

QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF NORTH AMERICA

# CURRENT

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HOLY  
BIBLE

THE CALL TO  
**EVANGELIZE**

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**MORAL DILEMMA?**

THE  
**REFORMATION  
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**OPEN DOOR**  
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TAKE HEED HOW YOU  
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## THE CALL TO EVANGELIZE

by Rev. Ian Goligher

It is reported that General William Booth, when he was officiating at a graduation ceremony for Salvation Army evangelists, said, “If I had my way, I would have you suffer three hours in hell, for it would have saved these three years of study.”

Have we lost the burden to evangelize? Did we ever have it? The state of the church is rightly assessed by its burden for the lost. History reminds us that when churches experience a period of revival there is a heightened awareness of the glories of heaven and of the horrors of hell. Sin will be rightly seen in its enormity as a crime against a holy God who will bring down His righteous indignation on wicked men. These awe-inspiring convictions lead to a red-hot zeal for the salvation of lost souls. In such times, the church that gathers for prayer sheds agonizing tears for the lost. The fearful reality of the fires of the damned is made so vivid to believers’ minds that the thought of an unsaved soul falling into hell alarms and horrifies them.

The doctrines of eternal matters may still be subscribed to by the church today, but the sense of their reality and immediacy are mostly lost to worshipers’ awareness. They can sing, and even pray about these things, but it is as if they were a million miles away and of little consequence. The lip mutters them, but the heart denies them. So often, the result is that prayer takes on a different form and evangelistic zeal diminishes or dies. Then the church has fallen into an unhealthy condition.

Until the salvation of lost souls and their future edification become pressing priorities, the church will never function according to the plan and purpose of God. When the Lord Jesus asked,

“What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?” He clearly taught that the worth of one soul outweighs the worth of the whole world. May the Lord write this truth in large letters on the heart of every reader.

We know that we are not living in days of revival. We are living in times of worldwide spiritual coldness. It seems today that the very best worship and service for God are lukewarm. We truly need a stirring in our very souls to awaken us to the work of winning the lost.

Ask yourself, “What will it take to motivate me to become a winner of souls?” Surely you will agree that a deep conviction of gospel doctrine is the first requirement, followed by much prayer to receive the saving power of the gospel. You will also need to pray for a personal infilling of the Holy Spirit in your life. Then, you will need to meet some soul with whom to share Christ. Finally, purpose to witness to that person with all the tender love of a missionary sent by God. Ask a friend to help you. Ask your minister for advice in witnessing to the lost. Perhaps, begin at a Care Home for seniors who are lonely and love to talk. Give out gospel literature and engage people in conversation. Work to get people into the church to hear the truth of God. Those visitors whom you bring will act as fuel for the preacher, renewing his purpose to preach and a reason for the whole church to pray. These are the evidences that God is stirring our hearts to the great work of evangelism. May it please God to use this issue of the *Current* to renew the old evangelistic fire within us.

Let us always remember that our Lord’s great commission of Matthew 28:19-20 is still His command for the church today.



## A LUTHER LESSON LUTHER’S FIRST MAJOR DEBATE

### The Place

Augsburg, Germany

### The Date

October 12 - 14, 1518

### Luther’s Opponent

Cardinal Cajetan, the pope’s legate.

### Luther’s Argument

The treasure of indulgences does not consist of the sufferings and merits of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Personal faith in Christ is required to receive the grace of the gospel.

Luther affirmed, “No man can be justified before God if he has not faith so that it is necessary for a man to believe with a perfect assurance that he has obtained grace. To doubt of this grace is to reject it. The faith of the righteous is his righteousness and his life.”<sup>1</sup>

### Cardinal Cajetan’s Demand

Retract this denial that past and future sins could be remitted through the purchase of indulgences, or be sent to Rome to face excommunication from the church.

### Luther’s Reply

He needed to be convinced from Scripture that his views were wrong. He was willing to be corrected from Scripture by whomever would convince him. He would not retract, however, merely out of blind loyalty to a church, to a system of religion, or to a pope who showed no regard for the clear teaching of the Word of God.

### The Result

“The Cardinal flared up and bellowed that Luther should leave and never come back unless he was ready to say, “Revoco” – “I recant.”<sup>2</sup> Luther bowed meekly, and left the hall as the victor of the debate. Protestant historians agree that this was the first step by which the reformed church separated from the papacy.

<sup>1</sup> d’Aubigne, Merle. *The Triumph of Truth*. Translated by Henry White; edited by Mark Sidwell. (Greenville: Bob Jones University Press, 1996), 164.

<sup>2</sup> Bainton, Roland. *Here I Stand*. (Herts, England: Lion Publishing, 1978), 96.



Questions and Answers with

# Rev. Derrick Bowman



*Rev. Derrick Bowman is a true Alabamian. He is by walk and talk the embodiment of southern hearts and hospitality. Raised in a godly Baptist home and converted to Christ at an early age, Derrick has dedicated his whole life to the service of Christ. Derrick lives in the city of Winston-Salem, North Carolina and is the associate minister at Grace FPC, where Rev. Reggie Kimbro is the senior minister. A man of many talents, Rev. Bowman is much appreciated in our denomination for his ministry and fellowship. We are pleased that this interview provides our readers with an opportunity to learn about his life and work.*

### **Tell us a little about your childhood and family life growing up in the state of Alabama.**

Although I was born in Birmingham, Alabama, my family and I moved to France when I was very young to help my maternal grandparents with a mission project there. They were missionaries in Nice for over thirty-five years. We lived in France from the time I was three until I was five. When we came back to Alabama, I enjoyed growing up next door to my paternal grandparents who had seventy-six acres to explore. My grandfather had cattle and a huge garden. Between our own garden and Grandpa's, I spent a lot of time walking behind a tiller helping to get the soil ready for planting. I enjoyed fishing in the creek, and hunting small animals with my Red Rider BB gun. A lot of my childhood was occupied playing baseball. In fact, my three younger brothers and I played baseball every year. It got ridiculous for my mother who was often running from one field to another to try to see each of us at bat! It was worse when we all made All-Stars and were playing games in different cities at the same time. For me, baseball eventually became an idol until the Lord stepped in and took it away from me when I was sixteen. That was when the Lord changed the direction of my life toward the ministry.

### **How do you think your family life impacted your character and service for the Lord later?**

I had the blessing of growing up in a Christian home, with two sets of Christian grandparents. My parents instilled in me the ways of the Lord from birth. I mentioned earlier about baseball being something of an idol in my life, but even through that, I did have a desire to serve the Lord. My parents had ingrained this principle in me, "You are better off being a ditch digger in the Lord's will than being the richest person in the world outside of God's will." I knew they were right. My parents taught me to follow the Lord no matter

what and implanted in me a good work ethic. I think most of that comes from all the hard work on the farm, as farm work never stops!

### **At what age did you come to the absolute assurance of salvation?**

I heard the gospel from my earliest days, but it was not until I was seven years old that the Lord convicted me of my sin and brought me to Himself. It was on a Sunday morning at church. I knew that if I had died then, I would not have gone to heaven. Actually, it was through our pastor's wife that I came to Christ.

### **How did you meet your wife Lydia and how did you know she was the right person to marry?**

I originally met Lydia when I went to visit Rev. Reggie Kimbro at Grace FPC in Winston-Salem, North Carolina to do an internship for him in his church. The Kimbros had planned a youth gathering, and Lydia was one of the girls in the youth group. I did not think about her until about a year and a half later at our denomination's youth camp when I first noticed her as a potential wife. I had the opportunity to see her among her peers, and the verse concerning David in I Samuel 18:14 came to mind: "And David behaved himself wisely in all his ways; and the LORD was with him." To this day, that is still how I view Lydia.

After that youth camp, I began to pray for the Lord's will concerning her. About

six months later, the Lord gave me clear direction that she would be my wife. I called her father and told him that I wanted to marry his daughter. He gave me permission to talk to her, and I told Lydia that I had already spoken to her dad and that I wanted to marry her. Needless to say, she was surprised and spent the next few months seeking the Lord. During a chapel service at Bob Jones University, the Lord gave her clear direction that we were supposed to be together. After a too-long engagement, we were married on July 19, 2003. Lydia is truly God's gift to me!

### **What was the most difficult aspect of your study years and training for the gospel ministry?**

Balancing study, work, and my relationship with Lydia before we were married.



Derrick in his baseball uniform (age 12 -1990)



Derrick in France (age 1)

**You spent two years in Canada as an intern and assistant in Cloverdale FPC. How did that help to prepare you for your work as a gospel minister?**

My time in Cloverdale FPC was one of the most beneficial times of my life. I enjoyed one-on-one instruction from Pastor Goligher, but more importantly, I had many opportunities to preach. Most weeks, I was preaching four times. The experience of preaching to a group of people on a consistent basis was extremely helpful. There is no better teacher than experience.

**The Lord has blessed you and Lydia with four children. What guidelines do you follow in your home to teach them in the ways of the Lord?**

Our children are definitely gifts from the Lord. Lydia and I both feel the responsibility to teach them the ways of the Lord as we learned them. Besides our family Bible time, we try to emphasize the importance of the means of grace to our children. I try to ask them questions about the morning message or their Sunday School class lesson. We have tried to teach them the importance of the midweek prayer meeting, and the importance for a congregation to pray together.

**What is the primary way you support your wife in your home?**

I don't do nearly enough! I do help with the cooking, though. I love to cook.

**Is there a particularly helpful way by which your wife supports you in your endeavors to serve the Lord?**

Lydia is my greatest supporter in the Lord's service. She is blessed with a keen sense of godly wisdom and with a kind heart which the Lord uses to guide me away from the pitfalls of life to better serve the Lord.

**What do you and your wife like to do together for recreation?**

Recreation requires extra time and extra money. We have neither; however, we do like great food. My motto is, "Life's too short to eat bad food." Together, we like to try to figure out the absolute best way to make a particular dish. We also like to travel when we can, but the time and money restraints limit us. We love Alabama Football!

**As the associate minister, what is your vision for the church in Winston-Salem?**

Primarily, my vision is to support Pastor Kimbro's vision. For a long

time, he has regarded the church at large as being in decline, and his burden is to strengthen the church spiritually. The simple means of grace is so important to the life of a believer, and I have the privilege of helping to promote that among God's people here in Winston-Salem.

**What is your role at the annual summer camps?**

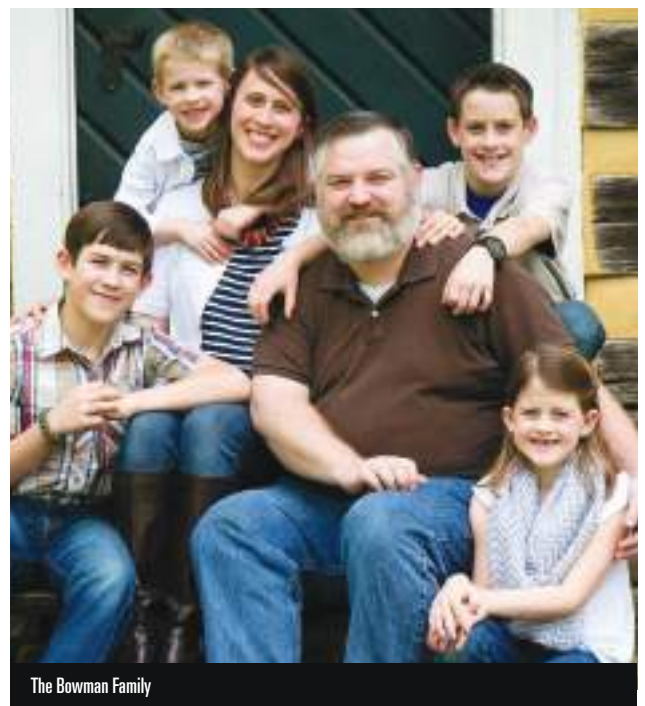
For the past four years, I have been the camp Bible Quiz master. I look forward to it every year. Last year, Lydia was able to be at the camp with me, so we did the cabin clean-up inspections together. That was a lot of fun.

**Will the FP campers see you at youth camp this year?**

Lord willing! ☞



Derrick and Lydia's wedding 2003



The Bowman Family



# CAN YOU SOLVE THIS MORAL DILEMMA?

## CASE ONE: A DEVOUTLY RELIGIOUS PERSON

The Pharisees of Christ's time were very religious people; in fact, you could say that they were in church every time the doors were opened. As well as that, they gave money to the church according to the strictest rules of the Jewish law: they prayed, and read their Bibles. They could quote many passages of Scripture, and they could recite the Ten Commandments perfectly. The Pharisees were proud of their righteousness. But Jesus said to His disciples, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:20). In other words, although they appeared righteous, Jesus said they were not righteous enough for heaven!

## CASE TWO: A WICKED, CONDEMNED CRIMINAL

When the Lord Jesus was nailed to a cross, there were two thieves crucified on either side of Him. At first, the thieves mocked Jesus, but as they drew near death, one of them began to have a change of heart. He said to the other, "Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds." Then turning to Jesus, he said: "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." To this Christ replied: "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:40-43). So we know that, though he lived a wicked life, he was pardoned from His sins by calling on the Lord to save him.

## OUTCOME: A MORAL DILEMMA

According to Christ, the religious Pharisee was not good enough to get to heaven, but the thief, though guilty of horrendous crimes, was promised paradise on the same day he was crucified for his evil deeds. How can the *seemingly* good person be eternally condemned while the publicly-condemned person be assured an immediate place in heaven? Does this make sense?

## THE RESOLUTION

The religious man *thought* he was good enough to be accepted by God, but his pride blinded him to the reality that by nature he was a hopeless case and totally unfit for heaven because he had a huge debt of sin to pay (James 2:10). He did not realize that the Bible clearly teaches that even one sin would keep him out of heaven. The criminal, on the other hand, knew that his sin debt would keep him from being accepted by God. He knew he needed mercy to get into heaven, so he confessed his sin and called upon Christ. Unlike the self-righteous Pharisee, the repentant thief was willing to own up to his own guilt and cry out for mercy. In doing so, he recognized two things: first, that Jesus Christ was Lord and, second, that He needed His saving grace.

## DO YOU KNOW WHAT THIS MEANS?

This means that *any* sinner can gain acceptance with God! Any guilty person can be set free from condemnation and be

assured of everlasting life with God. Every saved sinner is declared righteous because the merit of Jesus is transferred to him. Sinful souls who believe on Christ are given all the perfections of Christ in an imputed righteousness. Then, and only then, are they qualified to stand blameless before God and accepted by Him for all eternity.

## HERE'S WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

No matter what you've done, if you accept Jesus' free offer of pardon, you will be accepted by God. In great love, God sent His Son Jesus Christ to save His people. Jesus suffered as their substitute on the cross of Calvary. He suffered in our place to turn away God's wrath from us. Our sins were so many and so wicked against God's goodness that they needed to be taken off our account. Instead, they were placed on Jesus' account, and He bore them in His own body on the cross. By making Himself a sacrifice to pay the debt of our sins, God is satisfied and we are accepted by Him as free from all sin. Our death sentence became His death sentence.

## HERE'S WHAT YOU SHOULD DO

Don't be like the Pharisee who had only an outward fitness for heaven. Don't trust in an empty, religious show, or your own works or charitable giving, even to the best of causes. Remember that only one sin will keep you out of Heaven. What you need is to confess your sin, repent of it and believe that Christ loved you and died for you. In order to accept Christ's free offer of salvation from sin, just go to Him right now in prayer. Call upon Him and ask Him to be your substitute. Tell Him that you know you cannot be accepted into heaven by your own personal goodness, and claim His promise, "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37).

Now, with the full assurance of salvation, you can begin to live your life in a way that is pleasing to Him, and enjoy the Lord's daily love and mercy. As a true disciple of Christ, you will also need to begin attending a church that will teach you faithfully about the Lord and His ways from His Word. My friend, you will **never** regret trusting in the Lord Jesus. Never! ❏



**Rev. Geoff Bannister**  
is senior minister of  
Indianapolis FPC, Indiana



# THE REFORMATION LUTHER

by Edward M. Panosian



Martin Luther has been called, along with the Apostle Paul and Augustine, one of the three greatest theologians of the Christian church. Luther, however, never meant to be a great theologian. He certainly never meant to shake the foundations of Europe as he did. Martin Luther was originally concerned only with the salvation of his soul. As a result of his inward struggle and the study of God's Word which that struggle spurred, Luther discovered and embraced the doctrines of the Reformation, particularly that of justification by faith alone. These doctrines were not formed in the dry contemplation of the scholar (although Luther was unquestionably a scholar) but in the forge of human experience.

Luther, therefore, was not simply the instigator of the Reformation; he was in many ways an embodiment of it. He was a German peasant born near the end of the fifteenth century. He was to be used of God to lead an unintended revolution away from the ecclesiastical system of the late Middle Ages. He was to be attacked by his enemies for having gone too far and by his friends for not having gone far enough. And he was to pioneer

the Reformation of the sixteenth century, which was to become the pioneer modern movement toward the diversity of Christian denominations owning the absolute authority of the Old and the New Testament Scriptures, toward political liberty, and toward the social, economic, and intellectual enfranchisement of the common man.

In some respects, Martin Luther was like the Apostle Peter. He was often blunt and bombastic, speaking first and considering afterward. But like the Apostle, also, he was graciously empowered to stand on a "day of Pentecost" and proclaim the authority of God's Word, to the confusion of earthly powers, to the convicting and converting of those who would become God's. That day for Luther was in April 1521. Assembled in the city of Worms for the meeting of the imperial assembly (the diet) were representatives of all levels of the German "church and state." Presiding was the newly elected, twenty-one-year-old emperor, Charles V. After long preliminaries on the second day of questioning, having acknowledged the writings displayed on a table as his own and having been instructed by his accusers to retract their contents, Luther replied in words which

have been variously translated: "Unless I am refuted and convicted by testimonies of the Scriptures or by clear arguments (since I believe neither the pope nor the councils alone; it being evident that they have often erred and contradicted themselves), I am conquered by the Holy Scriptures quoted by me, and my conscience is bound in the Word of God: I cannot and will not recant anything, since it is unsafe and dangerous to do any thing against the conscience."

Expecting full well to be burned at the stake as the Bohemian John Huss had been a century earlier and having been warned before by his friends and reminded of the impotence of the "letter of safe-conduct" should the emperor who had granted it choose to ignore it, the German had nonetheless asserted, with a boldness born of absolute confidence in the living God, his irrevocable stand upon the written Word of that omnipotent God. Who was this man, this reformer? Born in 1483, reared in Saxony in a typically pious home of the times, trained in the grammar schools of the Brethren of Common Life, and having received a liberal arts education at the famed University of Erfurt, Martin Luther was confronted with the need to find answers to fundamental questions: How can I have peace of heart?

How can I be saved from my sin? What shall I do with my life?

His search for the answers to these questions became the preparation of the spark which was to ignite a conflagration felt throughout the Christian world—and beyond. From law to grace—the schoolmaster to Christ—was his experience, in several ways. He first prepared to study law, but finding it no comfort for his need, Luther forsook the potentially lucrative vocation for a supposedly higher calling, the service of the Church of Rome, the only way he knew to Christ. Here again the law, the keeping of vows, the ritual of ceremony and sacrament, of duties and hours, of confession and self-humiliation, brought comfort for only fleeting moments. Then a monastic superior, Johann Staupitz (while Luther was a monk in the Augustinian cloister at Erfurt), suggested that he simply believe the Word of God. Luther was thus cast upon the Bible, the message of God's love and redeeming grace, and he forsook the law of meritorious works. Having been driven to the Bible, the reformer-to-be began to make it his daily meat.

He was soon appointed, again by Staupitz's suggestion, to the

faculty of a newly established university, a project of the Elector Frederick of Saxony, at the town of Wittenberg, which—both town and university—Luther was to write indelibly on the pages of sixteenth-century history. It was here that he soon came to study and lecture on books of the Bible, going back to the Greek texts of the New Testament and the Hebrew of the Old Testament, taking their meaning literally and historically. There is a powerful lesson here: while the young teacher was about his assigned business, God gave him illumination of truth which was to shatter the exclusive monopoly of the ecclesiastical structure of Rome. He was not off on a tangent; he was doing what his hands found to do as unto the Lord, and God saw to it that that work was God's. He was used of God to do a great work when, in his faithfulness in daily duties, he least expected greatness.

It was the events of the second decade of the 1500s which catapulted the Wittenberg professor to prominence. The broad papal dispensation of certificates of indulgence in the German states became the occasion for conflict. Indulgences were presumed cancellations of some of the purgatorial sufferings of the soul after death of the body, according to medieval Romanist teaching (unchanged even today). While never technically “sold,” they were nevertheless being practically exchanged for money “gifts” for the building of a new cathedral in honor of Peter in Rome. So effective was the streamlined “sales pitch” of some peddlers such as Tetzel that the average man came to understand indulgences as virtual “licenses” to sin.

This traffic in souls so incensed the spiritually liberated Luther that he responded dramatically with an action which has been

commemorated for more than four and half centuries since as Reformation Day. On October 31, 1517, the eve of All Saint's Day on which the Duke's incredible (but popularly credulous) collection of sacred relics was annually displayed for the benefit of the faithful, Luther posted 95 Theses questioning the whole Romish doctrine of indulgences.

Although immediately ignored by Rome, the theses, translated and distributed throughout the Germanies through the medium of the recently developed movable-type printing, soon caused a decline in indulgence revenues. Then, her most responsive nerve having been touched, Rome responded. Pope Leo X, Medici son of the Renaissance, lover of the arts “who would have been an excellent pope if only he were also religious”—alternately threatened, counseled, commanded, and cajoled the author of the theses.

The pope demanded retraction and silence; the professor promised neither. Instead, Luther wrote more elaborately

on the un-Scriptural nature of Rome's teaching and practice. He rejected the assumption that only the Roman church can properly interpret the Scriptures; he rejected most of the seven sacraments as special means of receiving Christ's grace; and he rejected the exclusive authority of the pope to convene potentially reformatory church councils. A debate with the pope's champion,

Johann Eck, at the University of Leipzig in 1519, in which Eck informed Luther that Huss had been burned by an earlier church council for holding views on Biblical authority very similar to his own, destroyed Luther's remaining hope for reformation through a church council. He was driven to absolute dependence on the absolute authority of the written Word of God.

Three fundamental doctrinal truths, upon which all Christian believers are agreed, emerge from the work and emphases of this German: the absolute authority of the Old and New Testaments, justification by faith only, and the universal priesthood of believers. The last of those three

is illustrated by the paragraph quoted earlier from the speech at Worms. It became a veritable declaration of ecclesiastical independence from priestly tradition at the same time that it was a declaration of voluntary bondage to Jesus Christ and His Word. This was the Reformation rediscovery of the gospel.

After the Diet of Worms, Luther's great work was to “make Paul [and the Evangelists and Peter and the others] speak German” to the Germans. His translation of the New Testament into the vernacular of his people was to set the literary language of Germany. A few years later he married a former nun and with her established the modern married minister's home, reviving and ennobling the married state of the Christian clergy as a “school” for the counseling of married saints.

Some twenty years later, the pioneer work having been done and the work of organizing and consolidating having been undertaken by more fitted hands, the father of the German Reformation died and was received into glory. Far from flawless, a man of like passions with all men, he was a man God used for His own good purpose. He was an imperfect saint, but he was perfected with the saints in the paths of God's choosing. And that phrase “Here I stand” in the conclusion of his words at Worms may well echo in our ears as we, too, in this day, stand poised to do battles on the authority of—and with the sword of the Spirit, which is—the Word of God. ■

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**IN SOME RESPECTS,  
MARTIN LUTHER WAS LIKE  
THE APOSTLE PETER. HE  
WAS OFTEN BLUNT AND  
BOMBASTIC, SPEAKING  
FIRST AND CONSIDERING  
AFTERWARD.**





# TAKE HEED HOW YOU HEAR

By Ian Goligher

All congregations despair of the preacher not showing up at the church service, and all preachers despair of ever having to preach to empty pews. Preaching is a two-way business. It requires faithful preaching and faithful hearing. Nothing will kill the joy within a preacher's soul more than careless hearers of God's holy Word.

Blessed are the people who sit under a sound ministry, and happy is the preacher who finds his congregation keen to hear God's message for their souls. Not every preacher has that. Some people have no ear to hear God's Word with earnestness. Restlessness is often observable.

## WHAT IS REQUIRED OF THOSE THAT HEAR THE WORD PREACHED?

We need to remember that the preaching and the hearing of God's Word in the congregation are sacred acts. There is a mystery to preaching. It is more than the communication of man with man. It is the Spirit of God speaking to hearts through the Scriptures as expounded by God's man behind the pulpit. In God's purpose to edify His people, preaching is the highest form of worship. In *The Larger Catechism*, question 160, addresses the importance of hearing God's Word right:

"It is required of those that hear the Word preached, that they attend upon it with diligence, preparation, and prayer; examine what they hear by the Scriptures; receive the truth with faith, love, meekness, and readiness of mind, as the Word of God; meditate, and confer of it; hide it in their hearts, and bring forth the fruit of it in their lives."

God commands His people to gather together on the Lord's day. He also commands that His Word be preached to the congregation, and He promises His gracious presence to minister by His Spirit. The hearer, therefore, must be attentive to the preaching with a sense of expectation that God will meet with his or her soul through the ministry of the Scriptures.

The hearer should spend time in prayer seeking God's face for His blessing upon this chief means of grace. Pray for the preacher to be divinely guided in the selection of the Scriptures for that particular service. Ask God to enable him to expound the Lord's Word faithfully and to apply it to hearts wisely. When you pray for the ministry of the Word in these ways, you may expect to be stirred by the Spirit of God to hear what He would say to your soul. You will listen for God's voice beyond the preacher's voice.

It is part of the mystery of preaching that in a large or small congregation the Spirit of God ministers to each heart in ways that the preacher could never foresee nor fathom. It is not that the Scripture has more than one sense, but it has many uses, and it has an unlimited number of applications when preached to a mixed audience – hence the mystery of preaching. It is proper, therefore, for the individual believer to pray earnestly that God, by His Spirit, will prepare his heart so he may hear what God would say to his soul.

During the sermon, use the eye-gate. Follow the Scripture reading in your Bible. Let the sound of the words being read be matched with the written word before you. By doing so, it will have double the effect. Keep your Bible open during the preaching. Follow the references cited by the preacher. It will create an interaction in your mind and heart as you hear and read; read and hear.

As much as possible, develop good eye contact with the preacher. He needs to see your eyes to preach to you. When heads are constantly looking downwards or turned elsewhere, it hinders the preacher in his delivery. Should everyone turn away their eyes from the preacher, his work would be impossible. Good eye contact will help him to preach, and you to hear. Sit where you will see the minister's face and develop a rapport with

him. Children should learn this important lesson. Too often little children are lost in the back seats of the church sanctuary with "big" people blocking out their view. Teachers know that in children's meetings, where eyes are on the speaker, there is better attention in otherwise easily distracted children. Preaching is more than the sound of words. It is eyes, faces, and hearts engaged. The whole person is preaching, and the whole person should be listening.

What shall I say about the "nuisance" things that hinder the enjoyment of preaching? Cell phones, crying babies, banging doors, candy wrappers, stomping feet with in-and-out traffic. These are all detractors from the hearing of the Lord's Word. Preachers depend on good ushers to minimize these things. Set good habits within the congregation and let your determination to profit from preaching demonstrate the value you place on the hearing of God's Word to your soul.

In the book of Hebrews, we are commanded to receive the Word with faith, for it is the chief means to receive God's blessing from His Word. "For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it" (Hebrews 4:2). The word "mixed" bears the idea of the need to thoroughly digest food so that the nutrients reach the whole body through the blood system. Faith enables you to hear God's Word as a personal word to your heart and then as you receive the Lord's Word, it works to nourish your soul. You need to hear it, believe it, and then obey it. ■

# KITTY, MY RIB

## THE HEARTWARMING STORY OF A WOMAN OF COURAGE AND DEVOTION

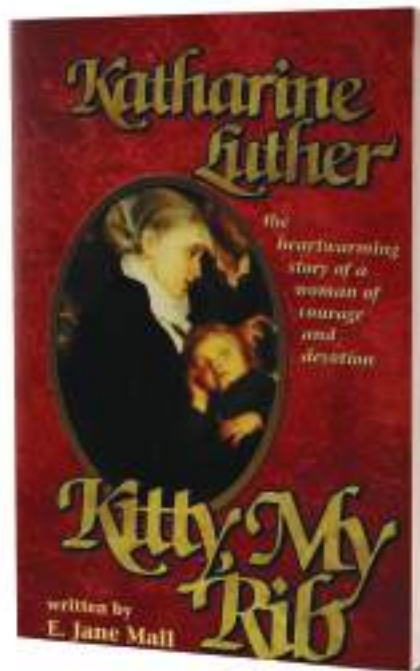
The exciting days of the Protestant Reformation produced great changes in the lives of millions of Europeans. In the 1959 fictional biography *Kitty, My Rib* author E. Jane Mall tells about the changes that transformed a young nun named Katharina von Bora, who entered the Cistercian convent at Nimbschen, Germany at age six, shortly after her mother's death. Katharina's aunt was also a nun in the convent, so her father was certain that his daughter would be well-supervised.

It was 1522 and nearby, in the town of Wittenberg, Dr. Martin Luther preached a sermon about marriage called "The Estate of Marriage", which was published as a small book. For centuries, the deceptive Roman Catholic myth regarding the spiritual superiority of celibacy had held sway in Europe. Rome taught that celibacy was more pleasing to God than marriage. Luther sought to preach the truth of God on the matter. Once that truth was widely known, monks and nuns began leaving the cloisters in great numbers. Nuns of the Nimbschen convent wrote to Dr. Luther asking for help to leave their cloister, yet he counseled them to examine their motives carefully. On April 6, 1523, Luther sent merchant Leonhard Köppe to help twelve of the nuns escape after he made his routine fish delivery. That night, Köppe's large wagon, covered with the usual heavy cloth, was not empty as he secretly carried the nuns away to Wittenberg.

Subsequently, Luther helped the nuns to return to their families. Some became governesses and others married; however, one of the nuns, twenty-four-year-old Katharina von Bora, proved to be a problem. Disillusioned with the church, Katharina was becoming eager to learn of the growing reform movement. She also had fallen in love with a wealthy young man, and they would have been married, but his father refused to let him marry a runaway nun. So Luther tried to arrange marriage for her with Lutheran Pastor Caspar Glatz, but Katharina refused. Her actions caused Luther to consider her a proud and haughty young woman.

A whole year passed since Katharina was freed. She worked for many months in the home of Lucas and Barbara Cranach. One day in conversation with Luther's friend, Pastor Nikolaus von Amsdorf, Katharina confessed tearfully that she would not marry Pastor Glatz because she did not love him. But she indicated that she was willing only to marry either Amsdorf or Luther. A few days later in conversation with Luther, Pastor Amsdorf revealed to him that Katharina would marry him. "Besides, Martin, you need a wife, your house is a wreck. She is a good cook and an intelligent woman." Luther eventually came to the realization that "his marriage would please his father, rile the pope, cause the angels to laugh, and the devils to weep."

On June 13, 1525, Martin Luther went to the Cranach's home to speak with Katharina. He proposed marriage to her. She accepted,



and the next day the wedding took place in Luther's house—the Augustinian Black Cloister. Immediately, things began to change in Martin Luther's house with a complete cleaning and then a thorough renovation of the whole building. The yard outside became a garden for growing vegetables and fruits. Some of the theological students became boarders in their large house, with some of the wealthy ones paying for room and board. Kitty was proving to be a Proverbs 31 wife. She looked well to the needs of those in the Black Cloister. She even enjoyed fishing in a nearby stream to offer fish on her dinner table. She also diligently cared for her husband's health. Much time was spent in growing and distilling herbs for making medicines for him. Martin Luther lived until age 63, probably because Kitty earnestly attended to his health for 21 years.

During times of the plague in Wittenberg, the Luther house became a hospital. Amazingly, the Luthers and their six children survived the plague. But Katharina's and Martin's hearts were broken when they lost their baby daughter Elizabeth at seven months old. The next daughter Magdalene lived to be thirteen years

old, and once more the family's hearts were crushed at the loss of such a sweet sister and daughter. The Luthers also raised four orphan children, including Katharina's nephew.

When God gave Luther a wife, He literally saved him from bankruptcy. Luther's overly-generous spirit would give everything away to those in need. Katharina also was generous, but with a very wise discretion. She managed the family finances and was able to raise four children to adulthood and leave them with an inheritance. The change in Kitty's life from nun to pastor's wife and joyful mother of children showed so clearly the will of God for most women. The Biblical model for godly families was openly demonstrated in the Luther home. This helped to dismantle the Roman Catholic myth regarding the superiority of "the sacred vocation of celibate life" over marriage and family.

When Dr. Luther was needed in other cities due to political or church problems, Kitty was always reluctant to let him go. Once she refused to let him go, and he was thereby saved from an assassination plot. It was on one of those journeys to a distant city that Martin Luther died on a very cold February 18, 1546. Katharina lived for another six years, caring for her children and others. Just before Christmas in 1552, at the age of 53, and surrounded by her children, Katharina Luther went into the presence of her Lord. ❏

*Kitty My Rib* is available at Concordia Publishing House <https://www.cph.org/p-263-kitty-my-rib.aspx> and at Amazon Books <https://www.amazon.com/Kitty-My-Rib-Heartwarming-Devotion/dp/0570031133>



**Rev. Myron Mooney** is minister of Trinity FPC in Decatur, Alabama and presently serves as Moderator of the FPCNA.



## TEACHING FAITHFUL MEN

The apostle Paul exhorted his son in the faith that “the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Tim. 2:2). Geneva Reformed Seminary (GRS) takes Paul’s admonition seriously, and throughout this past year, has offered a full schedule of classes to prepare men for the ministry. During the fall and winter semesters, GRS students studied Theology Proper; Christology; Theory and Methods of Counseling; John’s Gospel and Epistles; Old Testament Theology; Hermeneutics; and Contemporary Issues (new).

The Contemporary Issues course was included this year in order to assist students to deal with the challenges facing Free Presbyterian ministers pioneering in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Some topics included our denominational distinctive positions with regard to the use of the Authorized Version (KJV), abstinence from abusive substances, head covering, divorce, separation, worship music, and the FPCNA child protection policy. Dr. Mark Allison was the primary lecturer in this course, assisted by Rev. Colin Mercer (child protection policy), and Dr. Paul Overly (worship music). As part of this new course, the students also researched and evaluated several modern Presbyterian denominations, as well as some mega-church leaders who are diverting multitudes from God’s Word.

In addition to doctrine and theology classes, GRS has always stressed the importance of learning how to preach God’s Word effectively. Rev. John Wagner, assisted by Rev. Colin Mercer, taught two semesters of homiletics during the year. In the fall of 2017, a third semester of homiletics will

also be offered to assist students in this practical aspect of ministry.

Church history is another important area of study at GRS. In the spring semester, Rev. David Mook will lecture from the Early Church to the Reformation, and Dr. Mark Sidwell will cover the Reformation to the Modern Church.

GRS is located in Greenville, South Carolina and has three full-time students in residence: Jae Bae, Peter Banfe, and Owen Crew. Ethan Bolyard is also under care of Presbytery. Starting this fall, he will be taking a few courses in residence at GRS.

As well as learning more about God’s Word and how to share it with the world, seminary students are able to encourage one another in the Lord during this important time in their lives. They have been conscious of Christ’s presence during times of fellowship together. Please pray for them as they each have one more year before graduation.

GRS has also some students taking courses by correspondence. Andrew Cheptoo is associated with the Bible Christian Faith Church in Kenya, and is hoping to complete his Master of Religious Education degree. Eric Scholte, from California, is currently working through the MRE program also. GRS has four men under Presbytery care who are taking classes on-line. These men are simultaneously pioneering and pastoring churches. Milos Solc in the Czech Republic is midway through his Presbytery-mandated courses. Marcus Reyes and Lalo Pena have begun churches

in the Vera Cruz area of Mexico, and they are just beginning their course work. Ramon Sosa’s church is in the Dominican Republic, and he recently began classes as well. Teaching Mr. Sosa presents a unique challenge for GRS to provide lessons for him in Spanish. Please pray for each of these men that they would know the Lord’s help as they balance class requirements and the heavy burdens of ministry.

People often ask how they can help with the task of educating the next generation of preachers. GRS truly relies upon the prayers, support, and encouragement of God’s people. Especially, we need to pray that men would know the clear call of God upon their hearts before they engage in ministerial studies. Throughout N. America, one common problem facing the church is that men have launched into the ministry because they believed they had an aptitude for this kind of work. This thinking is prevalent in liberal congregations and denominations in our land. Part of the problem is a “mega-church philosophy” which regards ministers as entertainers and churches as corporations. The FPCNA and GRS, on the other hand, desire to see God call men who will be faithful to His Word and whose desire to preach comes from and is guided by heaven alone. We need the Lord to raise up such men in our denomination which currently has some vacant pulpits and congregations with pastors approaching retirement.

Primarily, our goal at GRS has been to equip laborers to follow Christ’s leading into the harvest fields of the world; however, before we can equip, we need the Lord of the harvest to call and move hearts toward dedicating their lives to gospel ministry. Please join us as we seek to follow Christ’s command, “Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth laborers into His harvest” (Matt. 9:37-38). ■



# A WIDE-OPEN DOOR IN MEXICO CITY

## GOD IS STIRRING HIS PEOPLE

We believe God has given us an open door in Mexico because He is awakening Mexicans to seek after solid gospel truth. Previously, many have been drawn to the charismatic movement, but now they are leaving in search of the pure gospel and healthy doctrine. There has emerged an openness and a hunger for the solid truth of the Scriptures. The Lord has used certain well-known online preachers, who have had their sermons translated into Spanish, to bring many to the doctrines of grace. But these preachers cannot provide home churches, and many believers are in search of a good reformed church. Unfortunately, those types of churches are few, and when people cannot find one they start their own out of necessity. This is the situation in which we find Mexico today.

The vision that the Lord has given us is to plant a church and bring it to maturity as a healthy congregation with elders and deacons. We desire a church with a focus on missions, and also on evangelizing those within and without the church walls. Our vision is also to see men from the church trained, so that they can plant churches in other parts of Mexico City and beyond. We pray that the Lord will allow the church to grow organically from within, and then be able to extend without into a group of Free Presbyterian churches with fellowship and solid leadership. In such a big city, there is so much need and opportunity. Our desire is that our church will grow to the point of being a mother church, with the blessing of seeing other works started in our vast city.

We are currently in the beginning stages of seeing this vision fulfilled, having just had the constitution of our church on February 5, 2017. We are working through some steps to fulfill our vision for our church

and for Mexico. If we are going to see the church grow organically, a focus on our children and youth is the way to do it. Another important step for us is to train men to become elders and deacons. We want to work closely with the men who are nearly reaching that point, and provide growth opportunities for those who have potential but are not yet ready for ministry — especially the teenagers and young adults. It is essential to provide much solid Bible teaching to bring all our current new Christians to maturity and to get every member serving and working for Christ. We find it important to emphasize fellowship, love, and service within the body of Christ to promote unity and to build up the body before being able to go out to evangelize and serve others.

Along with the vision the Lord gave us for Mexico when we first came, the Lord has also blessed us with some unexpected opportunities to fellowship with like-minded people and their pastors whom He has brought to us: Marcus Reyes, Lalo Peña, and Ramón Sosa, who wish to join the Free Presbyterian denomination. Understandably, this has presented some challenges, as the steps being taken are new, and the logistics of training the men are proving difficult and requiring much prayer. These men have full-time jobs and full-time ministries, and one of them has a language barrier, knowing little English. Currently, we do not have seminary courses in Spanish, and so it is difficult to know how to train men in Latin America who are interested in our denomination. A lack of resources and time prevent some projects from moving forward due to the



fast-growing needs of the Latin American churches. Therefore, to fulfill this vision, our hope and trust is in the Lord and His leading.

When the Lord opens a door, we must faithfully and obediently walk through it, even if the door looks slightly different than what we thought it would be. We trust He will provide the time, energy, and means to continue walking through the open door He has given us. We are in a time when God has pushed the door wide open in Mexico and given us much opportunity. “A great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries” (1 Corinthians 16:9). There is much to do and much to accomplish for Christ’s kingdom. We believe there is a great work before us here in Mexico. We are comforted to know that we are merely the tools that God uses to accomplish His will, and that Christ Himself is the “door of the sheep” (John 10:7). Brethren, please continue to pray for us. ■



**Rev. Jason Boyle** is the newly-ordained minister of Mexico Free Presbyterian Church. He and his wife Danielle have been pioneering the church since 2012.

# ALL NATIONS: ONE BLOOD

## PART 2

By J.C. Ryle

“And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth...” Acts 17:26

*In part one of this article inserted in our last issue, Dr. Ryle made the case for the whole human race descending from single parents, Adam and Eve. The application of this doctrine ought to breathe a true missionary spirit into the heart of every professing Christian. May this second part of his article challenge you to greater efforts to take the gospel to your fellow men. Editor.*

Are we all of “one blood? Then we ought to live as if we were. We ought to behave as members of one great family. We ought to “love as brethren.” We ought to put away from us anger, wrath, malice, quarrelling, as specially hateful in the sight of God. We ought to cultivate kindness and charity towards all men. The dirtiest dweller in some vile slum of London has a claim upon our attention. He is a relative and a brother, whether we like to believe it or not. Like ourselves, he is a descendant of Adam and Eve, and inherits a fallen nature and a never-dying soul.

Now what are we Christians doing to prove that we believe and realize all this? What are we doing for our brethren? I trust we do not forget that it was wicked Cain who asked that awful question, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” (Gen. 4:9).

What are we doing for the heathen abroad? That is a grave question, and one which I have no room to consider fully. I only remark that we do far less than we ought to do. The nation whose proud boast it is that her flag is to be seen in every port on the globe, gives less to the cause of foreign missions than the cost of a single first-class ironclad man-of-war.

But what are we doing for the masses at home? That is a far graver question, and one which imperiously demands a reply. The heathen are out of sight and out of mind. The English masses are hard by our own doors, and their condition is a problem which politicians and philanthropists are anxiously trying to solve, and which cannot be evaded. What are we doing to lessen the growing sense of inequality between rich and poor, and to fill up the yawning gulf of discontent? Socialism, and communism, and confiscation of property are looming large in the distance, and occupying much attention in the press. Atheism and secularism are spreading fast in some quarters, and specially in overgrown and neglected parishes. Now, what is the path of duty?

I answer without hesitation, that we want a larger growth of brotherly love in the land. We want men and women to grasp the great principle, that we are all of “one blood,” and to lay themselves out to do good. We want the rich to care more for the poor, and the employer for the employed, and wealthy congregations for the working-class congregations in the great cities, and the West End of London to care more for the East and the South. And, let us remember, it is not merely temporal relief that is wanted. The Roman emperors tried to keep the proletarians and the lower classes quiet by the games of the circus and largesse of corn. And some ignorant modern Britons seem to think that money, cheap food, good dwellings, and recreation are healing medicines for the evils of our day in the lowest stratum of society. It is a complete mistake. What the masses want is more sympathy, more kindness, more brotherly love, more treatment as

if they were really of “one blood” with ourselves. Give them that, and you will fill up half the gulf of discontent.

The working man may live in a poor dwelling; and after toiling all day in a coal pit, or cotton mill, or iron foundry, or dock, or chemical works, he may often look very rough and dirty. But after all, he is flesh and blood like ourselves. Beneath his outward roughness he has a heart and a conscience, a keen sense of justice, and a jealous recollection of his rights as a man and a Briton. He does not want to be patronized and flattered, any more than to be trampled on, scolded, or neglected; but he does like to be dealt with as a brother, in a friendly, kind, and sympathizing way. He will not be driven; he will do nothing for a cold, hard man, however clever he may be. But give him a Christian visitor to his home who really understands that it is the heart and not the coat which makes the man, and that the guinea’s worth is in the gold, and not in the stamp upon it. Give him a visitor who will not only talk about Christ, but sit down in his house, and take him by the hand in a Christ-like, familiar way. Give him a visitor, and specially a clergyman, who realizes that in Christ’s holy religion there is no respect of persons, that rich and poor are “made of one blood,” and need one and the same atoning blood, and that there is only one Savior, and one Fountain for sin, and one heaven, both for employers and employed. Give him a clergyman who can weep with them that weep, and rejoice with them that rejoice, and feel a tender interest in the cares, and troubles, and births, and marriages, and deaths of the humblest dweller in his parish. Give the working man, I say, a clergyman of that kind, and, as a general rule, the working man will come to his church, and not be a communist or an infidel. Such a clergyman will not preach to empty benches.

How little, after all, do most people seem to realize the supreme importance of brotherly love and the absolute necessity of imitating that blessed Savior who “went about doing good” to all, if we would prove ourselves His disciples. If ever there was a time

when conduct like that of the good Samaritan in the parable was rare, it is the time in which we live. Selfish indifference to the wants of others is a painful characteristic of the age. Search the land in which we live, from the Isle of Wight to Berwick-on-Tweed, and from the Land's End to the North Foreland, and name, if you can, a single county or town in which the givers to good works are not a small minority, and in which philanthropic and religious agencies are not kept going, only and entirely, by painful begging and constant importunity. Go where you will, the report is always the same. Hospitals, missions at home and abroad, evangelistic and educational agencies, churches, chapels, and mission halls, all are incessantly checked and hindered by want of support. Where are the Samaritans, we may well ask, in this land of Bibles and Testaments? Where are the Christians who live as if we are "all of one blood"? Where are the men who love their neighbors, and will help to provide for dying bodies and souls? Where are the people always ready and willing to give unasked, and without asking how much others have given?

Where, after all, to come to the root of the matter, where is that brotherly love which used to be the distinguishing mark of the primitive Christians? Where, amidst the din of controversy and furious strife of parties, where is the fruit of the Holy Spirit and the primary mark of spiritual regeneration? Where is that charity, without which we are no better than "sounding brass and tinkling cymbals"? Where is the charity which is the bond of perfectness? Where is that love by which our Lord declared all men should know His disciples, and which St. John said was the distinction between the children of God and the children of the devil? Where is it, indeed? Read in the

newspapers the frightfully violent language of opposing politicians. Mark the hideous bitterness of controversial theologians, both in the press and on the platform. Observe the fiendish delight with which anonymous letter-writers endeavor to wound the feelings of opponents, and then to pour vitriol into the wound. Look at all this ghastly spectacle which any observing eye may see any day in England. And then remember that this is the country in which men are reading the New Testament and professing

records to have been spoken by our Lord in the twenty-fifth chapter of his Gospel. In the great and dreadful day of judgment, when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of His glory, there are some to whom He will say, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.

at all. They had neglected love to others. They had not tried to lessen the misery, or increase the happiness, of this sin-burdened world. They had selfishly sat still, done no good, and had no eyes to see, or hearts to feel, for their brethren the members of Adam's great family. And so, their end is everlasting punishment! If these words cannot set some people thinking when they look at the state of the masses in some of our large towns, nothing will.

Last, but not least, I charge you never to neglect the duty of brotherly love, and practical, active, sympathetic kindness towards everyone around you, whether high or low, or rich or poor. Try daily to do some good upon earth, and to leave the world a better world than it was when you were born. If you are really a child of God, strive to be like your Father and your great elder Brother in heaven. For Christ's sake, do not be content to have religion for yourself alone. Love, charity, kindness, and sympathy are the truest proofs that we are real members of Christ, genuine children of God, and rightful heirs of the kingdom of heaven. Of "one blood" we were all born. In "one blood" we all need to be washed. To all partakers of Adam's "one blood" we are bound, if we love life, to be charitable, sympathizing, loving, and kind. The time is short. We are going, going, and shall soon be gone to a world where there is no evil to remedy, and no scope for works of mercy. Then for Christ's sake let us all try to do some good before we die, and to lessen the sorrows of this sin-burdened world. ■

**WHERE ARE THE CHRISTIANS WHO LIVE AS IF WE ARE "ALL OF ONE BLOOD"? WHERE ARE THE MEN WHO LOVE THEIR NEIGHBORS, AND WILL HELP TO PROVIDE FOR DYING BODIES AND SOULS?**

to follow Christ, and to believe that they are all of "one blood." Can anything more grossly inconsistent be conceived? Can anything be imagined more offensive to God? Truly, it is astonishing that such myriads should be so keen about Christian profession and external worship, and yet so utterly careless about the simplest elements of Christian practice. Where there is no love there is no spiritual life. Without brotherly love, although baptized and communicants, men are dead in trespasses and sins.


I shall wind up all I have to say on the point of duty by reminding my readers of the solemn words which the apostle Matthew

Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me" (Matt. 25:41-46).

I declare I know very few passages of Scripture more solemn and heart-searching than this. It is not charged against these unhappy lost souls, that they had committed murder, adultery, or theft, or that they had not been church-goers or communicants. Oh, no! nothing of the kind. They had simply done nothing

J.C. Ryle was the first Anglican bishop of Liverpool, England from 1880-1900. The substance of this paper was preached as a sermon at the Chapel Royal, St. James's, London, on March 2, 1884.





# RESURRECTION REASSURANCE

“The Lord is risen indeed.”

By Alexander Maclaren, D.D.

It is a great mistake to treat Paul's writings, and especially this Epistle [Romans], as mere theology. They are the transcript of his life's experience. As has been well said, the gospel of Paul is an interpretation of the significance of the life and work of Jesus based upon the revelation to him of Jesus as the risen Christ. He believed that he had seen Jesus on the road to Damascus, and it was that appearance which revolutionised his life, turned him from a persecutor into a disciple, and united him with the Apostles as ordained to be a witness with them of the resurrection. To them all the resurrection of Jesus was first of all a historical fact appreciated chiefly in its bearing on Him. By degrees they discerned that so transcendent a fact bore in itself a revelation of what would become the experience of all His followers beyond the grave, and a symbol of the present life possible for them. All three of these aspects are plainly declared in Paul's writings. In our text it is chiefly the first which is made prominent. All that distinguishes Christianity; and makes it worth believing, or mighty, is inseparably connected with the resurrection.

## THE RESURRECTION INTERPRETS CHRIST'S DEATH.

There is no more striking contrast than that between the absolute non-receptivity of the disciples in regard to all Christ's plain teachings about His death and their clear perception after Pentecost of the mighty power that lay in it. The very fact that they continued disciples at all, and that there continued to be such a community as the Church, demands their belief in the resurrection as the only cause which

can account for it. If He did not rise from the dead, and if His followers did not know that He did so by the plainest teachings of common-sense, they ought to have scattered, and borne in isolated hearts the bitter memories of disappointed hopes; for if He lay in a nameless grave, and they were not sure that He was risen from the dead, His death would have been a conclusive showing up of the falsity of His claims. In it there would have been no atoning power, no triumph over sin. If the death of Christ were not followed by His resurrection and Ascension, the whole fabric of Christianity falls to pieces. As the Apostle puts it in his great chapter on resurrection, “Ye are yet in your sins.” The forgiveness which the Gospel holds forth to men does not depend on the mercy of God or on the mere penitence of man, but upon the offering of the one sacrifice for sins in His death, which is justified by His resurrection as being accepted by God. If we cannot triumphantly proclaim “Christ is risen indeed,” we have nothing worth preaching.

We are told now that the ethics of Christianity are its vital centre, which will stand out more plainly when purified from these mystical doctrines of a Death as the sin-offering for the world, and a resurrection as the great token that that offering avails. Paul did not think so. To him the morality of the Gospel was all deduced from the life of Christ the Son of God as our Example, and from His death for us which touches men's hearts and makes obedience to Him our joyful answer to what He has done for us. Christianity is a new thing in the world, not as moral teaching, but as moral power to obey that teaching, and that depends on the Cross interpreted by the resurrection. If we

have only a dead Christ, we have not a living Christianity.

## THE RESURRECTION POINTS ONWARDS TO CHRIST'S COMING AGAIN.

Paul at Athens declared in the hearing of supercilious Greek philosophers, that the Jesus, whom he proclaimed to them, was “the man whom God had ordained to judge the world in righteousness”, and that “He had given assurance thereof unto all men, in that he raised him from the dead.” The resurrection was the beginning of the process which, from the human point of view, culminated in the Ascension. Beyond the Ascension stretches the supernatural life of the glorified Son of God. Olivet cannot be the end, and the words of the two men in white apparel who stood amongst the little group of the upward gazing friends, remain as the hope of the Church: “This same Jesus shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven.” That great assurance implies a visible corporeal return locally defined, and having for its purpose to complete the work which Incarnation, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension, each advanced a stage. The resurrection is the corner-stone of the whole Christian faith. It seals the truths that Jesus is the Son of God with power, that He died for us, that He has ascended on high to prepare a place for us, that He will come again and take us to Himself. If we, by faith in Him, take for ours the women's greeting on that Easter morning, “The Lord hath risen indeed,” He will come to us with His own greeting, “Peace be unto you.” ❏

Excerpt from Sermons of Alexander Maclaren, D.D.  
(1826 -1910)  
Manchester, England



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## MISSION BOARD TAKES STEPS TO LAUNCH RADIO STATION IN LIBERIA

On March 13<sup>th</sup>, the Mission Board voted to take steps to launch an FM radio station in Liberia after the Liberia Telecommunications Authority granted the Free Presbyterian mission the right to test 92.5 FM for two weeks, with the intention of licensing the frequency.

Through some unexpected donations, the mission in Liberia was able to purchase a used 150-foot radio tower for \$6,800 USD. A new tower would have been over \$30,000. The mission has put a deposit on a transmitter, and is currently praying for funds to purchase an antenna, coaxial cable, and lightning arrestor.

Rev. David DiCanio, who is in charge of the project, said that the studio is completely automated with laptop, software (Radiologik), and small mixer, which will be sufficient in the early stages to begin broadcasting. Mr. DiCanio has actually begun to test the frequency every afternoon for the past week by renting a radio station's 180-foot tower and antenna in Duazon, about one mile from where the mission compound is located and where the radio station will be set up. Mr. DiCanio reports that the signal can be heard in downtown Monrovia, an hour's drive away.

The missionaries have hired a team to concrete anchors into the ground to attach the 12 cables (guy wires), which will hold up the tower. The anchors were completed on March 28<sup>th</sup>, and the missionaries hope to have the funds to pay the laborers to erect the tower by Monday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>.

This project would not have been possible without help from Randy Cornelius, a missionary in Grenada who runs a radio station called "Harbour Light of the Windwards." Randy is a graduate of Bob Jones University and was introduced to the Liberia radio project by Charles Koelsch, an elder in the Greenville FPC. Charlie was an announcer at WMUU, the Bob Jones University radio station in Greenville, SC. for many years.

The Liberian missionaries ask for the Lord's people to pray that the door will stay open long enough for them to raise the needed funds to make the few purchases in order to get on the air and secure the frequency. The missionaries have heard that there are numerous people requesting frequencies, and the reason they are being granted one is a bit



## MEXICO CITY REPORT

On February 5, 2017, the mission church in Mexico City was officially constituted as Jason Boyle was ordained to the ministry and installed as their first minister. In the FPCNA, Jason Boyle and his congregation became the first mission church to be constituted and their minister ordained. The Presbytery sent Rev. Myron Mooney, Rev. Derrick Bowman, and Dr. Mark Allison to officiate at the constitution and ordination service. One hundred people attended the special service with almost one-third of them visitors. Jason's father from the United States, and Danielle's parents, grandmother, and brother from Canada were at the meeting. Marcus Reyes and Lalo Peña came up from Vera Cruz with their entire families and Lydia Bowman accompanied her husband from North Carolina. Mike Goldfuss, a former missionary to Mexico City and his wife were also at this historic occasion.

Dr. Allison gave a brief history of the FPCNA in the Sabbath School, and with the help of Jason Boyle, answered questions about our denomination. Rev. Bowman led the ordination service in which Dr. Allison brought greetings from our churches and from Rev. John Hanna, long-time missionary in Spain. Dr. Allison, acting as clerk of Presbytery, asked the prescribed questions of Jason Boyle. Moderator Rev. Myron Mooney preached a powerful message on the responsibilities of gospel ministers to care for souls through preaching and prayer from Acts 20:25-35. The entire service was translated into Spanish for the benefit of all who attended. The congregation tearfully rejoiced at the real sense of the Lord's presence, and in deep appreciation of God's great grace and mercy. This special service was followed by a congregational meal when the visitors and church members enjoyed a blessed time of fellowship.



of a mystery. The missionaries do not want to run ahead of the Lord, but they also don't want to fail to move when the Lord moves.



## NEW MINISTER INSTALLED IN MALVERN, PA

In our last issue, we reported on Rev. Dr. Stephen Pollock's call to become the minister of Malvern FPC. We asked for prayer for the required visas and plans to move to the U.S.A. We are pleased to announce that the Lord has answered prayer, and Rev. Pollock and his family are now settled in their new home at the manse in Malvern, Pennsylvania.

The Presbytery held an installation service on Friday, April 7<sup>th</sup> in the Malvern church to induct Rev. Pollock as the new minister of the congregation. Rev. Stephen Hamilton, minister of Walnutport FPC, who acted as interim moderator during the vacancy, led the meeting and welcomed the congregation and visitors to the service.

Due to stormy weather, the Clerk of Presbytery, Rev. David Mook, was unable to travel to the meeting. Therefore, Rev. Geoff Banister, minister of Indianapolis FPC, acted in the Clerk's place to put the prescribed questions of the Presbytery to Rev. Pollock. By his answers, the new minister demonstrated his commitment to the *Westminster Confession of Faith* and the standards of the Free Presbyterian Church of North America.

Rev. Myron Mooney, the Presbytery moderator, offered the induction prayer calling on God for His blessing upon the life and ministry of God's servant as preacher and pastor over the flock. Rev. Mooney proceeded to charge the minister from the Scriptures to be faithful as an evangelist and pastor over the congregation. He spoke of the long history of

Presbyterianism in the Philadelphia area since the arrival of Rev. Francis Makemie in 1683. Rev. Makemie was a Presbyterian born of Ulster-Scots parents in Ramelton, Donegal, in the province of Ulster, in the north of Ireland. He became minister of the oldest Presbyterian church in America and the first moderator of the very first Presbytery of Pennsylvania.

The congregation made presentations to welcome the Pollock family and extended gifts of appreciation to the deacons Mr. Wayne Kearns and Mr. James Brouse for their faithful service in the congregation. They also presented gifts to Rev. and Mrs. Hamilton for their care of the congregation during the vacancy. Rev. Larry Saunders brought greetings from the Presbytery in Rev. Mook's absence, as well as from Toronto FPC. There were also many greetings from other churches and ministers, including Malvern's two former ministers, Rev. John Greer and Dr. Mark Allison. Dr. John McKnight, senior minister of Reformation Bible Church, Darlington, Maryland, and long-time friend of the Malvern congregation closed the meeting in prayer. The people of the congregation and their guests enjoyed refreshments in the fellowship room after the service.

Remember to pray for the Lord's sustaining grace for the Lord's servant, his wife Cherith, and their five children through all the changes they are experiencing after leaving Northern Ireland to settle in the United States. Pray also for their family members, friends, and the Ballymagerny

congregation, who, in bidding farewell to the Pollocks to serve the Lord here in North America, sacrifice the ministry and fellowship of this beloved family among them.

## MISSIONARY CONFERENCE TORONTO FPC

**Date:** May 5-7

**Theme:** Labourers Together with God

**Guest speakers:** Dr. Mark Allison, Mission Board Chairman, reporting on Liberia and Geneva Reformed Seminary; Jason and Danielle Boyle, Mexico City; Mr. Richard Craig, Jamaica.



## FAREWELL FOR ERWINS

On April 28, the Presbytery is conducting a farewell service for Rev. Derek and Mrs. Anne Erwin, who are officially retiring from their ministry in Orlando FPC, where they have been serving for over thirteen years. We take this opportunity to wish them well as they plan to return to Northern Ireland for their retirement years. We intend to carry a full report of their retirement service in Orlando in the next issue of *Current*.



## WEDDING BELLS IN LEE'S SUMMIT FPC

Leanne Cleveland, daughter of Stan and Linda Cleveland of Lee's Summit, MO, and Mr. Vince Wilson, son of Bryan and Dreama Wilson of Maryland were married on June 24, 2016. Rev. Mark Fineout, minister of the church, officiated at their wedding and Dr. John McKnight, minister of Reformation Bible Church, Harford Maryland, preached the wedding sermon. Vince and Leanne both graduated from Bob Jones University and presently work as nurses at St. Luke's North Hospital in Kansas City.





# The Monk who Nailed a Paper to a Church Door

By Cosette Landon

October 31st is a day that means different things to different people. In North America, some people think it means a time to dress up in costumes and go trick-or-treating. But to many Christians, October 31st, 2017 will mark the 500th anniversary of the day that a monk called Martin Luther nailed a piece of paper to the door of a large church in Wittenberg, Germany. That simple action opened people's eyes to God's truth. We call it the Protestant Reformation. There must have been something very important on that piece of paper!

Last time in Kids' Corner, we learned about other pieces of paper called "indulgences." They were letters that the Roman Catholic Church sold to make people believe they were buying tickets for their souls to escape from an imaginary place of punishment

called "purgatory" to heaven! But in reality, the church was getting rich by telling a lie. Sadly, because people did not have Bibles to read where they could learn the truth for themselves, they believed everything the church told them, even untrue things like paper indulgences.

Martin Luther's piece of paper was a totally different one. The one he nailed to the church door that autumn day in 1517 boldly told the people that the pope and priests were not teaching what the Bible said. This paper is called "The 95 Theses." It was a large, handwritten poster that made 95 statements against error and an invitation to come and talk with Martin Luther at the church the next day. Through his research of the Bible, Dr. Luther had found the truth about how

to be saved. He learned that people must come to God in faith, believing that Jesus had already "paid the price" by dying and shedding His blood on the cross. Dr. Luther was certain that indulgences were very dangerous because they gave people false hope. Here are some examples from his list:

13. "The dying are freed by death from all penalties; . . . and have a right to be released from them."

21. "Therefore those preachers of indulgences are in error, who say that by the pope's indulgences a man is freed from every penalty, and saved"

36. "Every truly repentant Christian has a right to full remission [forgiveness] of penalty and guilt, even without letters of pardon."

43. "Christians are to be taught that he who gives to the poor or lends to the needy does a better work than buying pardons."

52. "The assurance of salvation by letters of pardon is vain, . . . even though the pope himself, were to stake his soul upon it."

It was very brave of Dr. Luther to nail these statements to the church door. Many church leaders would take them as a personal insult. They would also see them as a threat to all the money that was coming in from selling indulgences, which supported their rich lifestyle. Dr. Luther chose October 31st because the next day, November 1st, was known in Europe as "All Saints' Day." On that day, many people would be celebrating by going to church. By posting his paper the day before, Dr. Luther knew all those church-goers would notice it, and he hoped they would take time to read it so that they would know the truth too.

It was a wise choice of dates because the 95 *Theses* were seen and read and talked about all across Europe. Thankfully, people began to read and believe the truth of God's Word! ❏



## A WORD WORTH KNOWING

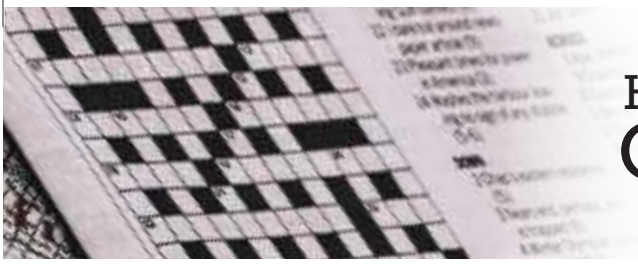
**Theses** (theé sēz)

Statements a person presents after research, and supports by reason and argument.



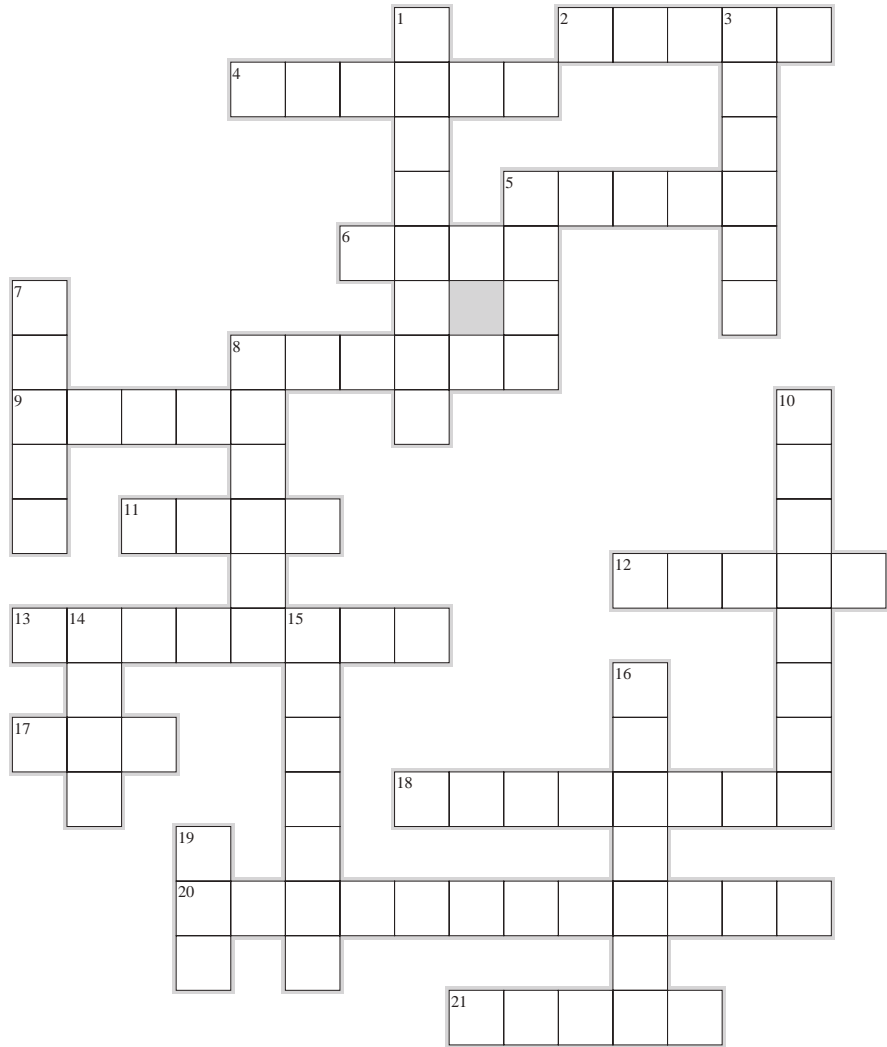
**WINNERS WILL BE ANNOUNCED  
IN THE NEXT CURRENT**

# Kids' CROSSWORD Puzzle



## Across

2. "The just shall live by \_\_\_\_."  
(Galatians 3:11)
4. "The LORD's voice \_\_\_\_ unto the city."  
(Micah 6:9)
5. "Thy \_\_\_\_ were found and I did eat them."  
(Jeremiah 15:16)
6. "Such as I have \_\_\_\_ I thee."  
(Acts 3:6)
8. "Be zealous therefore, and \_\_\_\_."  
(Revelation 3:19)
9. "Thou hast magnified thy word \_\_\_\_ all thy name."  
(Psalm 138:2)
11. "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are \_\_\_\_."  
(Philippians 4:8)
12. "They have wandered as \_\_\_\_ men in the streets."  
(Lamentations 4:14)
13. "The Pharisees were \_\_\_\_."  
(Matthew 15:12)
17. "Come and see the works of \_\_\_\_."  
(Psalm 66:5)
18. "For they \_\_\_\_ at the stumblingstone."  
(Romans 9:32)
20. "All the \_\_\_\_ ... did Josiah put away."  
(2 Kings 23:24)
21. "The entrance of thy words giveth \_\_\_\_."  
(Psalm 119:130)
5. "For all the people \_\_\_\_, when they heard the words of the law."  
(Nehemiah 8:9)
7. "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven \_\_\_\_."  
(Exodus 20:4)
8. "O Israel, \_\_\_\_ unto the LORD thy God."  
(Hosea 14:1)
10. "Lift up a \_\_\_\_ for the people."  
(Isaiah 62:10)
14. "Who hath trodden under \_\_\_\_ the Son of God."  
(Hebrews 10:29)
15. "I will \_\_\_\_ the wisdom of the wise."  
(1 Corinthians 1:19)
16. "I will \_\_\_\_ the name of the LORD."  
(Deuteronomy 32:3)
19. "By the works of the \_\_\_\_ shall no flesh be justified."  
(Galatians 2:16)



## Down

1. "I will lift up mine hand to the \_\_\_\_."  
(Isaiah 49:22)
3. "Be no more children, \_\_\_\_ to and fro, ... with every wind of doctrine."  
(Ephesians 4:14)

**PLEASE NOTE:** Please send your completed puzzle to *Current Kids' Corner*, Attn: Mrs. Rachel Carper, 3 Elmira St., Greenville, SC 29615, or by email to rcarper@bjc.edu by May 31, 2017. Include your name, address, age, and the name of the church you attend. Five winners will be drawn from all correct submissions received. The contest is open to young people ages 5–12, and winners will receive a \$10 cash prize.



# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- APRIL 28** Farewell service for Rev. Derek and Mrs. Erwin in Orlando FPC, Florida

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- MAY 5 - 7** Missionary Conference Toronto FPC

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- MAY 8 - 12** Presbytery Week of Prayer to be hosted by Faith FPC, Greenville, South Carolina

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- JULY 15 - 22** Youth Camp in Rock Mountain Bible Camp, Scranton, PA

## NOW I BELONG TO JESUS

My favorite hymn, "Now I Belong to Jesus", was written by a twentieth-century author, Norman J. Clayton, who lived from 1903 until 1992. Clayton was a prolific hymn writer, who published some thirty songbooks containing both Christian hymns and choruses. Some of these included "My Hope Is in the Lord", "Only to be What He Wants me to Be", and "I Must Tell Others the Story." Young Norman's musical ability was clearly shown at age twelve when he began to play the organ in his church. He continued as a church organist for fifty years in all! In later life he was the instrumentalist for the New York rallies of the evangelist Jack Wyrzten.

Converted as a young child, the memorization of Scripture was a life-long practice of Norman Clayton. Therefore, he desired that the message of God's Word be seen in every song that he wrote. This was something he accomplished so well in my favorite hymn, as shown by the following examples. In Mark 10:45, we read that Christ gave His life "a ransom for many", and Romans 8:35 asks, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" These truths are reflected in the first stanza of the hymn:

*Jesus my Lord will love me forever;  
From Him no pow'r of evil can sever;  
He gave His life to ransom my soul;  
Now I belong to Him.*

The second stanza of the hymn speaks of being lost in "sin's degradation", while the final stanza refers to being freed from "sin that long had enslaved me." These lines are drawn from the message of Scriptures like Romans 3:23, "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." The hymn's chorus might also be based upon Romans 8:35-39 since it says:

*Now I belong to Jesus;  
Jesus belongs to me;  
Not for the years of time alone,  
But for eternity."*

I was first drawn to this hymn by its beautiful melody, but soon realized that its message echoed my own salvation experience. At an

early age, I was taken to special evangelistic services where the gospel message was faithfully presented. One night, I whispered to my mother that I wanted to be saved. I wanted Jesus to be my Savior. There was an invitation given, and I walked the aisle to the front with my mother where I prayed, asking the Lord Jesus to save me. A few years later, while attending youth meetings, a warning was given about "just walking an aisle and praying a prayer." Since many young people had done that, but gave no evidence of true salvation, we were told that this could be true of us also. This resulted in a long period of doubting my salvation experience. Finally, however, the Lord brought Acts 16:31 to my troubled heart, and I was able to say along with the hymn writer: "Now I belong to Jesus, Jesus belongs to me." Truly I could sing the words of verse three from my heart: "Joy floods my soul, for Jesus has saved me." How sweet is the message that Christ shed His precious blood to redeem enslaved sinners just like me!

I still love the melody of Norman Clayton's hymn, but now it is the words themselves that mean so much more to me. I have learned over the years, as my understanding of theology has deepened, that though I walked an aisle and prayed at the front, the Lord had actually saved me when I was still in my seat. He had heard the cry of my heart! Like Mr. Clayton, therefore, I have been able to say since my early childhood:

*Now I belong to Jesus;  
Jesus belongs to me;  
Not for the years of time alone,  
But for eternity."*

This is my favorite hymn! ❏



**Mrs. June Hamilton** is the wife of Rev. Stephen Hamilton, minister of Lehigh Valley Free Presbyterian Church, Walnutport, Pennsylvania.