



CURRENT

QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF NORTH AMERICA

VOL. 9/No. 1 WINTER 2020

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MEXICO

IT'S TIME FOR
MARRIAGE

BIBLE BIRDS

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ABEL**

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Subscriptions

Current is published quarterly by the Free Presbyterian Church of North America (www.fpccurrent.com). The annual subscription price is \$15.00 (US). To subscribe, please go to www.fpcna.org/subscriptions. You may also subscribe by writing to Rev. Derrick Bowman, 5865 Woodsway Drive, Pfafftown, NC 27040. Checks should be made payable to *Current*.

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The Free Presbyterian Church of North America is a conservative, Protestant, and Reformed denomination with churches in Canada, Mexico, 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 we are 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 3:8) 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.



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WELCOME TO THE NEW YEAR OF 2020!

by Rev. Ian Goligher

Whoever thought that we would be writing 2020 on our checks so soon? Every new year, we launch out into the future with a measure of fear and trepidation. To mortal men with limited vision of future events, crossing over the threshold of a new year can be scary. But here we are, and we rightly acknowledge the goodness of God, for He has been our helper and has kept us by His grace. Our gracious God not only saves His people, He also keeps them.

There are good reasons to be encouraged as a denomination this year. As you will learn from reports and pictures in our magazine, some of our churches have recently been blessed with new office bearers. Churches also report additions to their Sunday School classes with new families attending. Financial constraints have been overcome and in many ways the reach of the FPCNA has been extended into new areas of North America by local church ministry and by radio. Take a look at the radio log on page 17 to note the additional cities and communities where people can now hear the weekly, and in some cases daily, preaching of the gospel through our *Let the Bible Speak* radio programs. The increase of stations carrying *Let the Bible Speak* programs on VCY America is no small thing that the Lord has done for us. Mr. Charles Koelsch, who edits and uploads programs for VCY radio, reports that he is finding it difficult to keep up with requests from across the country for radio offers. This is both a cause for praise and for much prayer that the Lord may use His word to awaken people to their need of Christ and bring forth abiding fruit in their lives — all for His glory. This is a time of opportunity when our nations are in greater need of the gospel message than ever before. Immigrants from around the world, who know little or nothing of the gospel of grace in Christ, are entering our countries. A generation is growing up around us that is Bible illiterate. The immoral social agenda of the ungodly must be countered, and there is no surer way to do that than to hold them up to the light of God's Word. After years of prayer for our seminary, God

has been pleased to hear us and has sent a few young men for training for future service in our denomination. We also rejoice in the amazing improvement in Dr. Allison's health and his ability to return to his work as president of Geneva Reformed Seminary. The gap in lecturers has been filled through able men from among our own ranks who have come alongside to teach. Through the installation of a digital classroom, students may interact in a virtual classroom from any part of the continent, or from anywhere in the world. Online courses are proving to be helpful to a number of students and pastors who seek to upgrade their education and equip themselves for gospel ministry. The downside of this growth in certain areas is that our ministers are being taxed with duties that go beyond their pastoral work in their own congregations. One encouragement on that front is the prospect of seeing our vacant pulpits filled in the near future. This may be a statement of faith, but it is our earnest goal and a burden we take to the Lord in confidence knowing He has purposes of good toward His people. Thirty-eight years ago, when I first visited Canada and first ministered in Calgary FPC over a long weekend, a dear lady opened her Bible after their mid-week prayer meeting to show me the words of Jeremiah 3:15, which said, "And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding." Showing me that verse of Scripture was a simple act of faith in God's Word, but it was also a seed planted in my heart that led me to these 36 years of service in Canada. We know that, as the great Shepherd of His sheep, the Lord can and will provide pastors to care for His people. In the year to come, we look forward to see how He will provide ministers for our churches and missionaries for our mission fields.

A new editor for *Current*

I am pleased to announce that we have a new editor for our next issue of *Current*. The

Publications Committee has appointed Dr. Stephen Pollock, our minister in Malvern, PA, as the new editor. After overseeing the publication of twenty-two issues, I am delighted to see Dr. Pollock become editor. Through his past work on *Vision*, the magazine of the Ulster Presbytery, he is well qualified for the job. But please pray for our new editor as it is a time-consuming task filled with many demands and decisions that require wisdom and patience. It has been a humbling experience for me and one that has caused me to cast myself upon the Lord for His help. Our burden is to see the magazine function to unify our congregations and guide both boys and girls and adults into a faithful walk with the Lord. I wish to thank all who have contributed articles and assisted me in so many ways in this work, and I sincerely thank all who expressed their appreciation for the content of the magazine. This announcement is another reason to look forward to 2020! ■



Latest News

Rev. Paul & Mrs. Arianna Backhurst with their children Joshua, Talitha, Calvin, Thomas, Boaz, Rosie & Jemima. We solicit the prayers of God's people for the Backhurst family as they say their farewells to family and friends in Northern Ireland, England and Holland, and set out to make a new home in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. A full report will follow in our next issue.



A BIBLE BASIS FOR THE ANTI-ABORTION POSITION

In Northern Ireland, where the Free Presbyterian Church originated, the British Government recently forced its citizens to surrender their anti-abortion position. Here in Canada, leading up to the recent Canadian federal election, abortion was bandied about as a political football. Even political leaders who are opposed to abortion did not have the courage to stand up for the rights of the unborn. It is an opportune time to show the Bible basis for the anti-abortion position.

My early revulsion for abortion began when I was a boy with a collection of bird's eggs. In order to prepare a shell for my collection, I had to carefully remove the contents from the wild bird's egg; sometimes, I would find a half-hatched egg. Revulsion led me to discontinue this hobby, because I knew I was tampering with God's creation and His gift of life.

That early revulsion is multiplied many times when I consider the barbaric acts of doctors, nurses, and others who make up the "abortion industry." Since the 1969 Canadian abortion amendment, millions of Canadian babies have been deliberately destroyed – about one every eight minutes of every day for the past fifty years — over 100,000 per year. And the Canadian government wants to increase immigration because the present population is not large enough to sustain Canada's planned development. What hypocrisy!

A SERIOUS MORAL ISSUE

"Abortion on demand" is one of the most serious moral issues facing Christians

today and it has developed into a bitter controversy. Hospitals, which should be for the alleviation of suffering, and the preservation of life, are now involved in killing unborn children. The battle lines are drawn as "pro-life" and "pro choice" groups debate the pros and cons in a heated and often vitriolic fashion. "Pro choice," of course, is the buzz word for those who favor abortion-on-demand. Its use is designed to draw attention away from the horrible realities of the abortion procedure, and focus on the woman's so-called right to choose what to do with "her" own body. The child's body isn't taken into consideration. "Pro death" would be a more accurate title. Dress it up as you will, it still means death to the unborn child.

Some argue that the Bible has nothing to say about abortion. Of course, the Bible does not use those specific terms, any more than it says, "Thou shalt not smoke." But Biblical morality is revealed in a set of clear commands like, "Thou shalt not kill." In the absence of a specific command, there are distinct moral principles laid down from which to draw our moral direction. The Bible places great emphasis on the sanctity of human life, born and unborn, and forms a strong Scriptural basis for the anti-abortion position.

THE NEED FOR ABORTION?

When we speak of abortion, we are referring to the deliberate termination of the life of the unborn child and the first question we face is – why is there a need for abortions? Some argue that in a dangerous pregnancy the mother's life must be saved first and we

would agree. But cases of life-threatening pregnancies are rare today, so the present "pro choice" campaign is obviously not for that reason.

The troubling fact is that most abortions today are merely done as a method of birth control. Instead of people exercising restraint within the context of the marriage bond, the present age is reaping a fearful harvest of sin. Those who shout loudly for abortion are seldom heard calling for sexual restraint, and for obedience to the seventh commandment, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." The Bible describes adultery as "a heinous crime" (Job 31:11) and "villainy" (Jeremiah 29:23). Adultery is a secret sin committed with mature deliberation. Jeremiah describes the adulterer in terms applicable to a brute beast. "Everyone neighed after his neighbour's wife" (Jeremiah 5:8). But adultery is worse than brutish. Even the animal kingdom, devoid of human reasoning ability, follows its God-given instincts and observes some decorum and chastity. Adulterous humans have debased sexual relationships to a degree unseen in the animal world. The sad result of such promiscuity is that abortion is used to flush away the evidence of the scarlet sin, and the unborn child is sacrificed on the altar of secret transgression. Remove adultery and fornication, and abortion would be in low demand.

A MOST IMPORTANT CASE

Never forget the case of one specific young woman. She suddenly found that she was pregnant. Her fiancé was not responsible, and was confused and embarrassed. He

thought of hiding her from public view to escape the shame. While Mary's case is unique, by today's standard she was a prime candidate for abortion. But she did not go that route. She had her baby, and how happy Christians are that Mary brought forth **Jesus Christ** – the Savior of the world.

WHEN IS A CHILD A PERSON?

The whole abortion argument hinges on this question: Is the unborn baby just a piece of tissue — a blob of protoplasm? Or is it a living, developing human being? If the latter is true, he or she must be granted the same dignity our nations give to every other human being.

The Bible teaches great respect for the unborn child. The Psalmist David gives a beautiful description of the child in the womb. "My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfected; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them" (Psalm 139:15, 16).

The second word "substance" is the Hebrew *golem* meaning *embryo*. The picture here is of the great Artist, the Creator, laboring in secret before publicly unveiling His masterpiece created in His own image. The words "curiously wrought" have the meaning of a garment being embroidered with great skill. The great Embroiderer is weaving such a wonderful tapestry of veins, bones, muscles, arteries, and membranes, etc., that the Psalmist cries out, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works" (Psalm 139:14).

What occurs in the womb is God's amazing handiwork. Will you, O man, break in with your instruments of death and trash God's handiwork? It is no coincidence that after the beautiful picture of the unborn the Psalmist is inspired to exclaim: "Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God: Depart from me therefore, ye bloody men (Psalm 139:17). David also speaks of the plan of God in the unborn. His or her "members" were all written in the book of God "when as yet there was none of them." The picture

is of the great Architect planning the members of the body when none existed. The Bible thus makes foolishness out of the statement made by the infamous Canadian abortionist Henry Morgentaler, that to refer to the fertilized ovum as a "baby" is "contrary to all our knowledge; as if someone affirmed that....a blueprint was already a house." What nonsense. Human architects can plan yet fail to bring their designs to fruition, but we are not dealing with a human planner, but with the Divine Architect. What God plans, He fulfils.

Throughout his many roles in life, David needed a hand tender enough for the lambs of the flock, and skilled enough to play his musical instrument to soothe the anguished Saul. That hand had to be accurate enough to sling the stone, and strong enough to handle Goliath's huge sword. God, in His divine foreknowledge and predestination, brought David forth – planned, produced, and

perfected him according to His will. Life is a gift from God and our bodies are His handiwork.

GOD OVERSEES THE UNBORN IN THE WOMB

This is clear from David's statements, "My substance was not hid from thee" and "Thine eyes did see my substance [embryo]." God saw Jacob and Esau before their birth: "Two nations are in thy womb....and the elder shall serve the younger" (Genesis 25:23). God saw Samson in the womb "The child shall be a Nazarite to God from the womb" (Judges 13:7).

Also, the case of Jeremiah is quite remarkable. Before conception God knew him. Before his birth, he was set apart for the work of God and ordained to be a prophet. "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb, I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto all nations" (Jeremiah 1:5). God regarded Jeremiah, Jacob, Esau and Samson as persons before their respective births.

Another remarkable case is that of John the Baptist. He was named John before

conception, and when he was in his mother's womb, he was filled with the Holy Ghost. God regarded John as a person even then (Luke 1:15, 35, 36, 41, 44).

Paul was converted to Christ as an adult on the road to Damascus, but was called to the grace of God from his mother's womb (Galatians 1:15). All of these scriptural instances, and many more, are evidences of the Lord overseeing the unborn. In the womb, God is painting a great masterpiece in His own image. From eternity, His plan was prepared and from the first stroke of the great Artist's brush (at conception) human life is sacred. It is a fearful crime to destroy God's handiwork either before or after birth. It is a transgression of the sixth commandment, "Thou shalt not kill." It is a sin that brings the fierce judgment of the Almighty.

A GOD OF MERCY

Perhaps some who read this article may have had an abortion, or aided and abetted others to procure an abortion— maybe even performed one. You now realize, on the strength of Scripture, that you have been guilty of murder and have broken God's sixth commandment. Your sin is a gross one, deserving the judgment and wrath of God. But God is also a God of mercy. Paul was a murderer in the days before his conversion. He persecuted the saints of God even to the death; however, Paul came face to face with Christ and repented of his sin. His sins were pardoned and the persecutor became the preacher.

Why not confess your sin to God now? Ask the Lord to forgive you and save your soul. Has He not said: "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Romans 10:17)? Then add your voice to those who are calling for that most basic human right – **the right to life.** ❧



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BIBLE BIRDS



There are more different birds mentioned in the Bible than any other group of animals. Ancient Israelites were familiar with Palestinian birds and God frequently used them to teach spiritual truths.

Swallows, a common Palestinian bird, are known for building nests in protected places, like under the eaves of buildings. It appears that some found the Solomonic Temple suitable. A son of Korah, a priest who served in the temple one week every six months, noted a swallow had a “nest for herself, where she may lay her young” near the Temple’s altar. He envies the bird’s safe permanence in God’s house, where he can be only two weeks a year (Psalm 84: 1-4). Oh, that we would be so eager to remain in His presence.

Most birds can only carry light burdens as they fly. Many birds of prey, however, have large, broad wings permitting them to carry items that weigh as much as they do. Such lift requires much wing flapping. Eagles are strong fliers, but much of their flying does not require flapping. Many birds use large wings to glide on naturally occurring thermals (columns of rising warm air). Isaiah speaks of the strong becoming weary and fainting and then says that those who “wait upon the Lord. . . they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint” (Isaiah 40:31). The eagle conserves and renews its energy by gliding in thermals. A Christian’s energy is naturally renewed by waiting upon the Lord. As He supplies thermals for eagles, He will supply our needs to do what He has called us to do.

Israel is on a major flyway. In the autumn, huge flocks of birds from Europe and Asia migrate through Palestine to Africa for the winter. In the spring they migrate north. Birds migrate to have a constant food supply

and ideal places to raise their chicks. Some estimate that over 100 different species migrate this flyway.

In Bible times people did not know the reasons for bird migration but they did know that at a specific time a particular kind of bird would invade their land and a few days later it would be gone. God asks Job, “Doth the hawk fly by thy wisdom, and stretch her wings toward the South?” Job had to admit that he had nothing to do with making it happen. Bird migration was, and still is, a God-ordained wonder.

“Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle [turtledove] and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the Lord (Jeremiah 8:7).” The prophet uses different kinds of migrating birds to broaden his illustration. Not understanding why or what they are doing, these birds obey their God-given instinct to migrate at the right time and thereby survive. The Israelites knew and understood what God wanted them to do, but refused to do it. Is it any wonder they did not prosper?

Chickens are native to the jungles of India and do not migrate. They were domesticated for their eggs and meat. Romans spread this easily-grown bird through their empire. When introduced to Israel, the Jews prohibited chickens in Jerusalem since their droppings could contaminate sacrificial flesh, but probably more as a snub to their Roman captors. That did not stop the bird from becoming a significant part of Jewish farms and dinner tables. The bird and its ways became so familiar that Christ could use chickens in a touching illustration.

Many birds are altricial: they lay small eggs in high nests, the chicks hatch

naked and blind and must receive parental care before they leave the nest. Chickens are precocial: they nest on the ground and lay large eggs. More yolk permits longer incubation. Chicks hatch with down feathers, open eyes, and can walk. The chicks soon leave the nest and follow the hen in search of food.

When danger approaches the hen clucks a certain way and her chicks run toward her. Depending on the threat, she either leads them to safety or permits them to hide under her. Barnyard fires have killed the hen, but when the flames have passed, unharmed chicks emerged from under charred wings.

These instinctual behaviors are what Jesus refers to as He laments Jewish waywardness. “O Jerusalem, . . . how often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not” (Luke 13:34). The captivities of Israel and the Roman domination they were experiencing could have been avoided if they had listened to the prophets and done what Jehovah had begged them to do. Are we any less wayward?

Permit me to paraphrase Hebrews 11. “And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Elijah’s raven, Noah’s dove, the peacock, the sacrifice of pigeons, the sparrow, wren, quail and other birds God uses to accomplish His purposes and communicate with us.” Perhaps another time. ❧



William Pinkston served as a science teacher at Bob Jones Academy for 50 years. He is a charter member of Faith Free Presbyterian Church of Greenville SC.

Q & A WITH THE PRESBYTERY TREASURER

As treasurer of the presbytery, Mr. George Robinson is the man responsible for the finances of our denomination. He is the chairman of the Finance Committee while Mr. Tim Farr manages the funds in the United States. The presbytery finances are carefully managed by the Finance Committee to fund each cause undertaken by the presbytery and to make each contribution count. I put the following questions to Mr. Robinson to help readers understand more of the checks and balances placed upon the distribution of finances of the FPCNA. Editor.

Who are the other members of the Finance Committee?

Currently we have four other members: Mr. Tim Farr, Rev. Ian Goligher, Rev. Anthony D'Addurno, and Rev. John Wagner.

What are the responsibilities of the Finance Committee?

The Finance Committee exists to coordinate and oversee the joint financial projects of the Free Presbyterian churches in the U.S. and Canada. The Finance Committee also prepares an annual budget for approval by the presbytery at the October presbytery meetings.

What are the main projects undertaken by the presbytery that require funding?

Funding is primarily required for the Seminary (GRS), foreign missions, and assistance to new and existing works.

How are monies raised to support presbytery projects?

Each constituted church is required by the presbytery to remit a ten percent levy based on its annual income. This source of funding provides a consistent income year after year.

Are funds raised above the ten percent levy?

Apart from the levy system, church members can and do designate to denominational missions and special projects. In particular, a substantial part of the Foreign Missions

Committee's budgeted income is met through the tithing of individuals.

How does the Finance Committee set about preparing a budget for the presbytery?

Currently, we have finished the 2020 budget which required churches to submit their latest financial statements with their levy amounts based on the previous financial year. We projected what funds will be on hand by the end of the current year (2019) and then worked from available and projected funds to meet the various budget requests from the Seminary Committee, Foreign Missions Committee, etc.

Does the presbytery allow the Finance Committee to go into debt in its annual budget?

The short answer is no. As stewards of the tithes and offerings of God's people, we realize that there are times of fatness and leanness, and we must respond accordingly. We are reminded often that despite our efforts at supplying the needs via various methods and schemes, ultimately, we have to exercise faith that the Lord will provide according to His will.

Are funds available for capital projects such as building funds?

Since the commencement of our presbytery in North America when we commenced the levy scheme, we have built up a capital fund from

which churches can borrow to undertake new capital projects or to upgrade existing facilities.

Who has the final say in the distribution of presbytery funds?

The budget and whatever recommendations the FC presents at its meeting in October for the following year are presented to the presbytery for its final adoption.

Is the budget for 2020 sufficient to meet the needs of the seminary, missions, churches and outreach endeavors?

If all ministries work within their allocated funding and there are no unexpected emergencies, there should be sufficient funds. We must work within our means and we must wait on the Lord for His blessing upon our stewardship of all that He is pleased to provide. I ask that all readers pray for God's blessing to meet the financial requirements of our denomination and I take this opportunity to thank everyone who has contributed, either through their local church, or by designated gifts to presbytery appeals for special assistance.



Mr. George Robinson serves as a ruling elder in Toronto FPC and as financial administrator of the Whitefield Christian Schools.

IT'S TIME FOR MARRIAGE...

Next issue I want to start a series of articles for young people on the subject of marriage. A bad and unhappy marriage brings much misery and the prudent see the evil ahead and hide themselves (Proverbs 27:12). It is important to think through the issues and try to prepare for marriage, seeking to avoid the bad and encourage the good.

As you grow into and through your teenage years, it is natural and good to begin to think about marriage. One of the features of "teen-age years" is an impatient spirit, wanting the independence of adulthood. That means being able to drive a car, hold a job, earn some money, and enjoy some freedom from the restraint of parents. These desires are a reflection of the way God has made us in order that we would eventually lead independent lives. There is, however, one area of life, in which young people seem to be content to remain as children: the area of biblical, doctrinal maturity. Please don't be offended if you're an exception, but an honest assessment would lead to the conclusion that many young Christians are content with a very basic knowledge of the things of God. I believe it is the will of God for young people to consider this before they begin to think about marriage. Therefore, I thought it would be beneficial to consider this topic before we get to the subject of marriage.

First, it is God's will for His children to grow up into maturity. Paul tells us that Christians must grow so that they are no longer children (Ephesians 4:13-14)! Elsewhere, there is a rebuke for believers: "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskillful

in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe" (Hebrews 5:12-13). Jude puts it very plainly: "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost..." (Jude 20).

A deepening knowledge of biblical truth is not simply an intellectual pursuit. Such knowledge must warm our hearts. It is dangerous to seek Bible knowledge without wanting to grow in our relationship with God. But our heart fellowship with God only deepens as our knowledge of God deepens. Doctrinal maturity gives personal stability (from error and from unbelief in times of personal crisis); it fosters unity, and ensures accurate evangelism. It is God's will and it is good for us to pursue maturity in our Bible knowledge.

We should pursue this growth:

1. *Prayerfully*

Jude said: "...building up yourselves, praying in the Holy Ghost." We ought to make the Psalmist's prayer our own: "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law" (Psalm 119:18).

2. *Patiently*

Jude uses the term "building" indicating progress. We grow in doctrinal maturity brick by brick, little by little. We will not arrive at Calvin's knowledge overnight. Be patient!

3. *Purposefully*

Like all Christian growth, it doesn't happen without effort. We all need to take active steps to increase our command of God's Word. There are some very practical ways to do this:

- a.** Sit under doctrinal preaching (Ephesians 4:11f).

Dr. Paisley used to say, "Sermonettes make Christianettes"! Seek out

expository, doctrinal preaching that makes you think.

- b.** Study the Bible by asking simple, doctrinal questions.

What does the passage teach about God, Christ, salvation, sin, etc?

- c.** Stand upon the shoulders of others.

We're not the first generation to study the Bible. Ask your parents or pastor to recommend books that will help you grow. When you get those books, read them!

- d.** Share with others what God is teaching you.

We remember more of what we learn when we share it with others. Seek out friends who share your desire to grow in your knowledge of God.

4. *Positively* (hopefully)

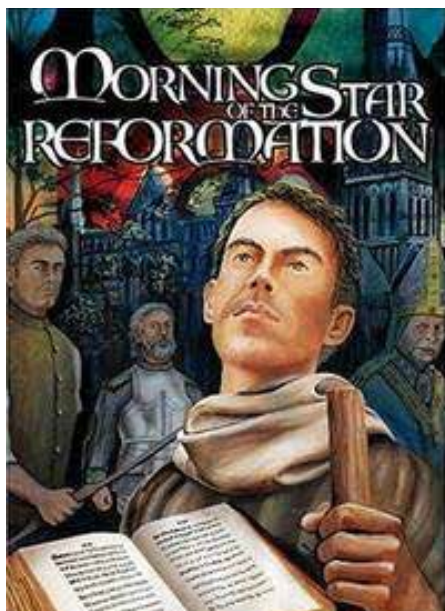
Don't despair! Don't get discouraged! As it is God's will for you to "grow up", we can rely on His grace to enable it to happen.

Next issue: marriage! But before that issue is printed, take steps to grow in your knowledge of the truth of God's Word. It is good to want to grow up. Just make sure you're not a "grown-up" child when it comes to the things of God. ☛



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CHILDREN'S BOOK REVIEW



Morningstar of the Reformation
by Andy Thomson

A knock came to the door of John Wyclif's home, and an elderly servant went to open it. Before him, he saw three Franciscan friars, "We have come to see Dr. Wyclif."

The servant replied, "O sirs, he is bedfast, unwell, and unable to receive visitors today." "We are here on official business and see him we shall!" So brushing past the servant, they entered the sickroom.

"Yes?" responded John Wyclif weakly. "You have death on your lips, Wyclif, so be touched by your faults. Repent and retract all that you have said to our injury." The friars smiled as they waited for Wyclif's humble repentance. Wyclif had often taught, "The Scriptures are the only law of the church; the church is not centered in the pope and the clergy, but in Christ the Head and in the whole body of his elect."

Wyclif whispered to his servant, "Help me to sit up." Feeble, pale, and barely able, he faced the friars. Looking into their eyes with a strength not his own, he declared, "I shall not die, but live. I will again declare the evil deeds of the friars!" Shocked and angry, the friars retreated in confusion, but John Wyclif lived on a few more years to further lay the foundation for freedom and the Protestant Reformation in England.

John Wyclif was born in 1320 in a small Yorkshire village in the north of England.

His well-to-do parents raised young John to receive thorough instruction in the Latin language. At age 16, he entered Oxford University to study for the Roman Catholic priesthood. At Oxford, a statement by his famous instructor Bradwardine caused him to begin a serious study of the Scriptures. His teacher had said, "Worship of mere external forms and ceremonies can never take the place of the true worship of the heart."

At that time, a horrible plague from continental Europe ravaged England, killing half of the country's population. John helped the sick and dying and then buried the dead. He was overwhelmed with the horror and reality of death. In the midst of that awful year of death, Wyclif came to full peace with God by trusting in the completed atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thereafter, when his fellow students expressed their trust in the church and in its traditions, Wyclif declared that their misplaced trust would be their everlasting ruin. Confidently, he asserted that he intended to fill England with the Word of God in the English tongue so that everyone would know the truth of salvation by Christ alone and the authority of the Holy Bible alone. His fellow students told him that the Dominicans would burn him and confine his soul to the everlasting flames of hell for giving the Scriptures to the common Englishman.

Wyclif was awarded his doctorate in 1372 and continued teaching classes and preaching his popular chapel messages at the university. He was ordained a priest and appointed as the parish priest of the village of Lutterworth in 1374. Wyclif's ministry was not limited to a small parish, however, for his vast understanding of the Holy Scriptures opened many doors of service for him. He knew that the Word of God was to be applied to every area of human existence.

Because his preaching at Oxford was so well known, he was called upon to address the English Parliament after they had received a demand from the pope. The pope was ordering England to pay enormous taxes. Wyclif declared that the pope of Rome had no sovereign authority over either the king of England or over Parliament. The English people and the

nobility agreed with Wyclif and they refused to pay. The English responded to the pope's demands by expelling the foreigners who held high offices in the English church and replaced them with Englishmen.

John Wyclif had many enemies who wanted his life, such as the bishop of London and the pope who condemned Wyclif and his doctrine. They would have easily put Wyclif to death had it not been for the common people and some of the members of the English nobility protecting him. Through the study of the Bible, Wyclif came to very enlightened views of Truth:

1. Sola Scriptura—the Bible alone is the source of Christian doctrine and practice.
2. Transubstantiation is a myth taught nowhere in Scripture.
3. He rejected the worship of saints and relics.
4. He stood against the sale of indulgences.
5. He stood for the Truth of the gospel that Christ's great work of living, suffering, and dying an agonized and bloody death for lost sinners is salvation and He is to be received by faith alone.

The feeble old man who sat up in his sickbed and faced the Franciscan friars was small in stature, but great in influence. Wyclif was one of many whom God raised up in times of national distress to deliver England from her enemies.

This account was taken from Andy Thomson's *Morning Star of the Reformation*, an exciting book, especially written for young people. Thomson was helped in writing the book by Dr. Edward Panosian and Mrs. Judy Brown. He dedicated the book to the now-deceased Mrs. Marie Bayer of Faith Free Presbyterian Church. Although the book is out of print, many copies are available on Amazon for under \$10. ■



Rev. Myron Mooney
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GENESIS

GOD'S BOOK OF BEGINNINGS STUDY NOTES

SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER 4:

Life in a fallen world after Adam's sin was dramatically different from life in the perfect world where God had placed Adam and Eve, directly after their creation. After the fall of the world into sin, worship required blood sacrifices. Enmity arose between true and false worshippers of God, which manifested the depth of sin's corruption within the human heart. Abel's murder and Cain's punishment revealed a world already spiraling downward. Apostasy, man's departure from God, sprang into the open when Cain went out from the presence of the Lord. Suddenly, two lines of peoples were dwelling on the earth. Cain's descendants lived in rebellion to God, while Seth and his offspring determined to worship Jehovah and live for His glory. Those who worshiped God through blood sacrifices declared they were sinners before a holy God, while those who rejected worship through blood sacrifices presumed they may become as gods, as formerly suggested by Satan.

Key verse:

"And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering" Genesis 4:4.

This text reveals the necessity of a blood sacrifice for fallen sinners to worship God. God's acceptance of Abel's person and his worship was based on the shedding of blood to make atonement for sin. God's absolute requirement still stands today. God only accepts worship that is offered unto Him by faith in the sacrifice of Christ.

OBSERVATIONS

1. There is evidence that Adam and Eve had faith in the promised Redeemer, referred to as the

"seed" of the woman (Genesis 3:15).

Also, God had clothed their nakedness with animal skins (Genesis 3:21). While this clothing, which required the death of an animal on their behalf, was suggestive of their redemption, there is added evidence of their faith in the Lord as Savior in Eve's spirit of thanksgiving to the LORD [Jehovah] at the birth of Cain. She gave the Lord the honor for the birth of their son as God's gift and she took delight that it was a male child. These details show her trust in the Lord. The name of their second child, Abel, means "vanity", and drives home the point that Eve was impacted by the emptiness of this fallen world; her hope was in the promised Savior.

2. The enmity between Cain and Abel is a display of the enmity between the seed of the woman, the promised Christ, and the seed of Satan.

When God accepted Abel's blood sacrifice, but refused to accept Cain's offering, which came from the labor of his own hands, Cain was angry. The Lord's direct question to Cain, "Why art thou wroth", revealed the inner hatred of Cain's heart. He also rejected God's offer of acceptance for doing well. He spurned God's warning that rejection of the only way of blessing through blood atonement would lead to greater depths of sin. See God's statement, "If thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door" (Genesis 4:7). Cain's choices were limited to the way of worship by blood sacrifice, or his own works. He chose the way of works, which God had clearly demonstrated to be the way of rebellion. His vindictive attitude to God was further manifested in his refusal to obey God and to enjoy God's offer of continued good standing with Abel. The inner hatred in his heart was so strong that he could not bring

himself to obey God, nor to seek the good of his brother Abel. While Cain talked with Abel, his wicked heart plotted Abel's murder causing Cain to seek a time and place to kill him, making it premeditated murder.

Dr. Henry M. Morris pointed out:

"The seed of the Serpent was quickly striking at the Seed of the woman, corrupting her first son and slaying



her second, thus trying to prevent the fulfillment of the proto-evangelic promise right at the beginning of human history."

3. Cain's unrepentant heart made him a fugitive in the earth?

God's questions to Cain were heart-searching: "Where is Abel thy brother? What hast thou done?" (Genesis 4:9-10). Unrepentant Cain replied, "Am I my brother's keeper?" His response showed that he had no regard for his brother's welfare, nor his life. Abel's blood cried out unto God for vengeance. Cain was guilty before God, but he remained unrepentant and was headed for judgment, for he was "cursed from the earth" and the ground would no longer sustain him (Genesis 4:11-12). He then became a "fugitive and a vagabond in the earth" (Genesis

4:12). The commentary that followed this murderous act are the saddest words recorded of any man, "And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD and dwelt in the land of Nod." Nod means "wandering". Cain removed himself from God's care and rule. He sought to build a future without God. Throughout the Bible, Cain stands as the man who went apostate. We see the stinging description of apostates in the book of Jude, "They have gone in the way of Cain" (Jude 11).

4. The world grew more wicked in the days prior to the flood (Genesis 4:16-24).

The record shows that the first peoples of the world developed a high degree of proficiency in the arts and crafts. Many dwelt in cities, or lived in tents, some herded cattle, while others developed the art of music and musical instruments. But their lives were corrupt. Lamech became a polygamist, and in his poetry spoken to his wives he boasted of his violent ways: "Hear my voice; ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech: for I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt" (Genesis 4:23). We don't find much of the milk of human kindness in Lamech. And as he represents the character of the wicked Cainites, we learn that the world was already filled with brutality causing misery even in the dearest of all human relations; of a man and his wife. It is no surprise that a man who will break God's law of marriage to take more than one wife, will treat his wife harshly.

Even in those early generations of world history, God's judgment was being stored up against the immorality of the wicked. Lamech boasted to his wives of taking the life of a vulnerable young man and then falsely consoled himself that, "If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold" (Genesis 4:24). Lamech deceived himself into thinking that if Cain knew God's protection after his crime of slaying Abel, then he too would be safe from God's judgment for slaying a young man. But Lamech trusted in a refuge of lies not thinking that the longsuffering and goodness of God is intended to lead the wicked to repentance; not to encourage men to sin more and more.

The Bible is replete with warnings against this subtle deception. For example, the apostle Paul stated, "For this we know that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience" (Ephesians 5:5-6). These things are recorded in the word of God to warn us not to become complacent in sin. God's wrath against all sin is real and wilful sinners who abuse God's goodness for further occasion to sin are constantly under God's wrath. That fact was realized when God destroyed the wicked by a world-wide flood. The gospel calls us to repent of all sin to find true refuge from God's wrath in the blood atonement provided by Christ. For, "He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all..." (Romans 8:32). God has made provision for sinners to be saved through faith in His Son, but each hour a sinner refuses God's sovereign mercy, he or she is under God's wrath and in danger of eternal condemnation. Do not be guilty of playing the fool. Repent of your sin and go to Christ today, and you will be saved.

5. The birth of Seth commenced a new line of people of faith who worshiped the Lord (Genesis 4:25).

It is from the line of Seth that the knowledge of God was preserved until the time of the great flood. Seth's name means "appointed", or "substitute", and may have been so named with an eye to the promise of a Savior. Men of Seth's lineage learned to depend on the power of prayer for life and survival. Seth called his son Enosh, meaning "to call". It would appear that Seth and his people set themselves to pray earnestly to call on the Lord in prayer for His power and protection.

Application: How does this apply to me?

To live in a fallen world where sin abounds and Satan is active we must expect the promotion of many forms of evil. Evil comes from the heart of man, who is fallen and depraved in all his faculties. We must not expect men to make the right choices, even if given the right conditions and the right

opportunities in life. When sin is in the hearts of men and women and when they are left to themselves they will always choose evil. The doctrine of total depravity finds strong support from the earliest figures of human history. The fall of man was not a slow devolution, but a sudden plunge into spiritual warfare against God – a warfare within man's heart.

Things to do in light of this study:

1. To learn more on the doctrine of man's depravity, read the *Westminster Confession of Faith* chapter nine on "Man's Free Will". Note how it sets forth the difference in the state of man's will prior to the fall in Adam's state of innocence, and the time after the fall in man's state of sinfulness. It states that man "*hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good ... being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin, is not able, by his own strength to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto.*"

2. Count the seventh man from Adam in the line of Cain and you will come to Lamech – a leader in iniquity (4:19-24). Then count the seventh man from Adam in the line of Seth and you will come to Enoch, the man who walked with God, and was translated from the earth at age 365 (Genesis 5:23). ■

Further questions and points to study:

- Why was it important that a line of the promised seed survive through to the time of Noah's flood?
- What is significant about the development of different skills in music, metal production, and animal husbandry in such a brief period of time?
- What is the significance of the names of Seth and of Enos?



CHURCH NEWS FROM MEXICO

In August, our church received the FPCNA mission team members, who were able to accomplish a lot in a short time. Not only did we enjoy their fellowship personally, we know that several in our congregation developed lasting friendships with those on the team. They were also able to distribute about 5000 “A New Beginning” tracts, leaving us with another 5000 for future ministry. The team did a five-day evangelistic English class, which has given us a wider presence in the community.

The congregation has been encouraged in recent months with numerical and spiritual growth. We have been very pleased to see Alberto Cruz, the newly-elected deacon, develop in his role, as well as teaching the bi-weekly youth Bible study. Ruben Callejas, also a deacon, is a young man who is studying under Jason with hopes of one day becoming a pastor, Lord willing. We have about six people who are interested in being baptized, and look forward to publicly professing their faith before the congregation. Jason also continues to oversee Lalo Peña, Ramon Sosa, and Jair Aguilar and their respective churches on a regular basis.

The Lord has been leading us to purchase a property for the church. We have seriously considered several locations over the years, but each time the Lord closed the door. We are currently looking at a property that Derrick Bowman mentioned while they were doing the tract distribution. The Lord has burdened the hearts of the people of the church to give beyond their usual offerings, and to give their time doing fundraisers. Many who have so little materially-speaking are doing what they can to pitch in.

We have other large tasks ahead of us apart from raising funds, such as needing to form a non-profit organization. Bureaucracy of any kind in Mexico can be a headache. We do ask for prayer that the way would be made plain and straight, and that we would have wisdom to make decisions. In addition, we are asking for prayer that God’s blessing would accompany our efforts to acquire an adequate and permanent place to worship Him.

By God’s grace, we continue to move forward with both short-term and long-



term goals. Purchasing a property and being able to build on it is our most pressing need at the moment, and we need the Lord to continue to raise up men to serve as leaders in our church. We are continuing to focus on training our young people, and we are asking that the Lord will protect the next generation for His service. Long-term, we believe the Lord would use us to form an FPC denomination in Latin America. Therefore, we ask for prayers that the Lord would guide and direct, as well as raise up men to plant new churches.

Finally, please pray that we would not “grow weary in well doing” but that the Lord would send workers to come alongside us, to strengthen our hands, and to encourage us in the work. ☒



CONGRESS ECHOES AT MALVERN WEEK OF PRAYER

For the first time since 2009, the Free Presbyterian Church of Malvern, PA was the host for the Week of Prayer and regular meeting of the presbytery. Several of those who attended the meetings from October 7-11 could remember their experience as delegates to the 4th International Congress of Free Presbyterians that took place in the same church facility just over a year earlier. The intensive preparation that yielded so much blessing on that occasion left the church's session and congregation ready to display their hospitality again to those who attended the Week of Prayer.

Dr. Stephen Pollock, the minister of the Malvern church since early 2017, led the congregation in its preparations to welcome the ministers, elders, and students, along with a visiting Baptist pastor, to the meetings in the beautiful church building. Beginning Monday evening, the attendees enjoyed the kind hospitality of the church through a series of meals in the lower level of the church building.

As the host minister, Dr. Pollock selected the speakers for each of the prayer sessions. Rev. David Mook addressed those who arrived in time to attend the Monday evening prayer session. The subsequent prayer sessions occurred Tuesday through Friday mornings at which Rev. Ian Goligher, moderator of the presbytery, Dr. Larry Saunders, Rev. Reggie Kimbro, and Rev. Stephen Hamilton brought messages from the Scriptures. There was a wonderful atmosphere in prayer that led to the conclusion that it was a very encouraging Week of Prayer.

Highlighting the meeting of the presbytery that Rev. Goligher convened on Tuesday afternoon was the report of the Examination Committee on two applications that the presbytery received. They were from men who sought admission to the care of the presbytery for preparation for the Free Presbyterian ministry. The presbytery heard both men preach during the Wednesday afternoon portion of the presbytery meeting. The presbytery approved the application of Mr. Logan Elder, a student at Geneva Reformed Seminary, admitting him to the presbytery's care. The second applicant has present commitments that led the presbytery to defer acting on his application until the next meeting of the presbytery in May 2020.

The Seminary Committee reported the encouraging news that Dr. Mark Allison, the Seminary president, resumed some of his responsibilities at the outset of the 2019-20 academic year. While he still faces limitations, he is able to spend time with the students as he facilitates courses that he has taught previously and from which the video recorded lectures are available. The Committee also presented its outline of the academic program for the year, including the prospect that Dr. Alan Cairns will be able to teach at least two modules.

The Finance Committee presented its proposed budget for 2020, and the presbytery moved to adopt it.

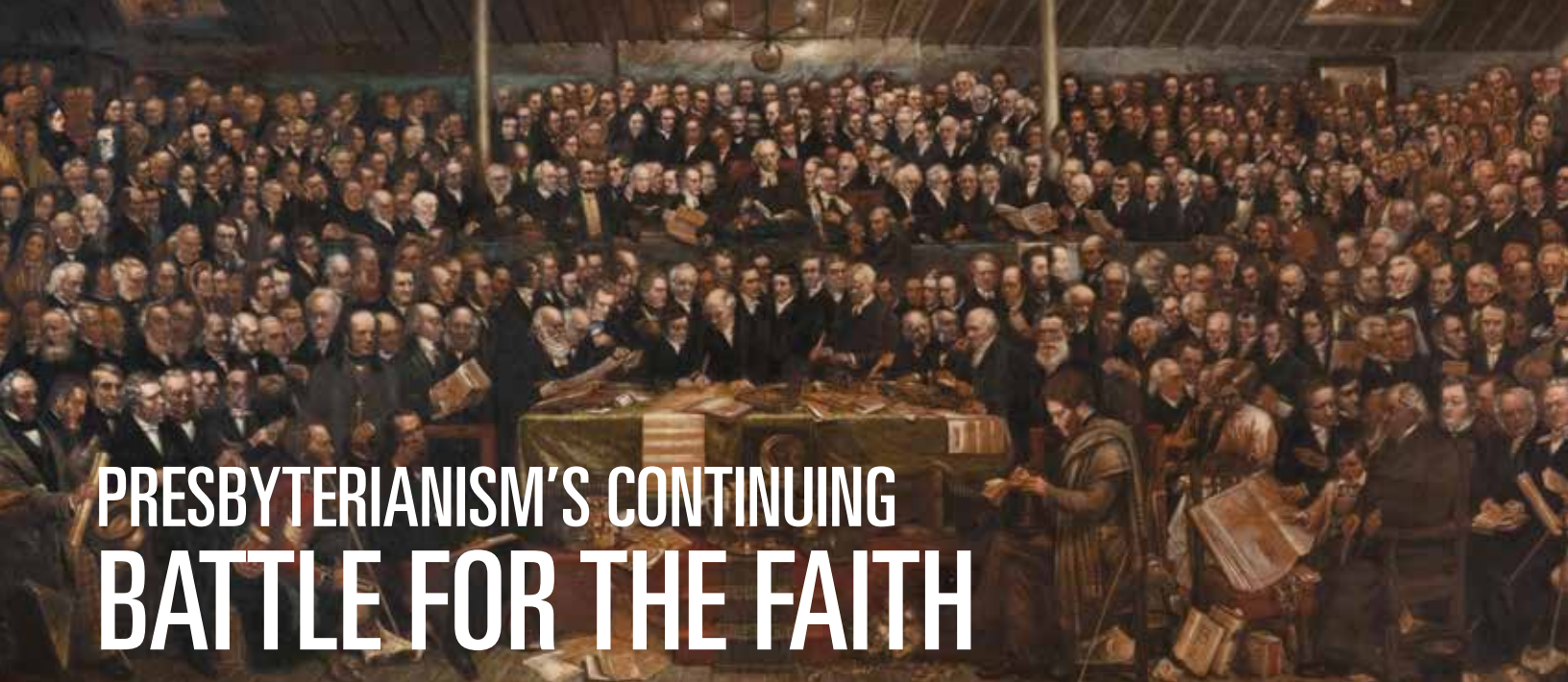
The Committee noted some encouraging developments in the funds that are available for the presbytery in the coming year. The Constitutional Documents Committee reported continuing progress toward final publication of the finished *Book of Church Order*.

On Wednesday evening, the presbytery members enjoyed a wonderful dinner with the congregation before the church's regular mid-week service that included the preaching of Rev. Andrew Simpson, minister in Prince George. During the early part of that meeting, Rev. Goligher, the moderator of the presbytery, conveyed to the session and congregation the hearty thanks of the presbytery for all of the meals and other practical supports that the presbytery enjoyed during the week.

The presbytery adjourned on October 10 with the prospect of its 2020 meetings in Faith FPC of Greenville, SC from May 11-15 and in Calgary FPC in Alberta from October 5-9. After the adjournment, the attendees at the Week of Prayer traveled to the famous Shady Maple Smorgasbord where everyone enjoyed a sumptuous meal and wonderful fellowship. ■



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.



PRESBYTERIANISM'S CONTINUING BATTLE FOR THE FAITH

The aspects of the revival of Presbyterianism during the Reformation period had emphases in theology and church government. In theology, Presbyterianism returned to its Biblical roots in its emphasis on salvation by grace alone and its rejection of human merit as the guarantor of acceptance with God. In church government, Presbyterianism returned to its Biblical roots in its emphasis on the sole authority of Jesus Christ in the church, and on the Scriptural designation of elders, chosen by each congregation and ordained by the presbytery, as the spiritual overseers of the people of God.

By the time the Reformation era ended about 1650, more than a century after the death of Martin Luther and nearly a century after the deaths of John Calvin and John Knox, the legacy of the Reformation and of Presbyterianism in particular was under increasing pressure. By the 18th century, the campaign to infiltrate Protestant seminaries with rational skepticism regarding the truths of the Bible, especially the Bible's emphasis on the miraculous, was gathering momentum. The objective was to undermine the spiritual fervor that was a hallmark of the awakening that was the Reformation.

The Age of Reason (sometimes going under the name of the Age of Enlightenment) argued for the philosophy that the use of reason was the path to knowing the truth, and where reason appeared to contradict the statements of Scripture, reason must prevail. The Protestant seminaries, especially those in Germany, became sources of willingness

to challenge the Reformed faith. Because of the academic reputation of those seminaries, many theological students from across Europe, and later from across the Atlantic Ocean in North America, pursued their studies in them. The attack on the divine inspiration of the Holy Scriptures featured the suggestion that the first five books of the Bible were the product of a series of editors instead of the Mosaic authorship that Jesus Christ asserted was the case. New Testament criticism reflected the search for the "historical Jesus" and challenged the inspiration of the Gospels.

As graduates of the rationalistic seminaries returned to their home territories, they began to affect the ministerial training in those areas. In 19th century America, several Presbyterian bastions of orthodoxy fought the rising trend of skepticism about the truths of the Scriptures. Princeton Seminary, the successor to the College of New Jersey where Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) served briefly as president, counted among its distinguished faculty Charles Hodge (1797-1878), his son, A. A. Hodge (1823-1886), B. B. Warfield (1851-1921), Robert Dick Wilson (1856-1930), and J. Gresham Machen (1881-1937) among other defenders of the truth. Those scholars devoted their lives to defending Presbyterian theology and government.

During the years when those men were active, other men with opposing views rose from the ranks of students to secure faculty positions, not only at Princeton, but also at other seminaries. It became evident, however, that Princeton was the

focus of attack because of its longstanding reputation for orthodoxy and its defense of Presbyterianism. During the early decades of the 20th century, that battle reached a fever pitch. J. Gresham Machen and some of his protégés—Charles Woodbridge (1902-1995), Carl McIntire (1906-2002), and O. T. Allis (1880-1973), among others, occupied the front lines. The battle was over fundamental Biblical truths, such as the Virgin Birth of Christ, the inspiration and infallibility of the Scriptures, the creation of man by the direct act of God, the vicarious atonement by Christ, and His bodily resurrection. Machen and those who stood with him argued forcefully against the incursions of modernism and skepticism. Some, including Woodbridge, dated the dividing point in Princeton's history at 1929. By the mid-1930s, the purveyors of unbelief forced the defenders of the truth out of their positions.

At the same period, the battle between Biblical orthodoxy and modernistic skepticism became prominent in Northern Ireland, the six counties in Ireland that remained in the United Kingdom after the plebiscite of 1921 enabled the remainder of Ireland to form its own republic. The Irish Presbyterian Church became a battleground as James E. Davey (1890-1960), a minister in the church and a professor at the General Assembly's College, the training ground for ministers, faced accusations of heresy for denying the doctrine of the divine inspiration of the Scriptures. He suggested that to believe in the Bible was a form of idolatry and argued for an approach to Christianity that separated it from the

historic doctrines taught in the Bible. A lengthy proceeding in the courts of the Irish Presbyterian Church declined to address Professor Davey's departures from the faith and ultimately, the General Assembly cleared him on all charges.

In 1953, Davey became the moderator of the General Assembly in the Irish Presbyterian Church. The alarms over modernism troubled many in the denomination, and there were departures. One independent congregation on the Ravenhill Road in Belfast issued a call in 1946 to Ian R. K. Paisley (1926-2014) to become its minister. Early in 1951, the

ruling, but they located another building in the town for the campaign that took place February 4-18. On March 17, Rev. Paisley's congregation and three others issued the Free Presbyterian Manifesto as they formed the Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster. The new denomination was to provide a haven for those who were anxious to separate from the modernism and ecumenism of the Irish Presbyterian Church.

Out of that beginning, the new denomination developed to the point that one of its ministers, Rev. Frank McClelland (b.1936) moved to Toronto in 1976 to establish a Free Presbyterian congregation in

in the Republic of Nepal as a separate presbytery.

From its 1st century roots in the formation of Christian churches across the Roman world, Presbyterianism has reflected the abiding philosophy that Christ alone is the Head of the church, and that He has established the government of His church as the bulwark against the influences of false religion. Through the Middle Ages in which apostasy seemed to gain the ascendancy to the revival of Presbyterianism during the Protestant Reformation to the reemergence of the continuing struggle with false religion in recent centuries, Presbyterianism's only



From its 1st century roots in the formation of Christian churches across the Roman world, Presbyterianism has reflected the abiding philosophy that Christ alone is the Head of the church.

elders of the Irish Presbyterian church in Crossgar planned an evangelistic campaign at which Rev. Paisley, then 24, was to be the preacher. Because of his reputation for opposing the ecumenism of the recently-formed World Council of Churches (its first assembly took place in Amsterdam in 1948), with which the Irish Presbyterian Church affiliated, and his forceful opposition to Roman Catholicism, he became a target for modernists. The Presbytery of [County] Down ordered the Crossgar session to cancel its planned campaign and refused to allow the use of any part of the church building as a venue for it.

The elders received suspensions from that presbytery for refusing to submit to its

that city. The following year, an independent congregation in Greenville, SC affiliated with the Free Presbyterian Church, becoming known as Faith Free Presbyterian Church. Early in 1980, Rev. Alan Cairns (b. 1940) accepted the call of that congregation to become its minister. During the 1980s, other congregations formed in both Canada and the United States. In 2005, the Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster constituted the North American churches as an independent presbytery with fraternal relations with the Ulster denomination. In 2013, the Ulster presbytery constituted the churches

recourse has always been to the faith of the Scriptures. Faithful Presbyterians hear the call of Jude in his epistle to "contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." Those who are the heirs of that heritage continue the battle for the faith. ■



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.

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Malvern Deacons

On Sunday October 17 in Malvern FPC, Mr. Jack Armstrong and Mr. Ken Sassa were recognized as deacons after being elected to this position by the congregation. Dr. Pollock stated, "We're thankful for them and they've already got down to work!"



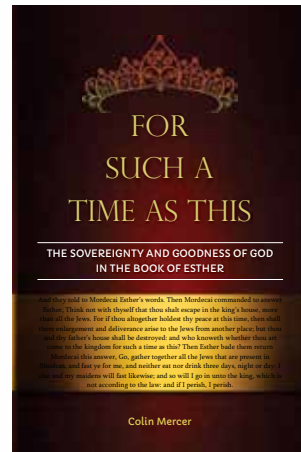
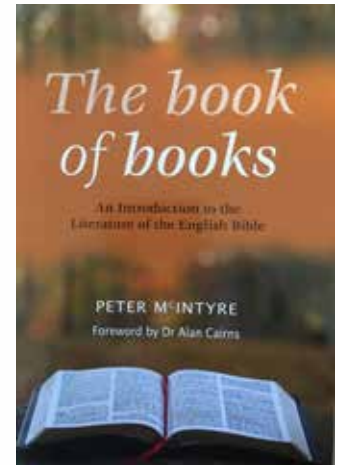
Calgary Deacons

On July 23, 2019 our Calgary Congregation elected Dwayne Egert, Bob Niemi, Caleb Struck and Dirk Struck to serve as deacons. May the Lord strengthen and use them along with the interim session in the life and witness of the church.

The Book of Books by Rev. Peter McIntyre

This is a project undertaken by Clogher Valley, FPC Northern Ireland "The Book of Books contains a summary of each of the sixty-six books within the Bible. There are also chapters analyzing the Bible as a whole, the Old and New Testaments, the Pentateuch and the Gospels. Based on studies conducted by Rev Peter McIntyre in Clogher Valley Free Presbyterian Church, this book is published with the view to providing easily accessible reference material for Christians as they read the Scriptures. The themes, the penmen, background information and relevant application are all covered, with the emphasis throughout that the Bible is the Word of God. In the Foreword Dr Alan Cairns commends this work; "There is much here to instruct and edify... This book invites God's people to take their Bible seriously and to give their best efforts in studying it."

A Kindle edition is available on Amazon.com for \$2.99



For Such a Time as This by Rev. Colin Mercer

"In a warmly pastoral manner, Colin Mercer sets before his audience vivid descriptions of the consequences of godless thinking, and warming scenes of divine mercy. He sees in Esther, and in the world that swirled about her, the sovereign rule of a gracious God, and therefrom makes godly and practical application for every believer. Doubtless this helpful read will be one to which the reader is repeatedly drawn." —John McKnight, Minister, Reformation Bible Church, Darlington, Maryland, USA

This is no dry and dusty tome! It comes from the pen of a preacher; and its beats are those of a pastor's heart. It seeks to evangelize, with many a warning to the careless sinner—and it aims to edify, with instruction for the Christian in these testing times. Throughout, Mr. Mercer combines the virtues of careful exegesis, lucid commentary, and pointed application. If it is easy to read—and that, too, is a virtue—it is not always an easy read, for it challenges, prompting the heart-searching and self-examination required of us all.

Timothy Nelson, Principal, Whitefield College of the Bible and minister of Ballynahinch Free Presbyterian Church, Northern Ireland.

It is available in some of the North American churches and also on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) Hardback \$14.99 or on Kindle for \$5.99.



Cain and Abel:

Twin Brothers, Two Choices

Do you have brothers and sisters? Maybe you get angry with them sometimes! Let's learn about the first siblings in the history of the world and how they met a sad end because of one brother's pride and anger against the other.

Genesis tells us about these brothers, Cain and Abel. Their parents were Adam and Eve, the first man and woman. According to Genesis 4, we believe these brothers were twins. Can you imagine being the very first siblings on earth? We read about these brothers after their parents sinned in the Garden of Eden. Abel was a shepherd and Cain was a "tiller of the ground" – a farmer. Even though they had different jobs, both acknowledged God, and one day, they each brought a sacrifice to God as He required after their parents sinned.

Maybe your parents have a garden where they grow vegetables. Being a farmer, Cain brought his harvest as a sacrifice to God. Abel, however, brought a little lamb. Surely God would be pleased with both sacrifices since each brother brought something important to him! But God accepted Abel's offering and did **not** accept Cain's. Why? By offering up a lamb to die in his place, Abel showed his hatred of sin and his need to ask for God's forgiveness. He had shed the blood of one of his precious lambs, showing his humility and reverence of God. Cain brought

the fruit of his own works with a proud heart, which was not acceptable to God. Maybe Cain brought the *best* of his harvest! But, bringing our best works to God is not enough.

When God did not accept Cain's sacrifice, Cain became angry. God gave him another opportunity to do it right and told him if he would make a proper sacrifice, he would rule over Abel. Instead of repenting and making an acceptable sacrifice, though, Cain did something terrible: he killed Abel! Cain's pride and anger were so strong that he committed the first murder in the Bible. He wanted to be first in God's eyes, so he disobeyed God's command and killed his own brother. Pride and anger can lead to awful things!

Soon after, God asked Cain, "Where is Abel thy brother?" Cain did not confess and repent; he lied to God, saying, "I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?" Cain piled one sin upon another. He committed murder and then lied about it! Rather than becoming a ruler over his brother, Cain received God's punishment: he was sent away from home to become a fugitive – someone who wandered for the rest of his life in a place called Nod. "Nod" means having no place to rest. No matter where Cain went, he would never be able to escape the guilt of killing his brother.

Without Jesus Christ, we are like Cain – trying to please God by our works. Perhaps you think you are a good boy or girl because you come to church, attend Sunday School, and say or do all the right things. But God sees your **heart**. Your own goodness is called "self-righteousness" or thinking very highly of yourself. This cannot save you. To be accepted by God, you must come to Christ for salvation, trusting His sacrifice to cleanse away your sin just as Abel did when he shed a lamb's blood as a sacrifice to God. In the same way that Cain was doomed to roam in the land of Nod for the rest of his life, you will be left to face a lost eternity if you reject God's way. As we close, think about this chorus of an old hymn entitled, "Christ is the Saviour of Sinners."

Saviour of sinners,
Saviour of sinners like me,
Shedding His blood for my ransom,
Christ is the Saviour for me! ✎



Rachel Huffman
attends Lehigh Valley FPC, PA

A WORD WORTH KNOWING

Acceptable

Sufficiently good to satisfy all required standards in order to please.



[Children, your quizmaster recommends that you check your spelling when you submit your answers. Some had the right answers but with the wrong spelling.]

Fall 2019

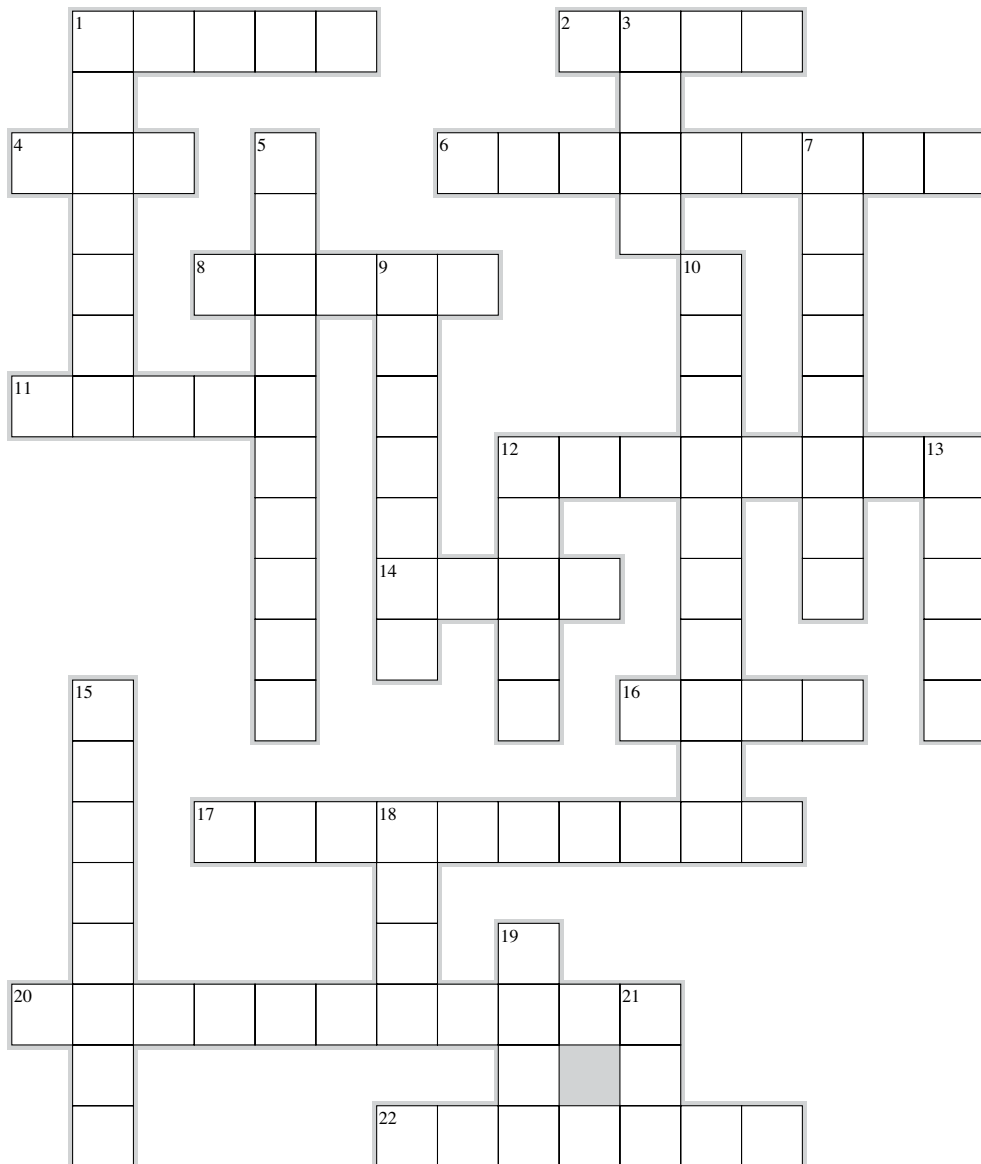
- ★ **ABIGAIL FEROLINO**
Cloverdale FPC (Cloverdale, B.C.)
- ★ **Kyle Munger**
Grace FPC (Winston-Salem, N.C.)
- ★ **Cameron Pike**
Malvern FPC (Malvern, Pa.)
- ★ **Lilyanna Seifert**
Malvern FPC (Malvern, Pa.)
- ★ **Elise Vosekalns**
Phoenix FPC (Peoria, Ariz.)

Kids' Crossword Puzzle

All answers are found in Genesis 4 (KJV)

Across

1. It spoke to God from the ground
2. God put this on Cain to protect him
4. Cain lived here
6. Seven times
8. Angry
11. An unacceptable offering
12. Someone who is running away
14. Killed
16. Who was "another seed instead of Abel"?
17. From now on
20. Face, expression
22. God had what unto Abel and his offering?



Down

1. Cain killed him
3. A keeper of sheep
5. What part of his flock did Abel give to God?
7. Something given to God in worship
9. Cultivate, farm
10. Penalty for doing something wrong
12. Where was Abel when he was killed?
13. Cain's son
15. Wanderer
18. A tiller of the ground
19. After his birth, men "began to call on the name of the LORD."
21. Who said, "I have gotten a man from the Lord"?

PLEASE NOTE: Please send your completed puzzle to Current Kids' Corner, C/o Judy Brown, 651 Ponden Dr., Greer, SC 29650, or by email to ljbrown2@gmail.com by Feb. 28, 2019. Include your name, address, age, and the name of the church you attend. Five winners will be drawn from all correct submissions received. The contest is open to young people ages 5–12. Winners will receive a \$10 cash prize.



CALENDAR

OF EVENTS

APRIL 15 - 20

Mexico FPC Youth Camp

APRIL 21

Easter Sunday

MAY 13 - 17

Presbytery Week of Prayer Hosted by Toronto FPC

The Stories Behind Our Hymns

"It is Well with My Soul"

A Christian's ultimate hope and confidence is never in present earthly circumstances. Men of the world whose souls are in danger of destruction may enjoy the sweetest surroundings of life, while a Christian may be found in the direst straits through tragedy, leading to thoughts of despair.

Horatio Spafford had been a successful lawyer in Chicago before that city's great fire in 1871. He had made what appeared to be sound investments in real estate, but with bank failures following the Chicago fire, Spafford lost a fortune. During the following years he labored to help some of the 100,000 homeless to rebuild. In 1873, he was advised to take a trip to Europe to escape his sorrows at home. Due to business commitments, he sent his wife and family ahead of him and promised he would soon follow. Just days later, he received an unexpected and devastating telegram from his wife. Their cruise ship had been struck by an oncoming vessel and almost immediately went under. The two hundred and twenty six fatalities included their four daughters, Maggie, Tanetta, Annie, and Bessie. Mrs. Spafford was found nearly unconscious but still clinging to some wreckage. Along with forty seven other survivors, she had been picked up by a ship that several days later docked in Cardiff, Wales. From there, she telegraphed the heart-breaking news to her husband, "Saved Alone."

Most likely, the Spaffords were planning to join their good friend and evangelist D.L. Moody, who was conducting gospel campaigns in Great Britain. By the time

Horatio Spafford met up with his wife in London, Moody was able to visit them to give whatever comfort he could. The words of the prophet Isaiah would be suitable to ease the pain of their broken hearts: "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee" (Isaiah 26:3).

Through the power of God's grace, the Spaffords found peace and strength to overcome their sorrow. It is commonly reported that three years later, on a return trip to America, while sailing near the area where the luxury French Cruise Ship S.S. Ville du Havre had sunk with the loss of so many lives, including his four precious daughters, Horatio Spafford wrote the hymn, "It is Well with My Soul."

When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll;
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,
"It is well, it is well, with my soul."

Refrain

It is well, (it is well),
With my soul, (with my soul)
It is well, it is well, with my soul.

Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,
Let this blest assurance control,
That Christ hath regarded my helpless estate,
And hath shed His own blood for my soul.

My sin — oh, the bliss of this glorious thought—
My sin, not in part, but the whole,

Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more!
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!

For me, be it Christ, be it Christ hence to live:
If Jordan above me shall roll,
No pang shall be mine, for in death as in life,
Thou wilt whisper Thy peace to my soul.

But Lord, 'tis for Thee, for Thy coming we wait,
The sky, not the grave, is our goal;
Oh, trump of the angel! Oh, voice of the Lord!
Blessèd hope, blessèd rest of my soul!

And Lord, haste the day when the faith shall be sight,
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll,
The trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend!
Even so—it is well with my soul!

There is no telling how God's people might respond to such tragedy, but when our faith is in Christ and the power of His gospel, while we may have lost so much in this earthly life, we are assured: "It is well with my soul." ☞

