

CURRENT

QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF NORTH AMERICA

VOL. 10/No. 2 Spring 2021

**SEVENTY
YEARS LATER**

**SUBMITTING
TO TRUTH**

**EARNEST
PRAYER**

**A FISTFUL
OF HEROES**

**PRAYING OVER THE
PAST
IN THE PRESENT**

From the Editor

3 Earnest Praying

Features

4 Seventy Years Later

6 Submitting to Truth

8 Praying Over the Past in the Present

9 Our Vision and Aim for a Truly Christian School

10 A Biblical Worldview of the Physical World

12 Genesis Study Notes

14 Truth for Youth

16 Christian Hospitality

17 A Fistful of Heroes

Kids' Corner

18 For Such a Time As This

19 Crossword

Back Page

20 Assurance of Faith

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.

Subscriptions

Current is published quarterly by the Free Presbyterian Church of North America (www.fpcurrent.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*.

General Editor, Dr. Stephen Pollock. Copy Editor, Jill Saunders. Graphic Design, Moorehead Creative Designs. Printer, GotPrint.com.

The editor may be reached at email: malvernfpcc@yahoo.com phone: 610-993-3170, or Mail: 80 Malin Road, Malvern, PA 19355.



YOU CAN READ *CURRENT* ONLINE

You can read each issue online or look for specific articles by title and author at www.fpcurrent.com





EARNEST PRAYING

Dr. Stephen Pollock

St. Patrick of Ireland was a man who knew the Lord Jesus Christ as his Savior. Patrick opens his *Confession*, “My name is Patrick. I am a sinner, a simple country person, and the least of all believers.” Patrick would come to be known as the “Apostle of Ireland” as he preached Christ, traveling from county to county, planting churches. It is a coincidental but fitting providence that on March 17, the same day people commemorate Patrick, believers in Crossgar, Northern Ireland covenanted to be faithful to Christ in the face of apostasy and ecumenism with the beginning of a new gospel-preaching, evangelistic denomination. Their hearts were captive to Christ and they longed for others to know their Savior and Lord.

The inauspicious commencement of the Free Presbyterian Church in a remote town was used of God to spread the gospel to places like Kathmandu and Kilkeel, Tasmania and Toronto. This publication is dedicated to the work of the gospel under the North American Presbytery of the Free Presbyterian Church. This presbytery owes a debt of gratitude to the founders in Northern Ireland whose vision has greatly impacted the work on this side of the Atlantic. Much of this edition of *Current* reflects upon this influence as we look back and look forward. I hope the articles serve as reminders why we exist as a denomination. You will read of the importance of standing against error, but specifically I ask you to consider the prominence of the preaching of the Word in the advance of the gospel. From its earliest days this denomination has had an evangelistic, missional heart. That heart is evidenced once more

in the article by Miss Joanne Greer, Liberia. She presents her burden for the advance of the gospel among the children of Liberia.

I trust that, by God’s grace, we can continue to go forward preaching Christ as He is revealed in the Word of God. Yet, all of our efforts and resolve will come to nothing without the blessing of God. Dr. Ian Paisley greatly admired the work of Charles Hadden Spurgeon and often read his sermons. Spurgeon was known as a great preacher, but he was a great man of prayer. After his first visit to England, D. L. Moody was asked upon his return to America, “Did you hear Spurgeon preach?” He replied, “Yes, but better still I heard him pray.” What was true of Spurgeon was true of his congregation. Spurgeon’s autobiography describes his gratefulness for being blessed with a praying church. “I always give all the glory to God, but I do not forget that He gave me the privilege of ministering from the first to a praying people. We had prayer meetings that moved our very souls, each one appeared determined to storm the Celestial City by the might of intercession.”

Seventy years ago there were men and women who resolved to “storm the Celestial City by the might of intercession.” Will we take up the baton in *our* generation? Success in our labors will be measured as souls are saved, sanctified, and one day glorified. Such success is the work of God and will only come as the Spirit of God is poured out upon Christ’s church. To that end, let us pray earnest prayers. ■

The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly.

(James 5:16b-17a)

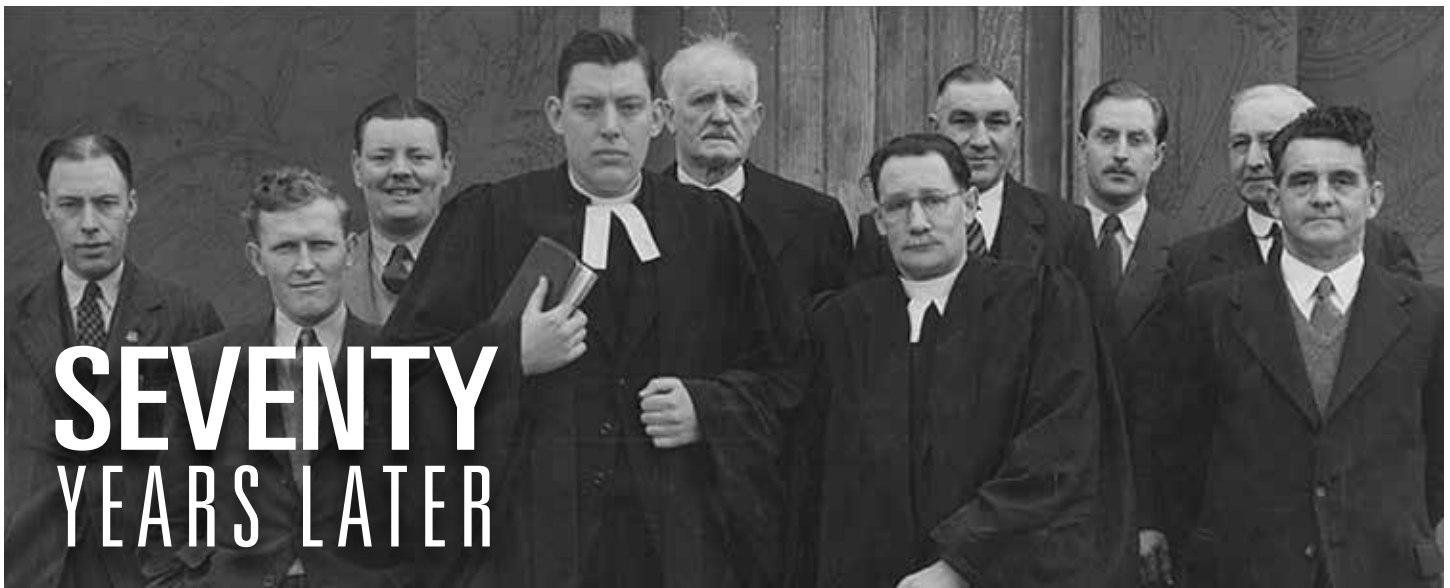


C.H. Spurgeon on earnest praying:

“If you do not pray except when you feel like praying, you will not pray much, nor pray when you most need it. My brethren, when you do not feel like praying, you ought to pray all the more, and go to the Lord to help you to pray” (MTP 35:583).

“We must get rid of the icicles that hang about our lips. We must ask the Lord to thaw the ice-caves of our soul and to make our hearts like a furnace of fire heated seven times hotter” (MTP 13:79).

“It may suit a teacher of English composition to criticize your sentences, but God thinks much more of your desires than of the words in which they are expressed. It may be natural for a scholar to consider the accuracy of your terms, but God specially marks the earnestness of your soul” (MTP 48:483).



Pictured in Crossgar on March 17, 1951 at the opening of the first Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster. L to R: Jack Gibson, George Hutton, Cecil Harvey, Rev. Dr. Ian Paisley, William Emerson, Rev. George Stears (Minister Protem), James Morrison, George K Gibson, William Miscampbell, and Hugh James Adams.

I first set foot in Ravenhill Evangelical Church with my parents in 1948. We belonged to a country church where, for me as a twelve-year-old boy, the most interesting activity was to guess at what stage one of the leading elders would fall asleep. He always did—and little wonder, with the droning of the uninspired clergyman. At that time, our family was religious, but unregenerate.

What a complete change we experienced that first Sunday morning in Ravenhill. The church was well filled with ordinary people who seemed to be genuinely happy as they anticipated the beginning of the service. Fascinated, we watched as the young preacher made his way to the pulpit, looking younger than his twenty-two years. He smiled radiantly, but I was under the impression that Christians were supposed to look miserable as a badge of their superior piety.

The hymns were bright and happy, the prayer was powerful, and the preaching was dynamic as the Rev. Ian Paisley expounded the gospel. The whole service had such an impact on us, even as unbelievers, that we never went back to our ancestral church again. Sometime thereafter, my mother and stepfather were converted to Christ; however, I did not get right with God for another seven years.

IN THE BEGINNING

The first Free Presbyterian Church was founded on March 17, 1951, a story that will be told by many in this Seventieth Anniversary year. It came into being through a gospel mission in Crossgar, Northern Ireland, conducted by Dr. Paisley. The mission was attended by much controversy, mostly because of the general compromises of the major churches, and specifically in this case because of the last-minute withdrawal of

church, where they can be nourished in the Christian faith, but because of the events in Crossgar, it was not possible there. So, a decision was taken that a new denomination was needed not only for Crossgar, but to meet the needs of Christians throughout Northern Ireland, also known as the province of Ulster. Hence, the Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster was born in Crossgar on March 17, 1951. The fact it was St. Patrick's Day was merely coincidental. The Ravenhill church quickly joined ranks, followed in that first year, by churches in Cabra (Ballymoney) and Rasharkin. This led to the formation of the Ulster presbytery.



Outside Cabra Church

permission to hold the gospel campaign in the church hall of Lissara Presbyterian Church in Crossgar. The services were speedily moved into a little “tin” mission hall where many souls were converted to Christ during the course of the meetings. Although I was still unconverted, I remember attending that mission and the excitement of those formative days. New converts always need to be sent to a faithful, Bible-believing, gospel-preaching

The mainline churches were most unhappy at this development and for those hardy souls, who joined the movement, life was not easy. They were regarded as traitors to the historic denominations, which largely had left off gospel preaching and joined the ecumenical movement, including the World Council of Churches, which was founded in 1948. The Free Presbyterian Church was the implacable foe of the ecumenical movement and was not afraid to publicly denounce its apostasy.

Public protests against religious modernism raised the profile of the new denomination in Ulster. Believers began to question what the Lord

would have them do. Many were like the elder's wife who told me she felt led of the Lord to leave her church and join us. The Lord spoke to her through Micah 2:10, *"Arise ye, and depart; for this is not your rest: because it will destroy you, even with a sore destruction."* She and her family obeyed God. And thousands more followed the Lord *outside the camp* and formed thriving congregations across the country.

STEADY GROWTH

In his excellent book, *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, Octavius Winslow said, "Be sure of this that when the Lord is about to favour you with some great and peculiar blessing, He may prepare you for it by some great and peculiar trial." Four churches were formed that first year. Growth was slow but steady for the next few years. By 1966, there were twelve new congregations, and in that year the denomination witnessed what could only be called a revival. A trial came, however, when three of our ministers, including the founder, were imprisoned for three months for taking part in a peaceful protest against the Presbyterian Church's alliance with the Roman Catholic Premier of the Republic of Ireland.

I was in secular employment as an aircraft design engineer in Canada and the United States from 1963-69. In 1966, while home in Ulster on holiday, I was asked to preach for Dr. Paisley on his first Sunday in prison. What a day that was! The church was packed half an hour before the service time. The atmosphere was electric. I was asked to read Psalm 142, including the words, *"Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name."* I was also asked to read a personal letter from the prison cell from the pastor to his people. I think it was the most emotional meeting I was ever in. Nearly everyone was weeping. Later I was able to visit "Doc" in jail with his two ministerial companions, Revs. John Wylie and Ivan Foster. The jail term was important for the Free Church, because those who opposed Dr. Paisley and the new denomination now saw its ministers willing to suffer for their Christian convictions.

A MOVING OF GOD

Following their release from jail, the Lord blessed the church with much growth. Congregations sprang up, young men were called into the ministry, and souls were saved. It was 1969 and Ulster entered that lengthy period of crisis known as the "troubles." There were murders, bombs, and much civil unrest all across the province. Yet in spite of the trouble, the Lord graciously quickened His people.

In those days we were continually attending ground breaking services, stone-laying ceremonies, and openings for new church buildings. There were continual ordinations of new ministers and elders. Many souls were saved. This time of accelerated growth lasted from the mid-sixties until the mid-eighties. Upon reflection, it was a blessed time of revival.

"GO YE INTO ALL THE WORLD"

In 1976, the Lord opened a door in Toronto for the first Free Presbyterian Church outside N. Ireland. Amid fierce opposition from the media, Toronto Free Presbyterian Church was born. This was followed the next year by Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (now Malvern) and Greenville, South Carolina. Initially, the Free Presbyterian work was under the care of the Ulster presbytery, but in 2005 the North American Presbytery was formed to represent the churches in North America. Under the new presbytery, there are in excess of twenty congregations with missionaries in Jamaica, Mexico, Liberia, Czech Republic, and S. Korea.

The impact of the Free Church in Ulster has been considerable. From its first extension in Toronto, it has established churches in the Irish Republic, mainland UK, and Australia, with missionary works in Spain, Africa, Nepal and affiliations in S. America, India, Romania, Philippines, and more. There are currently over 60 congregations in Ulster.

One of the biggest challenges facing the North American Free Church is manpower. The Fredericton (NB)

church has no minister, nor has Victoria (BC), and with the soon coming retirement of the present moderator, Rev. Ian Goligher, the Canadian arm is in serious need of an injection of young men for the ministry. Also, the Phoenix (AZ) minister and presbytery clerk, Rev. David Mook, will be retiring soon. The absence of these two brethren will weaken the North American presbytery considerably. We are looking to the Lord to send laborers into these needy harvest fields.



All churches have been badly hit by the Covid-19 pandemic. The Free Presbyterian Churches are to be commended for their use of social media to get God's Word out. The founder of *sermonaudio*, Steven Lee, was a member of the Toronto Church in the mid-eighties, until his father relocated his family to Greenville, South Carolina, to pursue business opportunities. Steven is an elder of Faith Free Presbyterian Church, Greenville. He founded *sermonaudio* that now broadcasts the gospel worldwide with the largest library of over one million free audio sermons.

Jesus shared one of His last signs of the end-time with these words: *"This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations: and then shall the end come"* (Matthew 24:14). For seventy years, the Free Presbyterian Church has been privileged to play a small part in the furtherance of the gospel of Christ. May the Lord be pleased to allow it to continue for many more. ❧



Dr. Frank McClelland
Minister Emeritus, Toronto
FPC, ON



SUBMITTING TO *Truth*

The themes in my previous article were drawn from a series of messages I preached when our nation and world were reeling from various outlets of information and disinformation surrounding national politics and the coronavirus pandemic. Countless articles and blog posts have been written addressing the mindset and actions of Christians during these distressing times. Truly these are times in which the Lord's people need wisdom, faith, boldness, and restraint, among other graces. I focused upon Truth in a world that is almost purposely filled with lies. We considered the themes of Abandoning Truth, Negotiating Truth, Discerning Truth, and Defending Truth. When I finished preaching that series of messages, I was moved to add one more—Submitting to Truth.

It is important to realize that among the many difficulties which confront us during these troubled days, the difficulty of accurately reading or interpreting Providence is prominent. Without inspired prophets, such as Israel possessed in some of her days of distress, we are left to our uninspired interpretations of what transpires. In most cases, doctrinal truth and even broad principles of practical application are easy enough. It doesn't take a PhD or an international church commission to discern that abortion, homosexuality,

heterosexual fornication, and pornography are moral evils that we should repudiate in our modern context. But mention face masks, vaccinations, airport security checkpoints, and a host of other prevalent issues and suddenly social media erupts with fiery rhetoric from disagreeing Christians, often with chapter and verse in hand—each claiming to confirm contradictory opinions as necessary applications of God's truth—all before the watching world. These are matters for which I encourage restraint and grace.

At the outset, I want to live up to my own dictum and confess that I cannot lay claim to an inspired understanding of God's prophetic timetable, or where we might be on that timetable, or what God's purposes are in each political or societal event that overtakes us. Specifics are unknown and it is dangerous to pontificate about them, but general principles may be apparent, and of course our own sobriety and humility should always be present. So, with these caveats of uncertainty and caution set before us, I want to address this final point of submitting to truth in these uncertain times.

One general truth that we must rest upon is the sovereign control of God over all things. God sends the rain upon the just and the unjust alike. God

raises up Pharaohs and Nebuchadnezzars, as well as Davids and Solomons—and Washingtons as well as Hitlers. Jesus confessed that Pilate's ability to have Him crucified was a God-given ability and was under God's sovereign control. So, we can confidently say that whatever circumstances prevail, God has allowed and even ordained them. God does no wrong. When men work evil, He overrules it to accomplish His own perfect will. (And remember, this fallen world and all the sinners in it actually deserve His eternal wrath from the moment of the Fall. Every mercy, every act of common grace, every delay of that final judgment, is just an outworking of His plan of Redemption. If He allows evils and the resultant sufferings to occur in this vale of time, these are gracious reminders of our need of forgiveness and the ultimate realities of His law, and they do not overthrow the truth that He will one day bring all things into judgment). It's just that sometimes when we see evil seemingly prevailing we start to have questions. This should not surprise us. The Psalms and the Prophets provide us with many examples of such perplexing times for God's people.

One example that is worthy of our attention is that of the prophet Habakkuk. Habakkuk was called to live and serve in the days leading up to the Babylonian captivity of Judah. The Babylonians were an idolatrous, immoral,

and cruel people. How could God allow them dominance over Judah? Habakkuk struggled with this question as well as his own fears about what this might mean for him personally. He plainly said, *"I have heard thy speech and was afraid"* (3:2). As he honestly opened his heart and his concerns to God, he was thrust back upon basic theology. *"Thou hast ordained them for judgment... Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil"* (1:12-13). He recognized God's holiness and His sovereign control, alongside the fact that Judah deserved chastening and judgment. If God used the Babylonians to accomplish this, that was not a sanction of the Babylonians' interests. God would deal with the Babylonians in His own time and way. This doctrinal appraisal of the situation allowed Habakkuk to pray through the difficulties. He famously prayed that God would *"revive (His) work in the midst of the years"* and that He would *"in wrath remember mercy"* (3:2). Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther were among the wonderful answers to Habakkuk's prayers. This even allowed Habakkuk a great measure of peace when thinking of his own fearful circumstances. One of the greatest texts in all of Scripture on the subject of joy being independent of circumstances is found in the closing words to Habakkuk's prayer: *"Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation"* (3:17-18). It is perhaps timely for us to remember the context of these familiar verses. These were not conditions that were simply going to "naturally occur." They were going to be the results of a tremendous, chastening upheaval.

Other examples of God's prophets calling God's people to submit to His judgments include Jeremiah's long and sad ministry, as well as Ezekiel's ministry to those already in captivity to be content under such chastisements. In each case the chief concern was to return to the Lord in their own hearts and not to assume that everything was well

with their own souls based upon their heritage or their outward profession.

Again, we cannot draw direct lines of connection to specific events during these New Testament days, but general principles are still evident. How long can a nation expect the blessing of God when it sanctions the murder of over 60 million babies? How long can a nation expect to live untouched by sorrows or chastening when it moves from condemning homosexual activity to sanctioning its unions in the public square? These are the sad fruits of apostasy and it seems now to many onlookers that social, political, and economic decay and ruin loom upon the horizon. It doesn't take much imagination, given the events of the past year, to foresee a time when the circumstances that prevailed in the earth before the Flood might prevail again. *"The earth was filled with violence"* (Gen. 6:13). Is this a time for Christians to fret and promote uninspired opinions on lesser matters, or is this a time for Christians to humble themselves and examine the condition of their own hearts and the health of the church? I wonder how many professing Christians sat idle during the last century when they were losing a faithful and godly church, but are now moved with great agitation at the prospects of losing a comfortable and prosperous nation? That is a sobering question.

By raising the subject of submitting to truth, I am not suggesting that concerned citizens of a constitutional republic such as the United States should resign their responsibilities or cease engaging in every lawful means of stemming the political and moral decay of this formerly blessed nation. What I am suggesting is that we as Christians take a hard look at majoring on the majors in our ecclesiastical and brotherly discourse and not allow political issues to imperceptibly overshadow our commitment to biblical Christianity. It may be that in God's Providence we reap the sad fruits of apostasy once again and that we lose some of the political and material blessings that followed in the wake of the Reformation (if not a worse fate that

none could say was undeserved). A healthy church in an unhealthy nation is better than an unhealthy church in a prospering nation.

If such changed times do come upon us, let us look to the examples of those we see in Scripture who faced similar or more difficult trials. Let us meditate upon the lives and testimonies of Daniel and his colleagues. Let us learn from the example of Paul and his companions in the book of Acts. Remarkably these often received fair treatment from civil authorities and the real venom came from apostate or false religion. To be sure, the civil authorities sometimes yielded to other pressures, harshly treating God's people, and even killing them. But they did so, not because of any disservice the godly had done to them or to their political power. They attacked them in *"the things concerning (their) God"* (Daniel 6:4-5). That's a testimony I fear some Christians may be putting in jeopardy in a day when fear and emotion can easily cause us to almost unintentionally engage in misplaced priorities. And in the case of Israel, that often ended in their willingness to pursue inappropriate alliances seeking to ward off calamities that God had ordained. They didn't submit to the truth about their situation; they bartered the truth trying to improve or preserve their situation. So, the next time current events tempt you to major on the minors, consider picking up a copy of James Buchanan's *Justification*, or John Murray's *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, or maybe just spend an evening with Spurgeon. The day may come when you need to be ready to give a detailed gospel answer to a needy, wayward, or deceived soul in these days where *"Truth is fallen in the street."* At that point, a humble testimony will do a lot more good than winning an obscure online argument ever could. ■



Rev. Reggie Kimbro
Minister, Grace FPC,
Winston Salem, NC

PRAYING

OVER THE PAST IN THE PRESENT



God has richly blessed the Free Presbyterian denomination since its inception on March 17, 1951. Our history is a beautiful story of God's provision, protection, and power in the lives of ordinary individuals. I am thankful to those people who made the necessary sacrifices over the years to maintain a faithful witness for Christ. As the youngest minister in the Free Presbyterian Church of North America (FPCNA), I realize the importance of knowing our history, not just so that we do not forget it, but so that our past can help inform the future of this denomination. There are several things about our past that have helped shape my desires for the future of this denomination.

First, we must persist in prayer. To study the history of this denomination is to study the prayer meeting. In the formative years of the FPC, and the later revival of the work in 1966, days and nights of prayer were commonplace. God was moving when His people were praying, and God was moving because His people were praying. Christians saw the need for prayer and persisted even at their personal inconvenience. An older gentleman once told me how he would take his lunchbox to the night time prayer meeting because he knew he would not get home before work the next morning. May the Lord burden us to be persistent in prayer again (all night if needed) that we might see His work advance.

Second, we must protest again. The FPC was a denomination that regularly stood against spiritual apostasy and national sin. These protests brought awareness of apostasy and the legalizing of evil that was taking place in Canada, the United States, and Ulster. Even though some issues for protest have changed today, the need for protest has not. We cannot be silent when children are being murdered in the womb daily or when bills are read in parliaments to criminalize gospel preaching. We should also use various forms of protest, such as writing to our representatives, refusing to subscribe to media platforms that fund evil practices or publically gather for preaching and prayer against sinful events. We must remember, however, that a critical aspect in protesting is evangelism. It is important to tell people what we are standing against, but it is equally important to tell them what we stand for. Protest and evangelism must go hand in hand.

Third, we should publish more material. Whether it be writing books, podcasting, or social media, we should be publishing our beliefs and perspectives, making them more accessible to the world. Some FPC ministers have written books; however, most of these works were printed in the earlier years of the FPC. We need a renewed interest among

our ministers to produce material on doctrine, history, ethics, and current issues. It is often difficult to recommend a book, podcast, or media platform with complete confidence in its content. The answer to this is to publish our own material, utilizing the various modern means at our disposal.

Fourth, we must continue to preach Christ. The FPC in Ulster and North America was built up spiritually and numerically through Christ-centred gospel preaching. Our preaching must continue to centre on Christ's person and His work. If the day comes when this is no longer the case, there is no future purpose for this denomination. We must also remember that our forefathers were not dry, emotionless preachers. They were passionate when presenting Christ to saints and sinners alike. This was in stark contrast to the boring lectures delivered by ministers in other "reformed" churches. I trust that we would continue to be passionate preachers of the Lord Jesus Christ. I am so glad to be serving in this denomination. May the Lord revisit us with revival power, for we need it now more than ever. ❏



Rev. Andrew Simpson
Minister, Prince George FPC, BC



Our Vision and Aim for a Truly Christian School

by Joanne Greer, Missionary, Liberia

Isaiah 54:13 is a text that God impressed on my heart soon after my arrival as a missionary to Liberia in March 2012. Although I had trained and worked as a nurse in Northern Ireland before going to Bible College, and although I arrived in Liberia with a completely open mind as to what I might end up doing, I was rapidly drawn down the road of teaching.

Almost immediately upon arrival, I noticed that the majority of the children I met either could not read or were very poor readers. As I gained some awareness of the education system from personal experience in visiting and volunteering in schools and from the testimonies of both Liberian nationals and foreign missionaries, I became more troubled about the future of Liberia's children. I enjoyed meeting affectionate kids and friendly teachers, but most were very candid about the problems they faced. Many schools, both public and private, struggled with administrative challenges, limited resources, and poorly equipped or maintained buildings. Sadly, many teachers were poorly trained and inadequately paid. Some children did not get a chance to start school until they were eight or nine years old. For example, I encountered one fifth grade

class with an age range that spanned 12-19 year-olds, several of whom could read only a handful of words each.

Ever since, my burden has increased and we as missionaries here have been praying for an open door. In February 2021, we were delighted that the North American Mission Board approved a Christian school

**And all thy children shall be
taught of the Lord. Isaiah 54:13**

pilot project to begin a preschool class (3-year-olds) in September 2021. This will allow us to test the waters and see how the Lord leads us.

Providing a *truly* Christian education in the Liberian context is not going to be an easy task, as it requires a biblical philosophy of education, materials that have mostly been written from a biblical worldview, and born-again and academically well-qualified teachers. Very few Christian schools here, if any, meet those criteria. Curriculum from Christian publishers may be used but it appears that some struggle to discern between a biblical and a progressive



educational philosophy. For example, even though truth is absolute and has its source in God, some local teachers act as if it is relative when it conflicts with their cultural norms. They often say, "This is Liberia"—meaning, "This is the way we do it here and it is just as good as your way." This is actually a reflection of the progressive notion that truth can be constructed, interpreted, or adjusted according to a child's environment, community, or feelings.

We plan to try to resolve this difficulty by setting up a comprehensive, in-service teacher training program that will not only address academic deficiencies but also teach biblical doctrine and a scriptural, educational philosophy. We have already selected a curriculum from a Christian publisher, and we also hope to hold teaching sessions for parents.

Please pray that the Lord will give Mr. DiCanio and me much wisdom, discernment, and grace for this new work, that God's Name will be glorified as we teach our students in the ways and Word of the Lord. May our students grow into godly men and women who will exert a righteous influence on their families, churches, and nation. ❧

A Biblical Worldview of the Physical World

Today we hear that Christians need a “biblical worldview” as if it were something new. “Biblical worldview” is the term *du jour* for a concept as old as the Bible itself. For Christians the Bible is a spiritual handbook, telling us what we need to know to respond appropriately to life’s situations. Applying what the Bible teaches to any decision would be exercising a biblical worldview.

Some Christians fall short of demonstrating a biblical worldview because they do not know what Scripture teaches and therefore cannot apply it. They need to study God’s Word. Others fall short because they, albeit often unwittingly, mix what Scripture teaches with popular but contrary worldviews. In the Garden of Eden, Satan mixed a wrong worldview with what God had told Eve and led her to sin (Genesis 3:1-6). Satan still finds mixing-of-worldviews an effective tactic to trip Christians today. Frequently he succeeds because Christians do not recognize the deviant worldviews he is using.

The mixing-of-worldviews is especially true as Christians make decisions regarding the physical world. In this article we will compare basic tenets regarding the physical world of common, non-biblical worldviews and contrast them with those of a biblical worldview.

Evolutionary Worldview

Some evolutionists feel the physical world just always existed—others feel it began with an explosion (the “Big Bang”) or some such happening. They agree that the beginning of all things was the playing out of physical laws—no outside force was involved.

The evolutionary worldview claims that the physical we observe today came about by those natural laws just playing themselves out. The complexity of the universe, a cell, an atom all evolved because of the natures of what they are made of. Is there anything beyond the

physical? For most evolutionists, there is no evidence of the spiritual so there is no reason to believe it exists. No God. No human soul. When a person dies, that’s it. Nothing beyond the grave.

The evolutionary worldview of the physical environment is that it is just there, the raw materials of evolution. Much of it is the “leftovers” of evolutionary past, but in it are the materials of the evolutionary future. Some evolutionists attach a sort of sentimental value to parts of the physical world because it took so long for it to get here, and we may need it in the future. To others, the physical is just materials to exploit however one wants or thinks best. (Whatever “best” is, is open for debate.)

Logically, the evolutionary position regarding the future of the physical can be summed up as: “Don’t worry about how or what we do to the environment because, as evolutionary history teaches us, we will evolve what is needed to deal with whatever future happens. That is, the ‘fittest’ will survive. Those not-so-fit will pass on. If we do something so drastic that the environment becomes inhospitable for human life, we will pass the way of the dinosaurs. But not to worry. Something fit for the new environment will evolve to replace us.”

The evolutionary worldview appeals to many who consider themselves intellectual—they are pleased to have figured out their existence, and no higher power was involved. Humans are the self-proclaimed “ultimate” of now. (*Wow!*)

But since there is nothing beyond the physical, that existence is empty. To those looking for a deeper meaning to life, evolution is unsatisfying.

Pantheistic Worldview

Satan has an alternative worldview which offers meaning to life: pantheism. It is not new. Ancient Jews faced and rejected it. When Satan sought to get Christians to accept it, the early church

recognized it as heresy. Today, however, some Christians embrace parts of it.

In contrast to the non-spiritual evolutionary worldview, pantheism seeks to make everything spiritual. It holds that the physical is essentially a manifestation of the spiritual. Thus the physical is god and god is the physical. Not all physical parts possess equal amounts of god. Humans have more, animals less, plants even less, and rocks very little (or none at all, depending on your pantheistic persuasion).

Some pantheists believe god and the physical world have always co-existed. Others say god predates the physical. The physical can change, even die, but the spiritual remains and is recycled. Reincarnation is a pantheistic doctrine. What something will be reincarnated as is based on how well it did spiritually in its last physical manifestation. If it ignored its own god part, and ignored or hurt god parts in other things, it does not deserve more spirit in its next reincarnation. To climb the reincarnation ladder one must be aware of the spiritual and seek to unite with other spiritual parts.

How does one do that? One must respect the physical, since it is really spiritual. One must also unite its spirit with other spiritual parts: find “harmony” with other humans and commune with the spirit of other physical things. Generally one does this by meditating on the spirit of the horse, the tree, the forest, etc. seeking to share their feelings of fear, joy, and peace. As one unites with the spirit of other things, one becomes more aware of one’s own spirit. Some pantheists claim this essentially puts god back together. Then, as spiritual discord falls away, things are united in peace. Eventually there is no need of the physical, it fades away and only spiritual remains. (*Sigh.*)

Can one experience peace by communing with a flower or meditating upon a tree? If a person clears their mind of distracting, disturbing

thoughts, sits quietly and slowly breathes deeply for a while, he will probably become relaxed. Does that peace come from uniting spiritually with the non-stressed spirit of the plant? Satan wants one to think so. Why? If a person likes that feeling, he will likely come back for more. Satan can grant peaceful feelings if it will keep one from going to Christ to seek the peace “which passeth all understanding,” the peace that comes from sins forgiven, the peace which comes from unity with Christ (Philippians 4:7; John 14:27). Christians are to meditate on God and His Word. Trusting in His promises is where we find present and eternal peace. Attributing spirituality to some physical thing and looking to it for help is idolatry.

Other Non-Biblical World Views

There are other non-biblical worldviews. For example, some believe that we are actually part of an alien experiment. Aliens set up the earth to see how it would play out. Every so often they intervene and change some factor in the experiment. When dinosaurs ruled the earth, the aliens learned all they wanted to know about that, so they bumped them off and added something—like human intelligence—to see what would happen. This sounds like the stuff of a science fiction fantasy. But there are those who believe it and have died (or committed suicide) because of their belief.

Biblical Worldview

A biblical worldview of the physical world begins with God. He existed

before the physical and He created all things. Scripture teaches dualism—the physical world and God are separate. The creation is sustained by His power, but God is not the rocks, flowers, cows, or forests He made. Humans are spiritual beings because God gave us souls. Our present physical existence is only a part of our eternal being (Genesis 1-2; John 1:1-10).

The physical world belongs to God, but God placed it under man's dominion. He told us to use the environment to meet our needs. We are to earn our bread by the sweat of our brow; we are to house and clothe ourselves by using God-supplied materials. The physical belongs to Him, but we have His leave to use it (Genesis 3:17-19, 8:16-22).

After death, humans will spend eternity in heaven or hell, depending upon their individual spiritual relationship with Christ. And the future of the physical world? Until God decides to end the existence of this present world, we are stewards of it. (*Amen.*)

But just as an owner can set parameters of what his steward may do with what is placed under his jurisdiction, God has given us guidelines and limits regarding what we may do with His creation. We will seek to examine some of these guidelines and limits in light of current ecological concerns in future articles.

Mixed Worldviews

Sometimes it's easy to spot a worldview. Statements like “Don't cut down that tree, you'll hurt it,” or “The deer have

as much right to be here as we do,” express a pantheistic worldview. “This fish developed these characteristics to be able to thrive in this unusual river” expresses an evolutionary worldview. A person with a biblical worldview may agree that a particular tree should not be cut down, that certain deer should not be shot, and that a fish has characteristics that suit it to a particular river—but a person with a biblical worldview will have different reasons for the position.

Many people are not entirely in one worldview camp or the other. People often pick and mix their positions regarding what should be done with the physical world based on what feels right or is politically correct at the time. For example, since an evolutionary world view does not recognize an existence after death, this position could logically be used to justify suicide. However, many who hold an evolutionary worldview condemn suicide because people are “special.” If being “special” involves something beyond the physical, they are probably borrowing that concept from either a pantheistic or a biblical worldview.

There are Christians who take positions based on pantheistic or evolutionary dogma, often without knowing it. For example: “God put this valley here. If He wanted it under water He would have put it under water. We should not dam the river because we would be destroying what God meant to be here.” While recognizing God as the Creator makes it seem biblical by attributing special value to the way something naturally exists, but this person is actually expressing a pantheistic worldview. ☒

SUMMARY OF WORLDVIEWS OF THE PHYSICAL WORLD

	EVOLUTIONARY	PANTHEISTIC	BIBLICAL
BEGINNING	Always existed, “Big Bang,” some other guess	God predates physical or god and physical always existed.	God existed before He created all things.
EXISTENCE	Just happened based on natural physical laws	God exists as the physical, the physical is god.	Dualism (God and the physical are separate)
SPIRITUAL	None (or unknown)	Physical – manifestation of spiritual	God gives each human an eternal soul.
ENVIRONMENT	Just there	Parts of god to be experienced, united	God owns and placed physical under human dominion.
FUTURE	Continue evolving	Becoming more of god, uniting god parts	Physical – be good stewards Spiritual – be faithful servants
AFTER DEATH	Nothing (or unknown)	Reincarnation	Eternity in heaven or hell (based on relationship to Christ)



Mr. 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.

GENESIS

GOD'S BOOK OF BEGINNINGS STUDY NOTES

Chapter 9

Key verse:

"And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth" (Genesis 9:11).

This is a clear promise regarding God's government of the world while the earth exists. This was of great reassurance to Noah and his family when future rain descended. Rain was no longer God's judgment but a mercy, especially when attended by a rainbow.

Summary

Genesis chapter 9 gives information on the distance between animals and humans. It sets out man's commission to replenish the earth and lay a foundation for human government to protect human life.

VERSES 1-17 RECORD GOD'S INSTRUCTIONS TO NOAH AND HIS CHILDREN:

1. The command to repopulate the earth
2. The distance between man and animals
3. The freedom to use animals as a source of food
4. The basis of human government
5. The covenant of mercy symbolized in the rainbow

VERSES 18-29 RECORD EVENTS THAT TOOK PLACE IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE WORLD-WIDE FLOOD:

1. The first acts of husbandry in planting a vineyard
2. The depravity of man in Noah's drunkenness and Canaan's sexual perversity
3. The consequences of sin dividing men in the new world

Observations

GOD'S BLESSING ON NOAH AND HIS SONS WAS LINKED TO THE ALTAR WHICH NOAH BUILT.

Chapter 9 begins with "and", which directs the reader back to the closing event in chapter 8. (We must not be distracted by chapter divisions in our study of the Bible, for they can be arbitrary). It is significant that Noah's first act after exiting the ark was to build an altar unto the Lord (Genesis 8:20). Clean animals and birds had been preserved for this act of sacrificing. God accepted the offering as a "sweet savor," which led to a decree of mercy toward sinners (Genesis 8:21). The formulation of the covenant recorded in Genesis 9:9-17 is premised on the blood offering that was accepted by God. Every covenant made by God is ratified by blood. The sacrifice of Christ was no different. It is the blood of Jesus Christ that made atonement to turn away God's wrath, and it is the blood of Christ "that cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:9).

GOD GAVE MAN DOMINION OVER THE EARTH.

Man is called to repopulate the world and to have dominion over all the creatures in the earth (Genesis 9:1). God put a greater degree of fear between Noah and the animals than was the case before the flood (Genesis 9:2). They would no longer act friendly to man; they would be controlled by fear, and so needed to be hunted and domesticated. They were to become a source of food to eat (Genesis 9:3). God made man to have dominion over all living things in the earth. This truth is another argument against evolution, pantheism, and

reincarnation. Animals are not moving in a cycle toward humanity. They do not have souls, and are not of eternal value, but were created by God for man's survival and pleasure. These instructions to Noah were important as man's dependence on animals for food and the necessities of life increased after the flood, due to a harsh climate.

Note that the selection of animals for man to eat was not limited to clean animals. That distinction came later under Levitical laws, and was abrogated in the New Testament. Think of Peter's vision of unclean beasts and creeping things and the command, "Arise Peter, slay and eat" (Acts 11:7) and Paul's statement, "For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer" (1 Timothy 4:4-5). These New Testament instructions further establish this truth.

BY FORBIDDING MEN TO EAT BLOOD, GOD ESTABLISHED THE PRINCIPLE OF LIFE WITHIN THE BLOOD.

The principle of life within the blood relates to the work of atonement. "For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul" (Leviticus 17:11). This fundamental principle contains a gospel lesson on the absolute necessity of blood atonement in a sinner's reconciliation to God. Dr. Henry Morris, commenting on Leviticus 17:11 stated, "**The flesh was given for meat, but the life of the flesh was given for sacrifice**" (Morris, "The Genesis Record," p. 223).

On this principle rests the doctrine and practice of substitutionary atonement. God accepted the life of a sacrifice offered



up to Him in the place of the life of a guilty sinner. This principle was daily before the eyes of worshippers in the morning and evening sacrifices offered in Old Testament worship. By its visible and continual ministration in their midst Israelites were constantly schooled in the principle of substitutionary atonement. Through the Levitical sacrifices, God intended to teach all Israelites and all Bible readers to apply the principle of “the life of the flesh is in the blood” to the death of Christ. Christ’s life was poured out when He shed His blood for His people. When a sinner exercises faith in the blood of Christ he or she is saved from the penalty of sin, which is death, by the value and vitality of the life of Christ. This gospel principle is clearly expounded to New Testament believers in the book of Hebrews (Hebrews 9:13-28). Substitutionary atonement, therefore, is at the heart of the gospel and must be preached by every gospel preacher and delighted in by every congregation that would honor the Lord in worship.

GENESIS 9:5-6 LAYS THE FOUNDATION FOR HUMAN GOVERNMENT.

Up until this chapter, there was no death penalty for manslaying. Cain was cursed and banished, but not punished with death. Likewise Lamech, though guilty of shedding human blood, did not face death for his crimes. But in Genesis 9 God gave the command, “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed...” (Genesis 9:6). The words “by man” call for human government, for it is man who is to put to death the manslayer. When an earthly government puts to death a manslayer it

is not murder, it is capital punishment. The apostle Paul taught that the magistrate who beareth the sword “is the minister of God” (Romans 13:1-6).

The principle also applies to animals which cause the death of men (Genesis 9:5). The animal that is guilty of taking human life is to be put to death. This principle is practiced in most societies today.

“It is clear, of course, that the authority for capital punishment also implies the authority to establish laws to govern human activities and personal relationships, which, if unregulated, could soon lead to murder (e.g., robbery, adultery, usurpation of property boundaries). Thus, this simple instruction to Noah is the fundamental basis for all human legal and governmental institutions” (Morris, “The Genesis Record”, p. 225).

MAN’S UNIQUE CREATION IN THE IMAGE OF GOD IS THE REASON THAT HIS BLOOD IS TO BE AVENGED.

God’s argument for revenging the murder of man is based on the fact that His own image is stamped upon man, “for in the image of God made he man” (Genesis 9:6). This issue rests on much more than revenge. It rests upon justice. It is God who demands the death of the murderer. This is because an attack upon man is an attack upon God, for man bears God’s image. To hate your brother is not only a crime against a human figure; it is against the character of God. Man’s body may be made of clay, but his soul comes from God. His greatest value is in the eternal nature of his soul. His destiny

in eternity, whether it be heaven or hell, may be determined by the manslayer’s hand. When a murderer takes another’s life, he has little consideration for that person’s soul.

Application

While this world continues, worship by the blood of Christ is required by God. Liberalism leads worshippers away from the doctrine of Christ’s blood-atonement, whereas biblical orthodoxy leads worshippers to declare and defend the substitutionary nature of Christ’s sacrifice for sin.

The second part of the royal law sets forth our duty to love our neighbor as ourselves. This includes his or her physical and spiritual good. Our evangelism should be based on the fact that men are made in God’s image. It is our duty to warn them of sin’s destruction, aiming to bring them to salvation through faith in Christ’s atoning blood.

To Do

Read the *Westminster Larger Catechism* questions and answers 135 & 136 on the duties required and the sins forbidden in the sixth commandment. ■



Rev. Ian Goligher
Moderator of FPCNA



EXCITING TIMES IN THE LORD'S WORK

The Editor in conversation with Rev. and Mrs. James Beggs

“Four churches opened in 1951—even for young people it was very, very exciting!” These words, spoken by Mrs. Beggs, highlight what happens in the hearts of God’s people when God is at work. She counted it a great privilege to have been a teenager in the founding years of the Free Presbyterian Church (FPC).

Young person, do you count it a privilege to be involved in the FPC? What do you look for in a church? What is it that makes church exciting? There are those who are Free Presbyterians due to the convenience of birth or location, but what about being a Free Presbyterian out of conviction? Have you considered what characterizes the FPC? To help you with this, I want to relate a Zoom call with a couple of

people who were teenagers when the FPC was formed in 1951.

Rev. James Beggs is the Minister Emeritus of Ballymena FPC, serving as pastor there until his retirement in 2000. He wasn’t a Free Presbyterian in the early 1950’s. He attributes meeting a certain Miss Margaret Paisley in college as one of God’s providences leading him into the work! Mrs. Margaret Beggs (née Paisley) was the younger sister of Dr. Ian R.K. Paisley by ten years. As a teenager she recalls attending the opening of the first Free Presbyterian churches founded in 1951: Crossgar, Martyrs’ Memorial, Cabra, and Rasharkin. (Dr McClelland records some of the details of this important year in his article in this magazine.) Mrs. Beggs knew that God was moving. Souls were being saved

and there was a genuine excitement to see God at work. Ninety-four souls professed faith in Christ in the gospel meetings conducted by Dr. Paisley in that first Crossgar mission.

While Mrs. Beggs was attending these special meetings, Mr. Beggs was being raised in a staunch Irish Presbyterian church. With sadness, he recalls how rare it was to hear the gospel being preached. Even though he was a young person and unsaved, he could detect the difference between a visiting “evangelical” preacher and the regular messages. He was saved while at college in Belfast and, when a friendship began to blossom with Miss Paisley, he was introduced to the preaching

of Pastor J. Kyle Paisley and his two sons, Harold and Ian.

I'll let Rev. Beggs relate his reasons for leaving Irish Presbyterianism and embracing the work of the FPC: "I came to the position where I could no longer support the [General] Assembly. There were three things that led up to the formation of the FPC. First of all, there was the heresy trial of Professor Davy (1927). When you read the records of his teaching, there was no question that he was guilty and yet he was exonerated by the Assembly and later even elected as Moderator. This was evidence of a departure from the faith and the acceptance of apostasy. As a Presbyterian, how could anyone who believed the Word of God accept this? Then there was the rise of ecumenism in the Irish Presbyterian Church. One leading man in the formation of the World Council of Churches said, "This is a reversal of the trend that began at the Reformation." For me that was sufficient. But thirdly, there was the rejection of the gospel in Crossgar." Though Rev. Beggs was not in the FPC in 1951, the recollection of those events was determinative in his decision to join the fledgling denomination.

Very early on, Rev. Beggs identified a new form of preaching in the new denomination. In his own words, "The early preaching had a tremendous impact on me. The application of the Reformed faith to the need of the sinner—I had never heard that! The preaching got to me!" From my own experience, I can confirm that what struck Rev. Beggs in the early days of the FPC molded his own ministry. I heard him preach in 2004 about the essence of Free Presbyterianism. I recall his passion as he presented with joy the fact that the Free Church sought to preach Christ evangelistically to sinners, upon the foundation of the historic doctrines of Christ. It was this combination of zeal for truth and zeal for souls that convinced me to plant my flag in this denomination. These things ought to burn within all of our hearts. It is a privilege to sit under such preaching. As our interview came to a close, Rev. Beggs was eager to make one last point about the early days.

"I came into the church as a young believer and we had late-night prayer meetings. I learned to pray amongst those men and there was a spirit of prayer. If the Free church is here today, I believe it's in answer to prayer. The Free Church is far from perfect, but the Lord has been good and I see much of what happened as an answer to prayer." Reflecting on the unique characters of those present, Rev.

Beggs, told me with a smile, "Those prayer meetings weren't always 'orthodox' but the Spirit of God was there. They were men whom God had taught to pray. We should never lose sight of the place of prayer in the work."

The point is this—young people in the 1950s and 60s in Northern Ireland lived through times when God came down. The Lord's presence drew them to meetings where they simply praised God and sat under the preaching of the Word. The Lord moved in their hearts so that they gladly met for seasons of prayer, longing that others would know the joy that they knew.

Young people, do not seek a *manufactured* excitement in your church life. The church may allow the world to come in and determine what will draw people and produce joy. Genuine joy in the things of God arises when the Lord comes in His presence. Power in preaching, prayer, and praise results. Understand that the heartbeat of the FPC is the preaching of Christ and Him crucified. It is our earnest desire to apply that truth powerfully to saint and sinner alike. When we fall short of this, we fail. When other things cause us to forget this, we fail. Young person, join with us in praying for this denomination, that we would know the power of God upon us. I want to know the "exciting times" when God comes down! ■



Mr. Benjamin Thomas (Orlando FPC and Geneva Reformed Seminary student) married Miss Heidi Tart (North Carolina) on Saturday, March 20, 2021. They are setting up home in the Greenville, SC area as Benjamin continues his studies.



Mr. Isaac Sassa (FPC of Malvern) and Miss Kara Morrow (Phoenix FPC) were married in Peoria, Arizona on January 1, 2021. They have set up home in the Phoenix area.



Offering Christian hospitality is a natural outflowing of Christian love which desires to enjoy the company of others for their mutual benefit.

Showing hospitality to others is such a commonplace and ordinary happening that we hardly give it much deeper thought than choosing the menu for the upcoming gathering. However, this last year in the panic of the pandemic, Christian hospitality took a hard hit. For weeks, no one visited or entertained either in homes or in churches. It wasn't long before many wished for fellowship again. It also wasn't long before many became used to a "new normal" that excluded Christian hospitality. For some who have resumed cautious gatherings, getting back into practice is challenging! Revisiting the Scriptural teachings of this Christian grace can revitalize hospitality in seasons to come.

The Scriptures show by example and teach by direct command the grace of Christian hospitality. Abraham, the friend of God and the father of the faithful, lived a unique life as God communed with him on several occasions. When the three men appeared near Abraham's tent one day, Abraham ran to meet them, greeted them with honor, wished them to visit for a while, provided water for their dusty feet, and offered the shade of the tree for rest. Hurriedly, he asked Sarah

to bake some bread and told his young men to prepare the young calf. Soon Abraham carried the meal of bread and butter, meat and milk to his guests. Abraham's and Sarah's eager actions, along with many other Old Testament scenes, as well as the gospels show us what hospitality entails and reflect New Testament commands given to the church.

The New Testament encourages Christians to be "given to hospitality" (Romans 12:13; 1 Timothy 3:2); to "use hospitality without grudging" (1 Peter 4:9); to be "a lover of hospitality" (Titus 1:8); and "to entertain strangers" (Hebrews 13:2). "Hospitality" comes from two Greek words—"love" and "stranger," or "showing love to strangers." As an outworking of our sincere love, we should be given to hospitality, cheerfully entertaining guests for God's glory and for the good of others.

What is the foundation for our love of hospitality? Ephesians 2:11-22 explains God's great love and kindness to those who were strangers to God's covenants and promises, those with no hope and without God. Verses 13-19 crescendo with Christ's work to take strangers and foreigners and to make them "fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God." Being in Christ Jesus and reconciled to God,

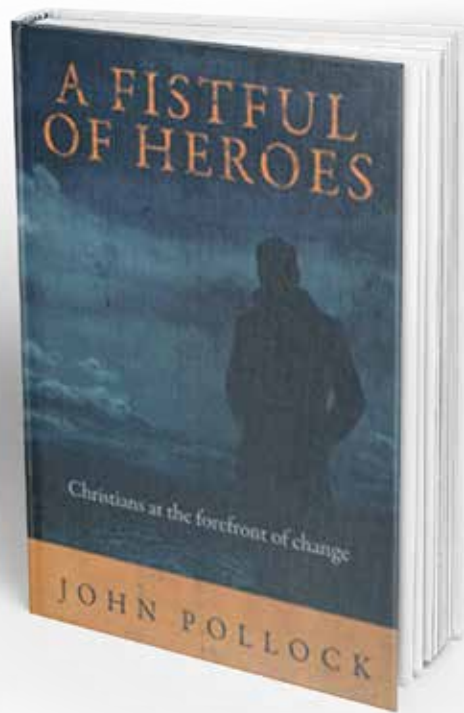
they are brought near through the blood of the cross and are made part of God's family. Because of God's abundant charity lavished on us, we, the strangers brought home to God, are motivated and empowered to extend hospitality to others.

Not only do hospitality opportunities abound in the Scriptures, but they abound in Christian history. The homes of Martin Luther, John Welsh, Thomas Chalmers, Charles Spurgeon, and Francis Schaeffer were often filled with guests and students. In the home, at the dinner table, and in evening conversations, these great men helped the younger generation work out the great theological concerns of their days. John Bunyan in *Pilgrim's Progress* describes the sweet hospitality and spiritual benefit of the Interpreter's House and the House Beautiful.

What encouragement for 21st century Christians to intentionally, passionately, and safely embrace hospitality for their enjoyment and mutual good and for the glory of God! ❧



Mrs. Barbara Mooney
wife of Rev. Myron Mooney,
Trinity FPC, AL



A Fistful of Heroes

by John Pollock

While some people are not happy with the monuments of national heroes and even of well-known Christians, others are glad to celebrate their great accomplishments. Several Christian publishers have produced tremendous books about heroes and heroines, as still others continue to reprint the popular titles to meet the ever-increasing demand. The Word of God strongly sanctions such testimonies that glorify the Lord. Romans 13:7 gives the enduring command, “Render therefore to all their dues...honor to whom honor.”

Christian Focus, a Scottish publisher, has provided a gem for the reader that will enable Christians to grow in their knowledge of church history, delight their heart by learning of previously unknown Christians, and promote hope in times of perplexity. This little volume of 287 pages, written by John Pollock in 1988, is entitled, *A Fistful of Heroes*, with the subtitle, “Christians at the Forefront of Change.”

The first four chapters recount the lives of several compassionate men who were instrumental in freeing African slaves, working tirelessly to gain their freedom. One of them was the famous pastor and hymn writer Rev. John Newton,

who was involved in the horrors of the slave trade before he became a child of God by faith in Christ. Then he began showing Christian love to all of his fellow human beings.

The second set of four chapters is devoted to the memory of Christian philanthropists who served the poor and vulnerable. One of them developed Sunday schools to meet the spiritual and academic needs of poor street children. Through the efforts and influence of a godly woman of means, the wretched conditions of prisons for women were greatly improved. A young apprentice started the YMCA to provide for young men, who were far from home and family, and needed extra Christian influences to help avoid temptation to sin. Throughout the week there were activities, Bible studies, and fellowship to strengthen the lonely young men.

These chapters are followed by accounts of some of the Christian military geniuses of the nineteenth century. It is quite striking that a similar book of Christian heroes by Iain Murray, published by Banner of Truth around the same time, includes a hero from the Southern United States. In both of these publications the Southern heroes exercised successful ministries to the

African slaves. The account in Pollock's work is a sketch of General “Stonewall” Jackson's life.

The next five chapters record the lives and ministries of several of the nineteenth century's greatest soul-winning preachers, who experienced true revivals and times of spiritual refreshing. Saving grace rescued some of these men of God right as they reached the end of their rope and even came near to committing suicide.

The final pages of the book give excellent introductions to the lives and ministries of fifteen pioneer missionaries. Beginning with William Carey in the late eighteenth century, the survey takes the reader all the way to the middle of the twentieth century. Six of these godly witnesses for Christ were women. Several of these precious saints of God gave their all for Christ, suffering martyrdom while taking the gospel to poor, benighted heathen. The living faith of these heroes enabled some of them to serve for many years amidst dangerous cannibalistic tribes.

The dedication of all of these servants of the Lord in the face of seemingly insurmountable trials is a tremendous inspiration to believers amid the daily struggles of Christian living. The study of these exemplary servants of Christ presents a much-needed corrective for Christians that are merely existing in self-indulgent profession. It is easy to sink into an unthankful, pessimistic attitude being unwilling to suffer or to do anything for the advancement of Christ's kingdom. Reading testimonies like these provoke powerful questions in the reader's mind: *Where is the spiritual fruit that should be in my life? Where is the reality? Where is the evidence of true, living faith?*

A Fistful of Heroes by John Pollock is available online for \$5 in paperback and a little more for the eBook. ■



Rev. Myron Mooney
Minister of Trinity FPC,
Trinity, AL



For Such a Time As This

People all around us, even government leaders, are deliberately breaking God's laws. Do you ever wonder what your purpose is in such a sinful world?

In the Old Testament, we read about Esther, a young Jewess living in Shushan, Persia, now known as Iran. Jews scattered throughout Persia after King Cyrus freed them from Babylonian captivity. Many returned home to Jerusalem, but some, like Esther's family, stayed in Persia. After Esther's parents died, she was adopted by her uncle, Mordecai. She lived a simple life and was not well known in Shushan.

Shushan was ruled by an ungodly king called Ahasuerus, who separated from his wife, Vashti, after she refused to entertain the king and his friends at a royal party. He wanted a new queen, so he invited young women from all over the kingdom to meet him. Mordecai sent Esther to the palace, but told her to keep her heritage a secret because many Persians did not like Jews. When Esther came to appear before the king, he loved her more than all of the other women and made her queen. Esther, once unknown, was now recognized by the whole kingdom! However, she still held a secret: she was a Jew.

One day, Esther's maids told her that Mordecai had torn his clothes and was running through the city, sobbing. Haman, one of the king's most important leaders, had ordered all Jews in Persia to be killed, including women and children. Mordecai overheard Haman's plan at the palace gate where he sat daily. So, Mordecai sent word to Esther that she must tell the king Haman's evil plot. Esther was afraid. According to royal custom, she could only see the king if he called for her. If she went uninvited, he might kill her. But, if he held out his golden scepter to her, she was welcome in his presence. Mordecai begged Esther to understand that she had been crowned queen "for such a time as this" (Esther 4:14). As queen, she could save her people from destruction.

Courageously, Esther went before the king. Imagine her fear! Mercifully, King Ahasuerus held out his golden scepter to her and told her she could ask for anything, up to half the kingdom. What relief for Esther!

Esther was wise and did not immediately reveal her request. Instead, she asked the king and Haman to attend a banquet with her. Then she held another banquet for them the next day. At this second feast, the king asked again what he could do for her. This time, Esther poured out her heart, telling the king she was a Jew and that Haman had plotted to destroy her people. How shocked Haman must have been listening to this! The king was so angry that he ordered Haman to be hanged on the gallows he had created for Mordecai, whom he hated for not bowing down to him.

Mordecai was right: God put Esther in a wicked place so she could save her people. *For such a time as this.* Remember, Jesus was also of Jewish lineage. In God's sovereign will, Esther preserved the line of Christ in saving her people. What an amazing story of a young woman who had no influence, but became queen of a heathen empire and saved the Jews.

You may never become a king or a queen. You may never be known in your city, state, or country. But God created you to live in *this* time, in *your* city, to influence those around you for the Lord Jesus Christ.

No matter how evil this world becomes, God created you *for such a time as this.* ☛



Rachel Huffman
member of Lehigh Valley
FPC, PA.

A WORD WORTH KNOWING

Courage

Doing what is right, no matter what it may cost



WINTER 2021



Thomas Backhurst
Calgary FPC



Gene Escobar
Cloverdale FPC



Rose Pollock
FPC of Malvern



David Vosekalns
Phoenix FPC



Elise Vosekalns
Phoenix FPC

Kids' Crossword Puzzle

Answers are found in the book of Esther

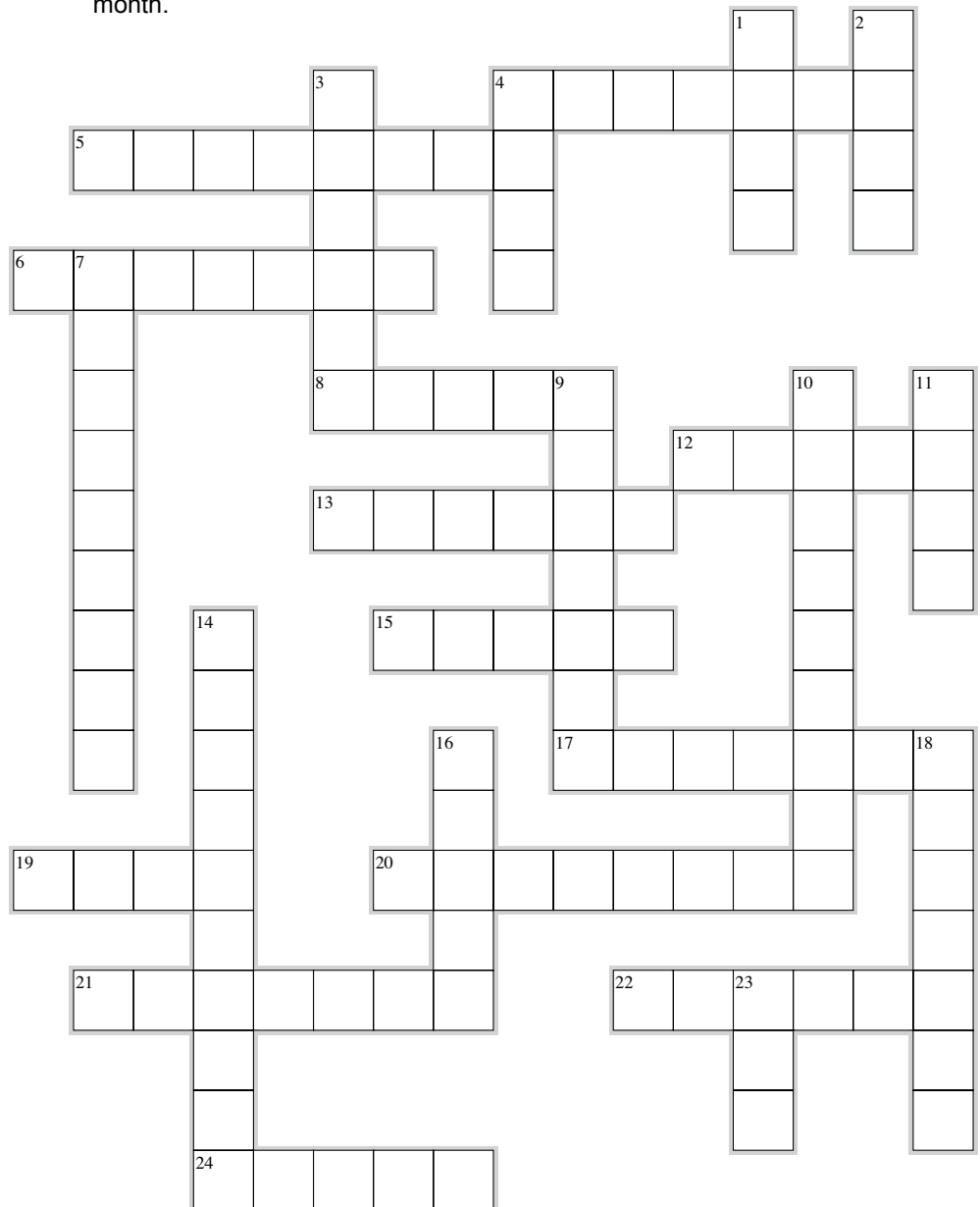
Answers must be spelled as found in the Bible (KJV).

Across

4. What did Esther want the king to do to the letters devised by Haman?
5. Esther's guardian or adoptive father
6. Esther invited the king and Haman to attend what?
8. Everyone except Mordecai bowed down to him.
12. In letters written by Mordecai, the king gave the Jews permission to defend themselves or to "_____ for their life."
13. Queen before Esther
15. The feast that celebrated the Jews' deliverance from their enemies
17. Haman's wife and friends told him to build what for Mordecai?
19. As she prepared to go to the king, what did Esther want the Jews to do for her?
20. Esther's other name
21. The king held this out to people he accepted
22. Messenger between Esther and Mordecai
24. After Haman was hanged, what did the king give to Esther?
3. Haman's wife
4. After Haman was hanged, what did the king give to Mordecai?
7. King of Persia and Media
9. When the king could not sleep, he found out this had been done to reward Mordecai for saving his life?
10. The Jews wore this to show mourning.
11. The Jews were to be killed during this month.
14. On what day of the month did the attack on the Jews begin?
16. The Bible says Mordecai sought the wealth of his people and spoke _____ to all his seed.
18. Location of the palace
23. The number of banquets Esther gave for the king and Haman

Down

1. True or false? The king could not change his decree that the Jews be destroyed.
2. The people Haman wanted to destroy



PLEASE NOTE: Please send your completed puzzle to Current Kids' Corner, c/o Judy Brown, 651 Ponden Dr., Greer, SC 29650 or to ljsbrown2@gmail.com by May 31, 2021. Include your name, address, age, and the name of the church you attend. Please also include an email address in case we need to contact you about your entry. 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.



— ASSURANCE OF — FAITH

Rev. Stephen Hamilton

There are two great questions all of us should be concerned with: *How can I be saved?* and *How can I know that I am saved?* The Bible teaches that sinners *can* be saved. This is the reason Christ came into the world, “to save sinners.” The Scriptures also teach that those who have been saved by Christ *can* know it: “...that ye may know that ye have eternal life” (1 John 5:13). It is entirely possible to have true faith in Christ yet still lack assurance. Of course, there are some who feel assured of that which is *not* true, i.e. they believe they are saved, but are not! They claim to be Christians, and are sure of heaven, but they are false professors.¹

For assurance of salvation to be genuine, there has to be a proper basis for it. We must believe that God *will* do for His people exactly what He has promised. Can we trust God and take Him at His Word? This is at the heart of this issue. Assurance is based upon the testimony of the Scriptures! (Romans 15:4) Eternal salvation has been provided for sinners by a God who cannot lie. His Word tells us about salvation from sin and hell, and how it has been provided. John refers to *these things* that he had written.²

The Promises of the Reward of Christ's Work

The blood of Christ shed for sinners really saves! Note these Bible words and phrases: *cleansing, forgiveness, propitiation, to take away sins, that we might live through Him, He hath given to us eternal life.* God, in a covenant of redemption, gave Christ to be the Substitute and Surety of His people. Jesus came to live and die to “save them from their sins”. And His work has been successful (Isaiah 53:10-12). Consider the work of Christ:

(1) *Accepted by God* (Romans 3:25,26; 2 Corinthians 5:19)
“Because the sinless Savior died, My sinful soul is counted free;
For God the Just is satisfied to look on Him and pardon me.”

(2) *Announced in the Gospel* (Romans 5:8; 1 Peter 2:24; 3:18)
The gospel presents a free salvation upon the merits of Christ. The promise of God is to save all that come unto God by Him. He will save whosoever believes on His Son.³

(3) *Applied in Grace*
God saves sinners! His Spirit is sent forth to bring to God all those for whom Christ died (John 3:8). It is His function to direct sinners to Christ—to look unto Him and be saved. Therefore, no one is saved by his own work, but by Christ's work on his behalf (Titus 3:5). Your assurance is in resting upon what God has done for you in Christ (Hebrews 6:17-20).

The Promises of Resting in Christ's Work

Are you looking to Jesus *only* as the ground of your acceptance with God? This is the ground of peace: “My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus blood and righteousness; I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus Name!” Luther said he would not give all the world for one leaf of the Bible. God cannot deny His own Word. It is the guarantee of eternal salvation to all that believe. In Scripture, many promises are given to those who rest upon Christ's saving work.⁴ Note that His promise is “sure to all the seed” (Romans 4:16). God has given us His oath (John 6:37). He says: “Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out!” Will you trust Christ's Word?

¹ Titus 1:16; Matthew 7:21-23

² 1 John 1:7, 9; 2:2; 3:5,16; 4:9,10; 5:11

³ John 3:16; Romans 10:13; 1 John 5:1,10-12

⁴ John 3:36; 5:24; 10:28-30