of the first half of the verse. In other words, the thirsting that calls for water upon the dry ground corresponds to the spiritual thirsting of the Christian's heart for God's Spirit to be poured out again.

In that portion of the Sermon on the Mount known as the Lord's Prayer, it could be argued that Christians are taught to pray for revival: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10). What will it take for the Lord's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven? The second coming of Christ will ultimately bring this to pass but apart from the Lord's return, revival takes us closer to meeting that heavenly standard.

Some Christians have argued that wickedness is too great and that the day is too far gone for revival to come. Such an attitude completely overlooks the character of the days in which God has moved in the past. How much darker could the days have been than what they were during the days that Christ walked this earth? Such were the forces of darkness that the Jews and Gentiles would take the very Son of God Himself and nail Him to a cross. And yet notwithstanding such darkness there soon followed the outpouring of God's Spirit on the day

of Pentecost that caused the light of the gospel to dispel the darkness of apostasy. The strength of apostasy was no barrier then to God's Spirit being poured out!

And for the ten days that occurred between Christ's ascension and the outpouring of God's Spirit, we find the apostles in prayer: "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren" (Acts 1:14). We're not told in this instance what the apostles prayed, but it's not hard to know when you consider the promise that Christ gave them before His ascension into heaven: "Wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me" (Acts 1:4). That promise is given a little later in verse 8: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." It's not hard to picture them in that upper room earnestly seeking God to give them the promised power of the Holy Ghost.

So the lessons the Christian can take from the Psalms and from the example of the apostles is that we must pray. Revival comes in answer to prayer. When Christ exhorted His hearers to pray, He told them to ask, seek, and knock (Matthew 7:7). In this text the Lord commands us to pray with passion for the thing we need. Our need is revival and for this we must give ourselves to prayer. Oh that the Lord would so burden the hearts of His people that they would devote themselves to storming heaven's gates with petitions for the Lord to move.

The spirit of this kind of praying is set forth in Isaiah 62:6-7: "I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence, and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth." We can be sure that it is God's will for us to take such portions of God's Word as our guides to pray for revival, and if we are truly burdened for God's glory in the salvation of sinners then we know He will hear and answer us according to His good pleasure. ■



**Rev. Geoff Banister**  
is the minister of Indianapolis  
FPC in Indiana.



# EVIDENCES OF NOAH'S FLOOD

One of the greatest cataclysmic events in the history of planet Earth was undoubtedly the flood of Noah's day as recorded in Genesis chapters 6 to 9. It was an awesome geologic event with major implications with regard to the past, present, and future of this world. Interest in the Genesis flood has increased recently with several expeditions going to Ararat in Turkey hoping to find any evidence of Noah's ark that might be there. But political and climactic difficulties have hindered any full-scale investigation.

That the flood took place as an historical event can hardly be questioned. Apart from the inspired Genesis record, Jesus put His stamp of authority on the biblical record in Matthew 24:27–39. Paul also (Hebrews 11:7) and Peter (1 Peter 3:20 and 2 Peter 2:5) testified to its reality. Secular history also confirms it with reports in the Gilgamesh Epic of Babylon, as well as in Sumerian and other writings. Sir James George Frazer lists one hundred of these reports. It is true they do not agree on the flood details, but is it not remarkable that they all agree that a flood of some magnitude inundated the earth?

Some people, trying to remove the supernatural, postulate a local flood. But that cannot be. The flood waters prevailed and “all the high hills, that were under the *whole* heaven, were covered” (Genesis 7:19, emphasis added). “Fifteen cubits [22 feet] upwards did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered” (verse 20). Such a situation would be impossible with a local flood for the waters would spill over into the next valley. To retain the water from doing so would require as big a miracle as the flood itself.

If the flood was purely local why did Noah have to spend over a hundred years building an immense craft measuring about 437 feet long with a breadth of 73 feet and a height of 44 feet? Its volume would have been about 1.4 million cubic feet. With a local flood Noah and his family would have needed only to emigrate into the next valley. The wicked, who were supposed to be destroyed by the judgment of the flood, could have done the same thing.

Remember there were 1,656 years from Adam to Noah and the flood. From Adam to Noah were eighteen generations and at a modest increase of 1.5% per year the population would have grown to almost 800 million people. That means the world's population was not just confined to one valley which the flood would destroy. A local flood would not have achieved the Lord's objective stated in Genesis 6:13.

The waters remained on the earth after the flood, not in the cloud system above the earth. The clouds retain moisture, but if all the clouds were precipitated the water level on earth would rise by only a few inches. Scientists can tell us fairly accurately how much water is currently on earth. Assuming, for the sake of simplicity, that the earth is perfectly round (it is actually a sphere) it is a simple calculation to ascertain the heights of the mountains that were covered to a depth of about 22 feet. There were no mountains as high as Everest in antediluvian days. They were probably no higher than about eight thousand feet.

In a universal flood imagine a ball covered by water on which floats Noah's ark with its precious cargo

of people and animals. For the flood waters to dissipate and for dry land to appear required significant major geologic processes including volcanism, diastrophism (earth movement including orogeny or mountain building), sedimentation, tidal movements, and fossilization. To regain isostatic balance the land would have to be moved upwards and the resultant valleys would draw off the flood waters. Psalm 104:6–9 describes the recession of water to allow the “dry land” to appear at creation (Genesis 1:9–10). The same geologic activity would have been seen immediately after the flood. “They [the floodwaters] go up by the mountains; they go down by the valleys unto the place which thou hast founded for them” (Psalm 104:8). The marginal rendering is even clearer, “The mountains ascend, the valleys descend.”

This means that there has been a major change in the surface of the earth's crust. Charles Darwin, known by many as the father of evolution, once stated that nothing, not even the wind that blows, is more unstable than the crust of the earth. The world that Noah saw when he stepped out of the ark was vastly different from the one with which he was familiar. So someone asks, where is the evidence of such a cataclysm today? The answer is simple: *everywhere*. The present earth's crust is a direct result of the recession of the flood waters. The scientists tell us the world's great mountain ranges such as the Himalayas and the Andes show evidence of being upheaved distances measured in miles. Seashells have been found in their

upper reaches at heights to which no bird could fly. So as the flood waters receded there was unprecedented geologic activity and evidence of the flood is to be seen everywhere.

Some argue that if there was a universal flood it would take ages for the world to recover, but recent events prove the error of that view. In 1963 the volcanic Icelandic island of Surtsey was born. Within two years the first plant was found growing in Surtseyan lava and by 2008, 69 species of plant life were thriving and sea birds had made Surtsey their home. The massive eruption of Mount St. Helens in 1980 destroyed much of the local area with the loss of 57 lives. But within just 25 years much of the plant life was restored. So it does not take millions of years to recover from a catastrophe.

The flood of the past demonstrates the inevitable punishment of sin. In the present the evidence of the flood is written on every mountain and valley. For the future, the universal nature of the flood that destroyed all humans and animals outside of Noah's ark gives credibility to God's warnings of another universal judgment, not by water but by fire (2 Peter 3:10). In light of this final judgment of planet earth Peter poses a powerful question, “What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?” ☒



**Dr. Frank McClelland**  
is minister emeritus of Toronto  
FPC in Toronto, Ontario.



## CONVERTED AT 11:45

My brother, Peter Lanting, had always been the picture of health, but in June 2014 when he went to his doctor complaining of pain in his abdomen he was sent immediately to the local emergency unit. I had the unenviable task of telling him that he was terminally ill with stomach cancer and that he had only a short time to live.

In the midst of that difficult conversation I said, “Pete, you need to prepare yourself.” He started talking about getting his will and finances in order, and that the walls of his condo needed painting. “Pete,” I said, “I wasn’t talking about that. You have only a few months before you face almighty God and you need to prepare yourself by trusting in Christ for your salvation.” As we parted that night I had a heavy heart.

Pete took it all bravely. He never complained and continued to face each day as before. On New Year’s Eve we visited with our parents at their seniors’ home. Near the end of the visit I spotted the devotional book *Morning and Evening* by Charles Spurgeon on the bookcase. I suggested reading from it and when the others agreed, I began thumbing through it. My wife, Debbie, said, “It’s December 31, just read from today’s date,” so I did. For the last entry of the year Mr. Spurgeon had written a clear challenge calling sinners to repent of sin and turn to the Lord for salvation. In particular it addressed those who had grown up under gospel preaching but resisted its claims. It asked, “How will such a

one escape the fires of hell?” When I was finished reading, I said to Pete, “Honestly, that wasn’t planned.” He didn’t say anything, but we knew that God had spoken loudly through His word.

In January, Pete’s decline became noticeable. In March as Debbie and I were on our way out of town for a few days we stopped in to see Pete at the hospital. The doctor was glad to see us because he was about to tell Pete that he had only a few more weeks to live. I told Pete about the burden I’d had for him. I reminded him of the endless nature of eternity and I told him that death doesn’t have to be bleak and hopeless. I pleaded with him to humble himself and receive Jesus Christ as His Lord and Saviour so he could have eternal life with God. As we left, Pete thanked me and we knew we left him with a lot to think about.

Amazingly, Pete was able to attend the Easter services at Toronto Free Presbyterian Church where he met a number of people who were praying for his salvation. One couple at the church, Armen and Veronica, as it turned out, lived in the same building as Pete. They had opportunity after that to faithfully witness to him and to show the love of Christ to him by helping him with grocery shopping and other things.

## YOU MADE PREPARATIONS FOR YOUR RETIREMENT, WHY WOULD YOU NOT PREPARE TO MEET YOUR MAKER?

One night Debbie and I were on the phone with Pete and he told us that he found out he would certainly die in a short time. This seemed a bombshell to him even though his doctor had given him that prognosis a month earlier. I asked him, “What is stopping you from trusting in the Lord? What do you have to give up?” “Nothing,” he said. “Then just stop saying, ‘No.’ You can’t earn your salvation and you have nothing to give up except allegiance to sin. Why don’t you turn to the Lord and be saved? You made preparations for your retirement, why would you not prepare to meet your Maker?” I had said much more than I intended, and the sound of my pleading voice was followed by a long, haunting silence.

A short time after that conversation Pete was admitted to hospital again for what turned out to be the last time. As Pete was getting his funeral preparations in order he decided to have the service near our parents’ seniors’ home so they could attend. He therefore contacted the chaplain, who visited Pete to discuss the service. The chaplain visited Pete a few more times and the Lord used those visits to melt Pete’s heart. Our parents’ pastor also visited him and so did Rev. Larry Saunders.

When I visited Pete one evening about ten days before the end he suddenly started talking about salvation. He had always known, more or less, that he was lost and needed a Saviour, but now he was convicted about it. At one point I asked him if he’d like to pray. I didn’t mean to pray for salvation, because I didn’t believe Pete had reached that point, but that is what he took my request to mean. He said, “Yes, if I don’t do it now I may never get another chance.” So I led in prayer, and then Pete of his own accord prayed for his own salvation.

Afterwards, he asked the kind of things you would expect from someone who was having genuine dealings with God. I found out the next day that Pete had called my parents and others to tell them that he was saved. When Rev. Saunders visited him, Pete said, “I’ve been running from God my whole life, and I didn’t come just at the last hour, but at 11:45!”

Our parents’ pastor came by again and helped Pete understand the issues of repentance and salvation through faith alone in Christ. The next day Pete spoke to me of his need to resist carnal thoughts, which encouraged me that he was taking his salvation seriously. I asked him if he could choose between going back to his life as it was a year before to live a long, healthy, and happy life without salvation or remaining in his present state of sickness with salvation, which would he pick? Without batting an eye, he said, “The last one.”

A week later Pete passed into eternity. I’m thankful for the gospel of Christ that offers full salvation to all who call on the Lord to be saved from their sin. It is because of Pete’s trust in what Christ accomplished in His life, death, and resurrection that I have the hope of seeing him again in the presence of the Lord. Truly Christ has removed the sting of death for all who trust in Him! ■

**Norm Lanting**

and his wife, Debbie, attend Toronto FPC.



# FANNY CROSBY

## HYMN WRITER, POET, TEACHER, MISSION WORKER, MUSICIAN

I find it very difficult to answer the question “What is your favorite hymn?” I love to read, sing, and play many hymns and cannot easily select one as my most cherished. I find, however, that many of the hymns I am drawn to and hold dear were written by Fanny Crosby.

Frances Jane Crosby was born in Southeast, Putnam County, New York, on March 24, 1820, the only child of John and Mercy Crosby. In infancy, Fanny developed an infection of the eyes and as a result of mistreatment of the infection, she became blind. She was only six weeks old. Before her first birthday, Fanny lost her father to an illness, which forced her mother to work outside of the home. As a result, Fanny spent much of her time in the care of her godly maternal grandmother, Eunice.

At fifteen years of age, Fanny began attending the New York Institution for the Blind (NYIB), where she later taught. While teaching at NYIB, she met Alexander van Alstyne, a music scholar and teacher. The two were married on March 5, 1858. Fanny left NYIB at the time of her marriage and from that point made writing hymns her vocation. It has been said that at times she would write up to eight hymns a day.

In addition to the approximately eight thousand hymns that she wrote, Fanny also published

many volumes of poetry, wrote several books, became an accomplished pianist and vocalist, and worked tirelessly for several rescue missions. She died in Bridgeport, Connecticut, on February 12, 1915, at the age of 95.

Fanny was known to say, “Had it not been for my affliction I might not have so good an education, nor so great an influence, and certainly not so fine a memory.” She had committed to memory the first four books of the Old Testament and the four Gospels before she was ten years of age!

In her hymns Fanny expressed heart-felt devotion to the Saviour and a sincere desire for a life consecrated to Him. Many of her hymns are written in the first person (e.g., “I Am Thine, O Lord,” “Pass Me Not, O Gentle Saviour,” “Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross”), demonstrating her own personal relationship with the Lord and drawing the reader into this relationship as well.

A recurring theme in many of Fanny’s hymns is consecration—total and absolute surrender to the Lord. Such consecration is clearly illustrated in the hymn “I Am Thine, O Lord” written in 1875. Fanny wrote the hymn while visiting the home of friend William H. Doane, who later composed the music to go with the words. On the night of Fanny’s visit, the topic

of conversation was the blessing of enjoying the nearness of God during times of dark shadows. True to her form, in sudden inspiration Fanny began reciting the words to this beautiful hymn:

Consecrate me now to Thy service, Lord,  
By the pow’r of grace divine;  
Let my soul look up with a steadfast hope,  
And my will be lost in Thine.

She never for a moment harbored any resentment for her infirmity, but rather claimed, “I have always believed that the good Lord, in His infinite mercy, by this means consecrated me to the work that I am still permitted to do. When I remember how I have been blessed, how can I repine?” What a marvelous illustration we have of the way God can enable us to rise above our trials and can “make all things work together for good to those who love Him.” Oh, that this would be the song and prayer of our hearts as well. ■



**Pina D’Addurno** is the wife of Rev. Anthony D’Addurno, the minister of Barrie FPC in Barrie, Ontario.



## DEDICATION FOR LEHIGH VALLEY CHURCH

On Friday, October 23, 2015, the people of Lehigh Valley FPC gathered in Walnutport, Pennsylvania, for a special service to dedicate their recently acquired church building. Some sixty people attended including friends and acquaintances of the congregation, some who responded to invitations that had been distributed in the area, and some members from Malvern FPC.

The Hamiltons were pleased to have their daughter Rachel with them from South Carolina, as well as Rev. Stephen Hamilton's sisters, Olive and Yvonne, who traveled from Ulster to be present for the special occasion. Other visitors included some of the minister's "soccer buddies" and their spouses, as well as the Hamiltons' next-door neighbors. This was

a particular blessing and an answer to prayer. Mr. Hamilton led the opening hymn and Dr. Mark Allison opened the meeting with prayer. Dr. Larry Saunders, moderator of the FPCNA, brought greetings from the presbytery and offered a prayer of dedication and thanksgiving for the Lord's provision of a house of worship for His people.

On behalf of the congregation, Mr. Paul Welwood, a foundation member, presented Mr. Hamilton with a personal gift for his ministry among them. This was followed by a surprise presentation of a pulpit fall to Mr. Hamilton and his wife, which had been planned by members of the congregation. During the service Rachel Hamilton played a special offertory on the piano, "Who Is on the Lord's Side?" Rev. David Mook, minister of Phoenix FPC and clerk of presbytery,

preached a very suitable yet solemn message from God's Word on David's preparing abundantly before his death for the building of the temple.

The meeting was brought to a conclusion by Dr. John McKnight, minister of Reformation Bible Church in Darlington, Maryland. Dr. McKnight brought greetings from the American Council of Christian Churches before closing the meeting in prayer. The people remained after the service for food and fellowship in the lower level of the building. With the Lord's presence known in the gathering, the whole event was a great encouragement to the congregation. An offering taken up during the service came to \$850. The congregation is thankful to the Lord for providing a permanent location. May the Lord continue to bless the congregation and its witness in the community as the gospel is preached in its new place of worship.

## NEW BABIES IN ALABAMA

Trinity Free Presbyterian Church welcomed three new babies recently. Caleb Forrest was born to Luke and Hannah Mooney on Friday, September 18, 2015. Ezra Mooney joined the family of Jacob and Kelly Frank on September 29. His older siblings are Lily, Levi, Asher, and Ava. Nora Evangeline was welcomed by Ernie and Myra Yarbrough on October 11. Nora has two big brothers, Ridley and Cameron. The mothers and new babies are all doing well.

## RELAY RUN FOR MEXICO

The Reformed Runners' fall run took place November 6-7 in the hills of North Alabama. In spite of rainy weather, the runners enthusiastically tackled their three- to six-mile legs. Early reports have the giving for the Boyles' mission work in Mexico at several thousand dollars with more coming in. Tee

shirts commemorating the run are available at <http://bit.ly/1SsrjNp> and donations can still be made at [www.reformedrunners.com](http://www.reformedrunners.com).

## TRIMBLE FAMILY MOVES TO PENNSYLVANIA

Paul and Christina Trimble are relocating their family from the Winston-Salem area to Parkersburg, Pennsylvania, in November, where they will be attending Malvern FPC. It is a homegoing for Paul, who has relatives in the area and in the church.

Rev. Reggie Kimbro, their minister at Grace FPC in Winston-Salem, says, "The Trimbles have been a tremendous help and encouragement to the work here for the past twelve years. Paul headed our rescue mission ministry, shared the preaching obligations for our nursing home ministry, and consistently rendered pulpit supply. Both Paul

and Christina taught Sunday school, and Christina was active in our Kids4Truth program. The whole family will be greatly missed, but we rejoice that they are moving to another avenue of service in Malvern and our prayers go with them as they depart.

Dr. Mark Allison says, "The congregation in Malvern is looking forward to Paul and Christina Trimble's family moving to our church in Pennsylvania. They should arrive in Parkersburg, Pennsylvania, on the day before Thanksgiving. Pray that the Lord would strengthen and help them in all the details of this move."

## CHANGE IN MALVERN

Dr. Mark Allison recently announced to the Malvern church that he was resigning as minister of the church to become the full-time president of Geneva Reformed Seminary. He says, "This





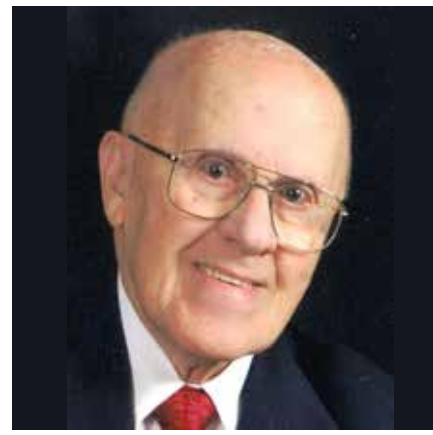
year has been a very unusual one. In late spring the seminary committee asked that I serve as acting president of GRS for two months. At the week of prayer in May that period was extended to one year. Then at the October week of prayer in Lexington, South Carolina, I followed the Lord's leading and accepted the presbytery's appointment as full-time president. "We hope to make the transition from being the pastor in Malvern to the Greenville seminary in mid-February 2016. In October, the office books were moved from my Downingtown, Pennsylvania, study to GRS with the rest of our belongings to follow. Pray not only for the move, but especially for the Malvern congregation as it seeks the Lord's leading to the man of His choosing." A farewell banquet for Dr. & Mrs. Allison is to be held by Malvern FPC to celebrate their fifteen years of ministry in the congregation. The moderator, Dr. Larry Saunders, and other ministers will be in attendance. February 7, will be Dr. & Mrs. Allison's final Sunday with his congregation. We have asked for photos and a full report for our next issue of *Current*.

### 30TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION FOR PHOENIX FPC

On February 26, a dinner and service are planned to mark the 30th anniversary of the founding of the Phoenix church through the faithful ministry of Rev. David Mook. Dr. Larry Saunders will attend the special event and preach at both Lord's Day services on Sunday 28. We hope to have a full report in our next issue.

### THE WRONG NUMBER THAT WENT RIGHT

In December, Rev. Larry Saunders thought he was dialing out to one of his most frequent phone contacts when he made the error of dialing the person next to that contact. Usually, such misdials end up in embarrassment and apologies for disturbing a stranger's peace. In the providence of God, however, he called a young lady who had attended the church a number of years before, and when he spoke with her he found that she was anxious to talk with him. She explained to Rev. Saunders that she had been trying to pick up the courage to call him about her own spiritual condition. That led to a meeting at the church when the young lady gave her heart to the Lord. Since then she has been attending the Sunday services and prayer meetings along with other family members.



## Ralph Colas

(1930-2015)

### A Christian Statesman

The American Council of Christian Churches (ACCC), a fellowship of Fundamentalist churches and denominations to which the FPCNA has belonged since 1993, announced the death on October 22 of its longtime executive secretary, Dr. Ralph Colas. He was 85 and succumbed after battling various forms of cancer for more than ten years. His wife of sixty years, Alice, and much of his family were with him at his home in Allentown, Pennsylvania, at the time of his death. Just two days earlier, the executive committee of the ACCC honored Dr. Colas with the title of executive secretary emeritus at the same time that it appointed Rev. Dan Greenfield as his successor. Dr. Colas, a loyal friend to all who were prepared to stand for the Lord Jesus Christ and the fundamental doctrines of the faith and against apostasy and compromise with it, was a regular visitor to the pulpits of Free Presbyterian churches.

Dr. Colas began his involvement with the ACCC in 1963 as a young Baptist pastor. The son of a longtime pastor, Ralph Colas labored in pastoral ministry for 37 years that took him to a variety of places from Meadville, Pennsylvania, to Alaska. Upon his retirement from pastoral ministry in 1991, Dr. Colas accepted the appointment by the executive committee of the ACCC to be the council's executive secretary on a one-year basis. He continued for nearly twenty-four years until his declining health ended his service. He traveled widely as a reporter to cover divergent religious meetings from World Council of Churches general assemblies to the Parliament of World Religions to conventions of the National Association of Evangelicals. A gifted writer, he published reports of his observations in such places to warn the Bible-believing public against the subtle temptations to dilute or abandon the cause of biblical truth.

Known for his unyielding zeal for the cause of the truth and his keen insights into the religious trends of the age, Dr. Colas also possessed a pastor's heart not only for the people represented by the council but for the pastors themselves who form the vast majority of the executive committee. As a veteran of many situations in which he had to take difficult positions against mentors and friends, Dr. Colas never wavered in his kindness and his warm friendship for the people of God. In the face of illness and pain he showed patient submission to His Lord whom he loved in life and in death.

At the funeral service on the morning of October 26, Dr. John McKnight, ACCC president, paid eloquent tribute to the selfless service of Dr. Colas and commended Mrs. Colas for her support of her husband's labors. The FPCNA gives thanks for the life and ministry of Dr. Ralph Colas and appreciates his example of standing in the gap for the truth of the Scriptures.



# IS YOUR HOUSE WATERPROOF?

by Cosette Landon



Some of you have attended, or know of, Faith Free Presbyterian Church, in Greenville, South Carolina. What you may not know about the church building is that it rests on a large rock of solid granite. During construction the builders had to use dynamite to blast the surface because it was too hard for even a heavy drill to go through it. One member of the church remembers working on his hands and knees to try to chip away thin layers of the rock so that concrete could be poured to make a level sidewalk. It was hard work with no short cuts. But one thing is certain—the church building has a solid foundation! It won't be sinking in mud come the next hard rain.

In Matthew 7:24–27 the Lord Jesus uses the picture of two houses to teach a very important lesson about wise living.

He compares a person who pays attention to and obeys God's commands (a wise person) to someone who builds his house upon a rock. No matter what comes into the life of the wise builder, he is able to keep a clear head and a steady heart because he has a firm trust in the Word of God. He has trusted the Lord's promises to save his soul. He knows what the Bible says and can recall it to mind when he faces temptation and hard situations. Because decisions based on the Bible will have God's blessing he knows he will be led in safe paths.

But there is another kind of builder Jesus mentions in this passage. The Lord describes a careless builder as one who builds his house on

sand. He is the very opposite of the wise builder. The Lord calls him "a foolish man" in verse 26. Imagine such a house. Think of a strong wind or a wave of the sea coming at it. Surely it would not be long before it would be completely swept away. Sand shifts easily in the slightest breeze. If you have ever been to the beach and seen it washed back and forth constantly by the water, you will understand perfectly. The man who puts no value on God's Word is a man setting himself up for a fall.

Job 5:7 says that "man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward." It is a sure thing that troubles will come at some time to all of us. The question is, first, do you know the

Lord Jesus as your Saviour? Then, are you well acquainted enough with God and His ways to have the faith to see you through? Have you listened when His Word is being taught, so you will be able to stand strong in the comforts of God's promises and assurance of His love? Or are you neglecting God's Word and crowding out His voice with thoughts of play and pleasures? Perhaps you are putting off turning from sin and coming to Christ in saving faith. Don't build your life on sand, day after day putting your time and energy into a house that will not stand. Consider this warning from the Lord Jesus Himself, and ask Him to make you a wise and careful builder to the glory of God. ☒

## A **WORD** WORTH KNOWING

### Foundation

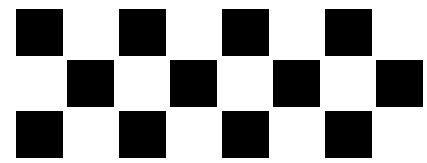
The base of a building that supports it



We apologize that because of a misprint in the Fall 2015 *Current*, the crossword puzzle was impossible to work. We hope you will enjoy working the winter puzzle.

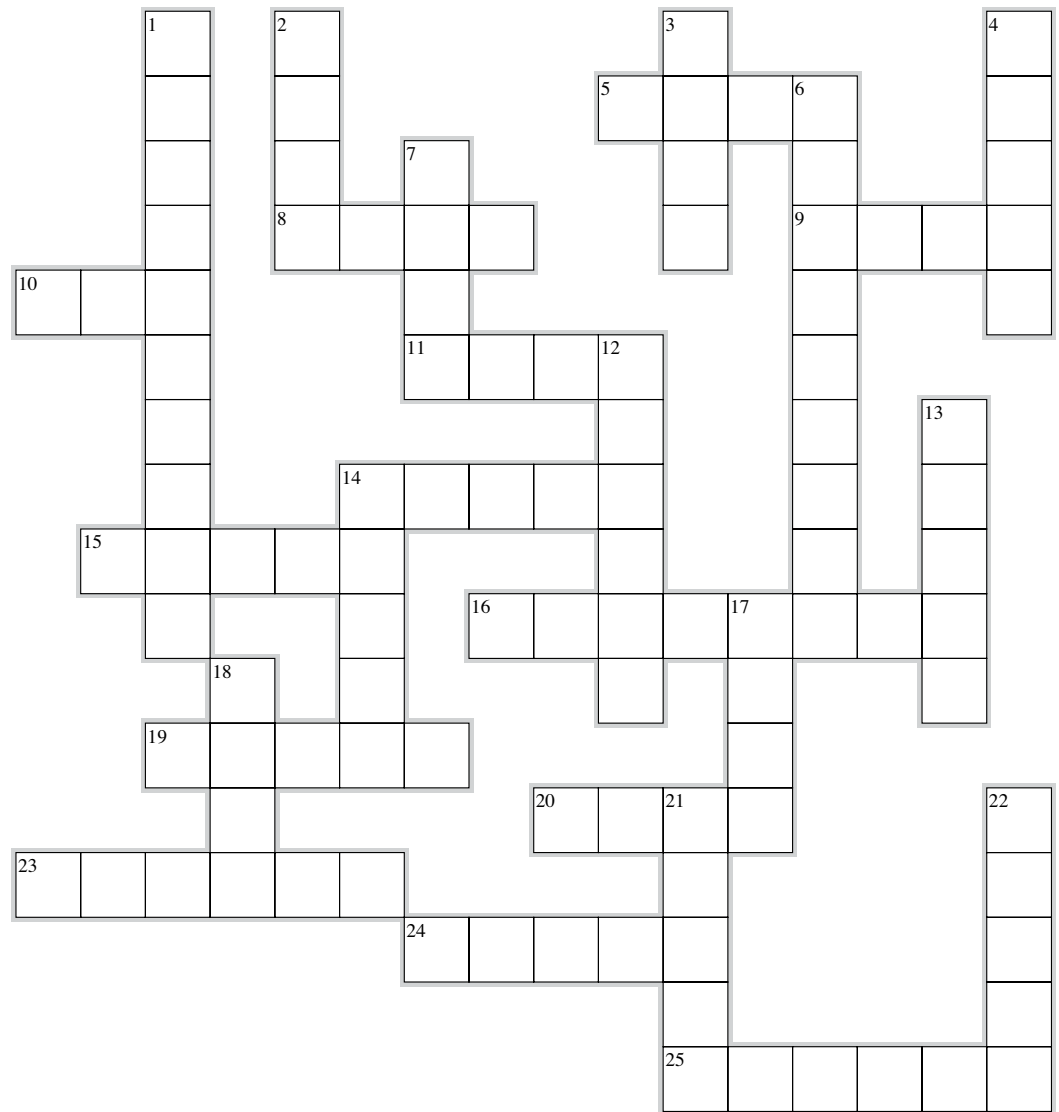


# Kid's CROSSWORD Puzzle



## Across

5. "Like a man which built an house, and digged \_\_\_\_." (Luke 6:48)
8. "He shall \_\_\_\_ upon his house." (Job 8:15)
9. "There shall not be left one stone \_\_\_\_ another." (Luke 21:6)
10. "Thy word have I \_\_\_\_ in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." (Psalm 119:11)
11. "But the word of the LORD was ... \_\_\_\_ upon line." (Isaiah 28:13)
14. "And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot \_\_\_\_." (Mark 3:25)
15. "He reared up the \_\_\_\_ round about the tabernacle." (Exodus 40:33)
16. "He said, The LORD is my rock, and my \_\_\_\_." (2 Samuel 22:2)
19. "Which of you, intending to build a \_\_\_\_, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost." (Luke 14:28)
20. "Strengthen ye the \_\_\_\_ hands." (Isaiah 35:3)
23. "Jesus Christ himself being the chief \_\_\_\_ stone." (Ephesians 2:20)
24. "I am returned to Jerusalem ...: my house shall be \_\_\_\_." (Zechariah 1:16)
25. "Thou shalt have none to \_\_\_\_ them." (Deuteronomy 28:31)
4. "The \_\_\_\_ are broken down." (Joel 1:17)
6. "The Lord stood upon a wall made by a \_\_\_\_." (Amos 7:7)
7. "Let us build up the \_\_\_\_ of Jerusalem." (Nehemiah 2:17)
12. "We count them happy which \_\_\_\_." (James 5:11)
13. "In three days I will \_\_\_\_ it up." (John 2:19)
14. "The \_\_\_\_ which the builders refused." (Psalm 118:22)
17. "Upon this \_\_\_\_ I will build my church." (Matthew 16:18)
18. "And he said, This will I do: I will pull \_\_\_\_ my barns." (Luke 12:18)
21. "Make me an \_\_\_\_ of stone." (Exodus 20:25)
22. "He ... finished all the \_\_\_\_." (1 Kings 6:22)



## Down

1. "For other \_\_\_\_ can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." (1 Corinthians 3:11)
2. "And great was the \_\_\_\_ of it." (Matthew 7:27)
3. "He that hath ears to \_\_\_\_, let him hear." (Matthew 11:15)

**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@bjv.edu](mailto:rcarper@bjv.edu) by March 31, 2015. 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.



# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**FEBRUARY 6**

Farewell banquet by Malvern FPC for Dr. & Mrs. Allison

**FEBRUARY 26**

30th anniversary celebration of the Phoenix church

**MARCH 27**

Easter Sunday

**APRIL 8-9**

Toronto FPC Men's Fellowship Weekend with speaker Rev. Colin Mercer

**MAY 9-13**

Presbytery Week of Prayer hosted by Faith FPC, Greenville, South Carolina

**JUNE 18-25**

Presbytery Youth Outreach held at Faith FPC, Greenville, South Carolina

**JULY 16-23**

Free Presbyterian Youth Camp at Rock Mountain Bible Camp, Pennsylvania



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WMUU.com Sunday 10:00 p.m.

Mon., Wed., Fri. 6:30 a.m. 7:45 p.m.

#### GRENADA, WEST INDIES

Harbour Light 94.5 FM & Internet

Monday-Friday 3:30 a.m. (AST)

Harbour Light 1400 AM, 94.5 FM

Monday-Friday 10:30 a.m. (AST)

#### VCY AMERICA

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#### CHINA

#### WORLD HARVEST RADIO

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#### FROM GRACE FPC

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WDER 1320 AM Saturday 11:30 a.m.

#### FROM FPC OF MALVERN (near Philadelphia)

**Malvern, Pennsylvania**

WFIL 560 AM Sunday 1:00 p.m.

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**Southern Alberta**

CHRB 1140 AM Sunday 10 a.m. & Saturday 5:30 p.m.

#### CLOVERDALE FPC

**Greater Vancouver**

KARI 550 AM Sunday 10 a.m.

Mon.-Fri. 5 a.m. & 5 p.m.

#### MANITOBA

CFRY 920 AM Sunday 8:00 a.m.

#### SASKATCHEWAN

CKSW 570 AM Sunday 9:30 a.m.

#### FORT ST. JOHN, BC

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**Fredricton, New Brunswick**

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**Prince George, British Columbia**

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