

the presbyterian banner

December 2011

*Jesus replied, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests,
but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head."*

Matthew 8:20

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Editor:
Rev. Sjirk Bajema
44 Prospect Hill Road,
Narre Warren, VIC
AUSTRALIA 3805
Ph. (03) 9705 1505
Email: sjirkb@gmail.com

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Editorial

It's been nesting time again. Perhaps you have been swooped by the over-zealous magpie. Or maybe those other birds have been harassing your cat and carrying on with their incessant chirping. They even tried to make themselves right at home at our place this year by setting up a nest in the garage. We tried all the suggested deterrents to this – cans and plastic bottles on string hanging down where they would usually get in, and rubber snakes. But they got past everything. It seemed the best treatment was to take away the flat surface which they were building their nest on, and any other possible area like that, and completely clear away their nest-building materials. They still tried after that, but with no foundation there was no way they could build the nest.

There is a lesson in this. If you remove the essential basis for any potential problem, the problem itself is dealt with. And don't we find this in our Christian lives? The best way to avoid the potential stumbling block is to keep right away from any possible connection with it. Don't give it the air to breath. Avoiding the temptation altogether, or giving it short shrift, is the way forward. As one wise believer said to a younger Christian struggling hard against a particular sin through intense praying and studying about it, 'No wonder it holds you in its grip – you won't leave it alone!'

But looking back over the past year we haven't been the most successful at that, have we? How many times haven't we fallen into the same trap again and again, just like that younger Christian? We looked to our own resources rather than to the Lord through His Word. We tried to do it on our own, or with the wrong kind of people, rather than seeking godly counsel and help. It's just as well it's not up to us. By coming clean before the Lord in prayer and so laying it all before Him, we can receive the forgiveness we need. There's no limit to the times we can do that. But you wouldn't want to push it. Would you?

*'We may not be able to stop the birds flying over our heads,
but we can stop them making nests on our heads.'*

Martin Luther

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The Results of Justification

Considering Romans 5:1—11

George Ball

This passage is etched in my memory. It was the ‘text’ for my first attempt at preaching. I had never preached before and I was no ‘boy Spurgeon.’ I had no idea how to go about preparing a sermon, nor any idea how much material I needed. I was afraid I might run out of things to say. What was I to do? So I copied swathes from Martyn Lloyd Jones’ exposition of Romans (unacknowledged of course). I ended up with far too much material and went on far too long (some will say I haven’t learned much since!). I sometimes wondered why I wasn’t invited back. Many years later however, they did invite me back. I was delighted, and to my great relief no one even remembered my debut.

The passage is memorable for another reason. I have attempted to preach from it occasionally over the years – and the difficulty is that there is such an embarrassment of riches. How can a preacher deal with it adequately? Martyn Lloyd Jones preached 12 sermons on this passage. James Boice preached 6 sermons. I am going to attempt to cover the passage in 1 article! All I am offering, therefore, is a mere skeleton. The chapter begins with a ‘therefore.’ That’s the clue to the purpose of this section. Paul is explaining what is involved as a result of being justified by faith in Christ – which he has been writing about since Romans 3: 21. What are some of these results?

We Have Peace with God (v.1)

When we think of what we were in our unsaved state, it should make the hair stand on the back of our neck; it should make our flesh creep; it should make us shudder. Why? Because we were enemies of God. We were under His wrath. We were under His condemnation. We were alienated from God. Our relationship with God was broken. Why? Because of our sin and unrighteousness.

But everything has changed since we believed. We now have peace with God. The issue has been settled. The cause of enmity has been removed.

The relationship is restored. How? ‘Through our Lord Jesus Christ.’ (v. 1). ‘We rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation’ (v. 11). ‘God presented Him as a propitiation by His blood to be received by

Romans 5:

¹ Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

faith’ (Rom. 3: 25). ‘In Christ, God was reconciling the world to Himself’ (2 Cor. 5: 19).

We need to understand the nature of this peace. It’s a real objective peace. It’s not a mere feeling. It’s not some emotional high that grips us now and again; it’s not some warm, fuzzy happy feeling that lifts us out of our feet. Paul is emphasising an objective reality. We have peace with (or ‘toward’) God, because of what Christ has done.

Let me illustrate it this way. It’s the night of the Exodus. The Israelites had their door posts sprinkled with blood. The Lord had promised, ‘when I see the blood I will pass over’ (Ex. 12: 12-13). It didn’t matter how the Israelites felt that night – whether they were afraid, or nervous, or anxious, or doubting. Their safety was guaranteed by the promise of God. When the Angel of death passed through the land and saw the blood, he passed over. All were safe inside. Paul says we have peace with God when we are justified through faith in Christ. This is a fact. When He sees us protected by the righteousness of Christ, we are safe. We should therefore enjoy the security we have. There are some Christians who are troubled souls, who live in fear and

doubt. Perhaps they have trouble accepting the fact that God could love them and accept them because of their particular past. They need to read verse 1 again – slowly. We HAVE peace! Faith must keep its eyes on the facts of our faith.

The Heidelberg Catechism gives a brilliant answer to the question, ‘How are you made right with God?’ It states: ‘Only by true faith in Jesus Christ. Even though my conscience accuses me of having grievously sinned against God’s commandments and never having kept any of them, even though I am still inclined toward evil, nevertheless, without my deserving it at all, out of sheer grace, God grants and credits me the perfect satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ, as if I had never sinned nor been a sinner, as if I had been as perfectly obedient as Christ was obedient for me. All I need to do is to accept this gift of God with a believing heart.’

We Have Access to God (v.2a)

We are used to seeing ‘No Entry’ signs in many different places: e.g. on the road, in the bank, and in many public buildings. The ancient Jew was very familiar with ‘No Entry’ signs in the Temple. There were areas accessible only to the priests. There was one area only accessible by the High Priest once a year: the Holy of Holies – where God dwelt. But now that is all changed since the death of Jesus. The veil has been torn. The way to God has been opened for all. ‘Through Him (Christ) we have obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand.’ The Message gets the idea across, ‘He has thrown open His door to us.’ Now that we have peace with God, we also have access into God’s gracious presence. Remember the story of Mephibosheth? David showed unusual kindness to this man despite his lameness and pedigree (he was a grandson of Saul). David invited Mephibosheth to share his home and table. Mephibosheth thought

there must be a trick – it was too good to be true (See 2 Sam. 9). But David had him there ‘for Jonathan’s sake’. Likewise, we are the Lord’s Mephibosheths – and there is no reason in us why we should be part of the King’s family, eating at His table. But we have this privilege for ‘Christ’s sake.’

There is a famous photograph of President John F. Kennedy in the Oval Office of the Whitehouse with his son John Jr. at his feet under the desk. How did he get there? We might have liked a photograph of the President with one of our children. That’s not possible, of course. We will never have access to the Oval Office. John Jr. was there because of his special relationship with the President – he was his father. We as justified believers have an even greater privilege – we have access to God because He is now our Father. John Stott writes, ‘Justified believers enjoy a blessing far greater than a periodic approach to God or an occasional audience with the King... Our relationship with God, into which justification has brought us, is not sporadic, but continuous; not precarious, but secure. We don’t fall in and out of grace like courtiers who find themselves in and out of favour with their master.’ As believers, we don’t come cringing or crawling into the presence of God. We come with confidence because Jesus has introduced us to the Father and we are always welcome (Heb. 4: 16).

We Have Hope from God (vv2b and 5)

‘We rejoice in hope of the glory of God.’ The blessings of justification include not only the past (we have peace); the present (we have access by faith into this grace); but also the future (we rejoice in hope). Gospel hope is not mere wishful thinking. It’s not the power of positive thinking. Gospel hope is what is certain but has not yet come to pass. Paul speaks further about the hope we have in chapter 8. We are hoping for the renewal and transformation of this fallen world. We have the sure and certain hope of the resurrection when our bodies shall be raised in glory. We are hoping for the glorious appearing of our great God and Sav-

iour, Jesus Christ. We shall see His glory and we shall reflect His glory. That will be heaven – our ultimate hope and final destiny. Our hope then is not the grave. Neither is it that our souls go to be with Christ.

Romans 5:

³And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; ⁴ and perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵ Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

⁶ For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. ⁸ But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. ¹⁰ For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. ¹¹ And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconcilia-

Our hope is that we shall have a new body and we shall dwell in the new heaven and the new earth with all the redeemed and with the Lord, where we shall see His glory. We

therefore (now) rejoice in hope of the glory of God. The psalmist exhorts us, ‘Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.’

We Have Purpose under Pressure (vv3-5)

Paul drops a bombshell. He says, ‘more than that, we rejoice in our sufferings.’ What a paradox. We groan under our suffering – yes. We complain under our suffering – yes. We hurt under our suffering – yes. We despair under our suffering – yes. We grin and bear our suffering – yes. But, we rejoice in our suffering? Can this be real? Yes. Remember who is writing these words – a man who was no stranger to suffering – one who has suffered far more for the Gospel than you or I ever will. His body was flogged, he was imprisoned, he was shipwrecked, he endured much opposition, he was deserted by friends, and he was often disappointed in the churches that he founded. (See 2 Cor. 11: 23-28). Yet he says, ‘we rejoice in our sufferings.’ In fact, he puts it even more strongly. The verb means to boast or exult. (It’s the same verb used in verses 2, 3 and 11). How can this be? How can we possibly rejoice in sufferings and find joy in what causes pain? Are we some kind of masochists who enjoy being hurt? Are we some kind of Stoics who grit their teeth and endure? Have we done something to deserve punishment? No. We are justified Christians who see in our sufferings the working out of a gracious divine purpose. The paradox is explained in verse 3-5. It is not the sufferings themselves that we rejoice in, so much as the beneficial results. We rejoice because sufferings produce something good in the life of the justified. Suffering is not good in itself – but it produces something beneficial. Note: he does not say that we rejoice after them or in spite of them but in them and because of them. What is the good produced? ‘Suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope’. We could not learn endurance or perseverance without suffering. The value of perseverance is that it

produces character. Job sensed its worth when he said in the midst of troubles, 'When He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold.' (Job 23: 10). The value of character is that it brings hope of future glory. What Paul means surely is that our developing, ripening Christian character is evidence that God is at work within us. And He who is maturing us through suffering will surely bring us to glory. The psalmist could say, 'It is good for me that I was afflicted' (Ps. 119: 71). I have the permanent scar of a knife wound on my body. I bear no resentment toward the man who did it. In fact the same man has scarred many others, too, with His knife. You see He was a surgeon, and what He did was for my good. Our Heavenly Father is a skilful surgeon and we know that if He inflicts any wounds upon us – it is not because He hates us or wants to punish us – it's rather because He loves us and cares for us – and wants to see us grow.

We Have Absolute Assurance of God's Love (vv6-8)

The apostle knows how we think. When suffering and pressure and opposition come, we are tempted to doubt God's love toward us. He also knows that of all people, Christians have a sensitive conscience. We are sensitive to our failures and our sins. He will expand on this in chapter 7. Each of us may wonder how God could possibly love someone as crappy as we are. He writes here to assure us of God's absolute love for His saints.

Paul uses four descriptive terms to describe our position before God in our unsaved state: we were 'weak, ungodly, sinners and enemies.' It is imperative that we recognise the significance of the chronology here. When did God demonstrate His love toward us? What kind of people did He love? What did He do to demonstrate His love? The answer: God loved us when we did not love Him. God loved us when we were weak, ungodly, sinners and enemies. 'God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us' (v.8). Paul takes us to the cross: the ultimate expression of God's love. The cross was God's love in action. Is it not remarkable that God provided 'so great salvation' while we were still in that totally depraved condition? If God loved us then – 'when we were still weak' – does He love us any less now? Of course not! Justification by faith in Christ gives us the assurance we need when tempted to doubt the love of God for us.

We Have Confidence to Face the Judgement Day (vv9-11)

What about the future? Will I be able to endure to the end? Will I be able to stand in the day of judgement? Yes! If we understand the beauty of this doctrine of justification, we can face the future with calmness and confidence. The apostle reasons, 'Since therefore, we have now been justified by His blood, much more shall we be saved by Him from the wrath of God.' Justification is God's declaration of judgment about us brought forward or 'fast

-tracked.' We don't have to wait until the Last Day to know what His verdict will be regarding our future. Jesus said, 'Whoever hears my word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life, and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life' (Jn. 5: 24). Being justified by faith in Christ is the declaration of the Righteous Judge that there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Another reason for confidence is that we have a living, resurrected Saviour (10). Jesus is at the right hand of God interceding for us (v.8: 34). Our future is guaranteed because our lives are inextricably bound up with the risen life of Christ. 'We shall be saved by His life.'

This is reason for rejoicing now: 'we have received the reconciliation' – and reason for rejoicing on the Last Great Day – when the Lord will publicly vindicate all His justified ones. As we've considered some of the blessings and results of justification we can understand what prompted John Stott to say, 'Nobody has understood Christianity who does not understand... the word justified.'

The Rev. George D. Ball is the minister of the Manning River PCEA congregation, having previously served in Narre Warren PCEA and in the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Northern Ireland.

Was this space for your church news and photographs?

Ask your minister or elder how your congregation can be part of this positive promotion of the denomination, as well as keeping the rest of us up with what's happening!

Camps, special events, youth news, seniors, engagements, marriages, births, anniversaries, obituaries... the list goes on and on!

Perhaps you could volunteer to send in some news and photos?

Life under the Banner

Do you have the right friends?

Jim Klazinga

Who are your friends? Do they have a positive influence in your life? Do they help you in your Christian walk? Or are your friends a hindrance to your spiritual growth?

It's said that you can't choose your family, but you can choose your friends. Are the choices you make in this regard good choices, or bad? Now, you might be inclined to say, "Who I hang around with is no one's business but my own." You might think this, but you'd be wrong. It certainly is God's business. The Bible makes it clear that God has much to say about who your friends are. For instance, Proverbs 22:24,25 says, "Make no friendship with a man given to anger, nor go with a wrathful man, lest you learn his ways and entangle yourself in a snare."

Consider also James 4:4 - "Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God." Now, this verse might not be speaking directly about who our individual friends are. But certainly there is a relevant principle here. Can we honestly say that having worldly friends and being "a friend of the world" are completely unrelated matters?

What Is Friendship?

Perhaps what we need to do is ask ourselves: what is true friendship all about?

Friendship is a bond of fellowship. We have a relationship with our friends in which we demonstrate mutual care and affection.

This bond of friendship involves loyalty and selflessness. You stand up for your friends. You support them in good times and in bad. You are not just looking out for your own interests, but for theirs. Friendship is not just about doing what you feel is good for you, but it means looking out for the good of your friend.

This bond of friendship involves giving. You give your time. You give your material possessions. You may even give your very life. As Jesus said, "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for

his friends." Of course, in this regard, you could hardly ask for a better example of friendship than that of Jesus himself. He gave up his life on our behalf, enduring the pain of hell on the cross as an atoning sacrifice for us.

The bond of friendship also involves the making and keeping of promises. We have a prime Old Testament example of this in the friendship of David and Jonathan. Just as David was about to flee from Jonathan's father King Saul, Jonathan said to his dear friend, "Go in peace, because we have sworn both of us in the name of the Lord, saying, 'The Lord shall be between me and you, and between my offspring and your offspring, forever.'" David remembered and kept these promises, even long after Jonathan died.

Again, we can look to the supreme example of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. God in Jesus Christ established a relationship with us, he chose us to belong to him, and in the very act of choosing us he makes a promise to us. As we read in John 15:14,15, "No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you."

Our Bond With Other Believers

So, we have a bond with our friends, a bond that requires loyalty, giving, and promises. Now ask yourself: who are the people I should have this bond with? Well, there is a group with whom you already share a special bond. The apostle John concludes his third letter by saying, "Peace be to you. The friends greet you. Greet the friends, each by name." There is a sense in which we can say that our fellow believers are by definition our friends.

Think about it: friends are people with whom we share interests; they are

people we have things in common with. Well, who do we have more in common with than fellow believers? What deeper bond can there be than the bond of joint union with Christ?

As someone who likes fishing, you still have more in common with a fellow believer than someone who can't stand the idea of spending hours holding on to a fishing rod.

As someone who likes rugby, you still have more in common with another Christian than with someone who has no interest in sports. And you should certainly show more loyalty to brothers and sisters in the Lord than to your favourite team.

Make No Friendship with a Man Given to Sin

Does this mean you can never be friends with a non-Christian? Well, consider again Proverbs 22:24, "Make no friendship with a man given to anger, nor go with a wrathful man." It would not be a stretch to apply the principle here to those who are 'given to' sin in general, those who are not regenerated by the power of the Holy Spirit and so remain dead in their sins. In other words: unbelievers. We are not to 'make friendship' with them.

We are not to 'go with' them. We are not to join with them in a manner that suggests support and approval, like how a getaway driver 'goes with' a bank robber, assisting him in his crime. We are not to fellowship with the unbeliever in a way that suggests that the bond between us is deeper than it really is.

Mind you, one might respond to this use of Proverbs 22:24 by pointing out how there are many Christians who are 'given to anger.' Can it not be said that this proverb is suggesting that we should be careful about being friends with anyone who is given to anger, regardless of whether or not they happen to be a believer?

It's true, there are many who claim to be believers, but who nevertheless are 'given to anger.' The question is though, is your anger-inclined

friend repentant? If not, then you may have to question your friendship with him. You may even have to ask whether or not such a person is in fact a believer.

You see, the difference between a true believer and an unbeliever is that the believer recognizes his sin for what it is and longs to be free of it. Not just because it would make his relationships with others easier, but because of how his sin is an affront to God. With believers who struggle with this particular sin, or any sin for that matter, our friendship with them requires us to walk alongside them and help them fight against it.

For sure, we need to heed the wisdom of Proverbs 22:25 - "lest you learn his ways and entangle yourself in a snare." We

must not allow ourselves to fall into the snare of adopting the angry brother's sinful pattern. And yet, we are still called to walk beside him and help him in his struggle. As we read in Galatians 6:1,2, "Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be

tempted." We do this because of the bond that we share in Jesus, a bond we do not have with unbelievers.

How Deep Can Your Bond Be with Unbelievers?

Having said all of this, we're not trying to say that we should have nothing to do with the people of the world (see 1 Corinthians 5:9,10). As those shining the light of Christ in our lives, we should be friendly to those around us, including unbelievers. We should show genuine concern for their well-being. And there will be activities that we can engage in with them. There will even be a certain level of fellowship we can experience with them (see 1 Corinthians 10:27).

No doubt we will have relationships with non-Christians. And if a non-

Christian happens to see you as a friend, you don't necessarily have to dissuade him of this, saying, "you are not my friend because I could never truly be friends with someone who is not a Christian."

But at the same time, you have to remember that your relationship with this person is not as deep as it would be if he were a brother in the Lord.

You simply don't have the same bond with them as you have with fellow believers.

Think about how everything else in life pales in comparison with having a living relationship with your Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. When someone doesn't share this with you, how much do you really have in common with him?



The Danger of Friendship with Unbelievers

Perhaps you might argue that having a friendship relationship with a nonbeliever would be one way you could witness to such a person. You want to be their friend in order to evangelize them.

Well, for sure, we do want to make contact and establish relationships with those who do not confess the name of Christ. We want to be a shining light to them. We respect the fact that there is a manner in which they bear the image of God, and so we don't act rude and hostile toward them. Nor do we want to give the impression that we'd rather not have anything to do with them.

But keep in mind the danger of main-

taining too close a connection with the unbeliever. There is a sense in which sin is contagious. 1 Corinthians 15:33 - "Do not be deceived: 'Bad company ruins good morals.'" Proverbs 13:20 - "Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm." Remember the warning God gave to his people as they were about to enter into the land of Canaan.

"Take care, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land to which you go, lest it become a snare in your midst.... lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and when they whore after their gods and sacrifice to their gods and you are invited, you eat of his sacrifice, and you take of their

daughters for your sons, and their daughters whore after their gods and make your sons whore after their gods" (Exodus 34:12,15,16). The danger of adopting the false gods of pagan friends is no less real today than it was for the people back then.

The psalmist declares in Psalm 119:63 - "I am a companion of all who fear you, of those who keep your precepts." It's good to surround ourselves with positive role models who can help us grow spiritually.

Having friends who share our faith means having friends who will pray for us. It means being able to discuss core convictions from a shared perspective. It doesn't mean they will never let you down. But God will never let you down, and he will work in and through your Christian friends to help you grow.

The Rev. James Klazinga serves as the minister of our Brisbane PCEA congregation, having previously served churches in the Reformed Churches of New Zealand and the United Reformed Churches of North America.

The Past for Today

Presbyterianism in Tasmania 1822-96

Rowland S. Ward

Presbyterianism in Van Diemen's Land (now Tasmania) began with Scottish free settlers. The Rev Archibald Alexander, the first resident minister – and the first serving Presbyterian minister in Australia – arrived late in 1822. He was from the United Secession Church which meant he could not be part of forming a Presbytery in fellowship with the Established Church of Scotland, but once such a Presbytery was formed he could be received by it. In fact he wasn't received; because he had to leave the ministry prior to the formation of the *Presbytery of Van Diemen's Land* on 6 November 1835 by John Dunmore Lang of Sydney, John Anderson of Launceston and John Mackersey of Macquarie River. While in legal and moral connection with the Established Church of Scotland, the Presbytery was independent of its jurisdiction. In 1853 a Free Church Presbytery was formed; but union took place only in 1896, more than 30 years after the major unions effected on the mainland. The reasons for this are instructive.



Rev Dr John Lillie

Doctrinal disputes 1844-64

A vague reference to Baptism and the Lord's Supper appears on 7 November 1844 in the minutes of the Presbytery. A *Launceston Examiner* report two days later states that 'it was re-

solved to adopt strict discipline as to the admission of members to the Presbyterian churches.' A year later a Committee was appointed to examine the issue, and a minute to the same effect on 28 December 1847 is extant. All this suggests that there was laxity in qualification for admission to the sacraments combined with difficulty and delicacy in handling the situation. Whatever the precise concern it appears to have died down, other matters intervening. However, between March and May 1861 Rev John Storie (1817-1901) of Hobart, who had served briefly at Castlemaine with the unionist majority of the Free Presbyterian Church of Victoria, preached some sermons on the sacraments in which he used very realistic language – perhaps approaching a Lutheran conception of the bodily presence of Christ in the Supper. On Baptism his views logically, although perhaps not in reality, looked towards baptismal regeneration. These sermons were published and responded to by Rev Adam Turnbull (Kirklands-Campbelltown) and Rev John Robertson (Bothwell); the latter, however, conceding that infant baptism was 'unknown in the Apostolic age'. Several inconclusive statements were issued by the Presbytery culminating in one of six points on 11 March 1864. This point rejected baptismal regeneration and the concept that the literal blood of Christ was treasured up in heaven, being in some mysterious way partaken of by communicants. Storie signed it and officially the dispute ended; but in the aftermath the Presbytery convicted him of slander and wilful misrepresentation, dissolving his pastoral tie. He was deposed since he refused to confess or apologise.



Paralysis in ministerial movements

The localities occupied by the Presbytery of Van Diemen's Land were not necessarily the ideal ones as the colony developed. However, when in November 1863 a call from the North West coast was addressed to the Rev Thomas Dove, the Presbytery took the view that it could not transfer a minister against the wishes of a congregation since the minister under the state-aid provisions of the time had the right to take the stipend with him. The Presbytery considered it could not deprive a congregation of its stipend where the congregation wished to retain its minister. Consequently the existing inefficient deployment of ministers was entrenched, and several parishes were left with tiny congregations. Thus Presbytery abdicated its responsibility to provide proper pastoral care.

Lack of proper procedures

The previous points highlight the problem of forming a church without having proper and legally enforceable rules. Storie's deposition had to be rescinded in 1868. The situation was not rectified until 1880, after a considerable period spent attempting to control difficulties and animosities.

Difficult people

The Presbytery of Van Diemen's

Land had a number of difficult characters who easily rocked the small boat. R.K.Ewing of Launceston was one of these. Originally an Independent, this gifted but arrogant man was a law to himself; and when, in 1868, he left Van Diemens Land for Victoria, he continued to cause strife. John Storie was another. Storie in Tasmania was an ardent Church of Scotland man who constantly opposed attempts by the Presbytery to break its Church of Scotland connection. When at length he departed (1879), having ensured a pension for life, the *Tasmanian Presbyterian Magazine* said 'good riddance'. He had enjoyed a fine income at taxpayers' expense, but left a wreck of a congregation behind him.



Rev Dr William Nicolson

The Scottish Disruption of 1843
 In 1844 the Presbytery, under the leadership of its most influential minister Rev Dr John Lillie (1806-66) of St Andrew's Church, Hobart, declared that it accepted the non-intrusion principles of the Free Church, but declined to follow these principles out in consistent practice. It refused to break its connection with the Established Church of Scotland, losing two of its twelve ministerial members and a licentiate as a consequence. The Launceston Free Church Association was then formed and in 1850, James Lindsay (1821-87) arrived to form Chalmers Church. The following

year Rev William Nicolson (1796-1890) came to Hobart and founded the Chalmers' Church building (cnr of Bathurst and Harrington Streets, demolished ca.1956). Rev Lauchlan Campbell (1821-1907) was settled at Oatlands in 1853, and a Free Church Presbytery was formed there. This was a stable group of capable ministers and in 1861 about 26% of the 9000 'census' Presbyterians identified with it.

Towards Union

In 1878, the Presbytery of Van Diemen's Land gained the legal capacity to manage its affairs properly and adopted the name 'Presbyterian Church in Tasmania' in lieu of 'Church of Scotland'. It became a Synod with

two Presbyteries in 1880, when there were nine ministers, and in 1896 received the four parishes of the Free Church Presbytery. About 40% of the claimed membership of about 1500 were from the Free Church parishes.

It is interesting to note that when the Reformed faith revived in Tasmania in the late 1950s, sermons of earlier orthodox ministers such as Thomas Cunningham (1841-1915) of Scottsdale were again circulated.

Rev. Rowland Ward presently serves as the minister of the Knox PCEA congregation in Wantirna, Melbourne, having previously served in the Ulverstone PCEA.

Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia

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The World in the Banner

Presbyterian Church of Ghana Officially Condemns British PM's Threat

A 1 November 2011 Ghana Broadcasting Corporation article titled 'Ghana: British PM Under Attack for Gay Rights Comments' reports that the Rev Dr Bugri Nagbo, Northern Regional Chairman of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, has condemned recent comments of British Prime Minister David Cameron threatening to cut off aid to countries that do not accept pro-homosexual legislation.

Dr Nagbo said that Ghana is a decent and well-behaved country, and that it is imperative that Ghana maintain its sovereignty and not kowtow to pressures to exchange legislation for money. He called for all political parties, religious organizations, and youth groups to stand against such ungodliness, as acquiescence to these pressures will doom the country of Ghana.

Dr Nagbo additionally said that countries that offer aid to developing countries in exchange for discarding their cultural values, are engaging in racism and in bullying behavior. He too advised the government of Ghana to disregard the comments of the British Prime Minister, as the government would lose its popularity if they were to enact pro-homosexual legislation in exchange for foreign aid money.

+ Ghana Broadcasting Corporation,
dg@gbcghana.com

+ Presbyterian Church of Ghana,
pcghg@yahoo.com

Indonesia: Deaths in Papua (formerly Irian Jaya)

Some 5000 Papuans from across the Eastern Indonesian province gathered in Jayapura for the third Papuan Congress from 17 to 19 October, its 50th anniversary. The Congress opened with prayers and included several church leaders amongst the speakers, including Rev Benny Giay, Rev Socrates S

Yoman and Rev Yemima Krey. By 8am on 19 October the streets were lined with some 3100 military and police officers wearing full combat gear and holding assault rifles. Armoured vehicles and police trucks were also out in force. As in past Papuan Con-

gresses (1961 & 2000), a declaration of independence was read and the Morning Star flag raised. The police responded by storming the Congress, ostensibly to put down the 'coup'. More than 300 Papuans were arrested, dozens wounded and six killed. The Melanesian Christian Papuans seek an end to the racial-religious discrimination and persecution they suffer at the hands of Javanese Muslims and the Indonesian government. Please pray.

+ *Religious Liberty Prayer Bulletin* |
RLPB 131 | Wed 26 Oct 2011

John Calvin: The Tyrant Who Never Was

For most evangelicals today, his name evokes an image of a negative, judgmental and cold tyrant, because this is the Calvin whom high school teachers and university and seminary professors have portrayed before their students in the last several decades. But this cold tyrannical image (some have ridiculed him saying that his wife died of boredom) has nothing in common with first-hand reports by friend or foe alike, nor the consensus of the world's foremost Renaissance and Reformation historians. As Westminster President Dr. W. Robert Godfrey, writes in his new book *John Calvin: Pilgrim and Pastor*, 'Historians, by contrast, know that John Calvin was one of the most remarkable men who lived in the last five hundred years and that his influence on the development of the modern western world has been immense. Calvin and Calvinism have been linked to the rise of such diverse phenomena as democracy, capitalism, and modern science.' Theologians and biblical scholars know him as a writer in theology and biblical studies whose work must still be carefully considered today. Church historians remember him as the principal theologian of Reformed Christianity — an expression of the faith that over four and a half centuries has attracted millions of adherents in countries throughout the world.

But he was not just a scholar whom many have caricatured as impersonal; he was also a pastor who cared deeply for his flock. Indeed, Theodore Beza (1519-1605) wrote in a biogra-

phy of his friend and colleague, 'Having been a spectator of his conduct for sixteen years... I can now declare, that in him all men may see a most beautiful example of the Christian character, an example which it is as easy to slander as it is difficult to imitate.'

On May 27, 1564, Calvin died, only fifty-five years old. The Dutch historian L. Penning described how Geneva reacted: 'When late at night the news of Calvin's death spread, there was much weeping in the town, as a nation weeps when it loses its benefactor. Cannon Street was crowded with people; it became a pilgrimage to the Reformer's death-bed, and the Government had to take measures to prevent too great a pressure.

Thousands of exiles, citizens, and foreign dignitaries followed the funeral procession. As he had requested, his body was placed in a simple pine box and buried in an unmarked grave, which 'surely was not the funeral of a despot.'

+ *RCNZ Oamaru Newsletter*

AD/BC rock solid in curriculum

By Dan Harrison

The time-honoured terms BC and AD are safe from the clutches of political correctness in classrooms. The agency responsible for the national school curriculum yesterday denied it ever intended to remove the terms from history classrooms.

Newspaper reports last month suggested BC and AD would be replaced by the academic terms BCE (Before Common Era), CE (Common Era) and BP (Before Present). The reports sparked outrage from religious leaders, with the Anglican Archbishop of Sydney, Peter Jensen, labelling it an 'intellectually absurd attempt to write Christ out of human history'. This was followed by a controversy in Britain, where BBC announcers revolted against a similar proposal.

But Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority's general manager of curriculum, Robert Randall, told a Senate hearing that BC (Before Christ) and AD (Anno Domini, Latin for 'the year of our

Lord') would continue to be used. 'We haven't extinguished the use of BC and AD,' he said.

Mr Randall said confusion had arisen because the curriculum contained an optional activity that would give students an understanding of the terms BCE, CE and BP. These had been the standards used for describing time in academic literature for the past 30 years, he said. One of the aims of the curriculum was to familiarise students with historical terms and concepts, Mr Randall said, and students would be expected to understand both ways of describing time. But he said the authority would amend the curriculum to make it clear that BC and AD should also be taught.

Liberal senator Brett Mason said the academic terms would be confusing because most people would not know their meaning. 'Does anyone know a popular historian who uses the terms BCE and CE? I don't know any,' he said.

+ *The Age*, 21 October 2011

Mormonism is a Cult and No More Christian Than Islam

Bill Keller, founder of 2.4 million-subscriber LivePrayer.com, is calling on Mormon cult member Mitt Romney to quit lying about being a Christian. Keller made national news in 2007 for saying, 'a vote for Romney is a vote for Satan!' Keller has demanded that Mormon Presidential candidate Mitt Romney quit lying to people that he is a Christian.

Keller applauds First Baptist Dallas Pastor Robert Jeffress for caring enough about the eternal souls of men to publicly state the truth: that Mormonism is a cult. Keller says, 'The fact is, the beliefs and teachings of the satanically inspired Mormon cult are totally inconsistent with Biblical Christianity. Romney and Mormons use the words 'god' and 'Jesus,' yet the god and Jesus of the Mormon cult are NOT the God and Jesus of the Bible! They view the Bible as a flawed and incomplete book usurped by the writings of their cults founder, Joseph Smith, who history shows was a racist, pedophile, polygamist and murderer!'

Keller continues, 'Mormon doctrine teaches their 'god' used to be a human who rose to god-like status, just like Romney and all Mormons believe they will too after their death. The 'Jesus' of the Mormon cult is the natural offspring of their 'god' Elohim who had sex with Mary, meaning their 'Jesus' is a created being and NOT a deity as the Bible teaches, and is the brother of Lucifer.'

Keller concludes, 'I could care less what fantasies Romney and those in his cult choose to believe, but I do care that they lie to people saying they are a Christian, when a person who believes in the teachings of the Mormon cult is no more a Christian than a Muslim is. Most appalling are prominent Christians who have sold out the faith to help Romney and other Mormons perpetuate their lie

that they are Christians, aiding that cult to lead ignorant souls to hell for eternity.'

Keller said that he is not worried about being politically correct since at stake are the eternal souls of men, saying 'According to the Bible, not Bill Keller, those who believe in a false Gospel like the Mormon's teach, will die and be in hell for all eternity.'

Keller has challenged Romney and another high profile member of the Mormon cult, Glenn Beck, to a public debate about Mormon doctrine, but those challenges have gone unanswered since 'they will never publicly debate a Christian theologian about what their cult teaches since it would stop their ability to lie to the public that they are a Christian.'

+ *Christian News*, news-desk@christiannewswire.com
+ *Liveprayer.com*, 6660 46th Avenue North, St. Petersburg, Florida 33709

Sudan: Refugees Bombed; 'Oil War' Looming

The Republic of Sudan Arab-Islamist regime has been waging genocidal jihad against the mostly Christian non-Arabs of the 'new south': Abyei, South Kordofan and Blue Nile. The regime has now escalated its attacks inside South Sudan. On 8 & 9 November it bombed refugees from South Kordofan and Blue Nile as they sheltered in South

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\$35 per annum for an individual subscription within Australia,
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as that helps sending our magazine to theological colleges and elsewhere.*

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Sudan's Unity and Upper Nile States. On 11 November a Khartoum-backed militia attacked a Southern military base in Kuek, Upper Nile, South Sudan. Many have been killed and wounded.

Satellite images reveal that Khartoum is establishing and supplying forward bases and massing militias along the border ready for a full-scale 'oil war'. Please pray for Sudan's Christians, in the North and in the South. May God be their fortress, deliverer and peace.
+ *Religious Liberty Prayer Bulletin* | RLPB 134 | Wed 16 Nov 2011

The 2011 NIV Rejected

The Reformed Churches of New Zealand recent Synod decided that the 2011 revision of the New International Version (2011 NIV) be explicitly not approved for pulpit use and that the grounds be recorded in the minutes.

These grounds are as follows:

1. The 2011 NIV is not a revision based on the old NIV of 1984, but is a revision based on the now-defunct TNIV (Today's New International Version) of 2005. The churches have already explicitly identified the TNIV as a translation not authorised for pulpit use.

2. The 2011 NIV (and its TNIV source), in employing a gender-neutral translation approach, does not accurately reflect the original languages. According to an evaluation by the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood (CBMW), 75 percent of inaccurate gender language translations from the TNIV are retained (i.e. 2766 inaccuracies) in the 2011 NIV.

3. The CBMW also reports that the 2011 NIV adopts feminist-leaning translations in several key verses dealing with women's role in the Church.

For example (departures from 1984 NIV underlined): 1 Timothy 2:12: 'I do

not permit a woman to teach or to assume authority over a man'; Romans 16:7: 'Greet Andronicus and Junia, my fellow Jews who have been in prison with me. They are outstanding among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was'; 1 Cor. 14:33–34: 'For God is not a God of disorder but of peace – as in all the congregations of the Lord's people. Women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the law says'; Romans 16:1: 'I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church in Cenchrae.'

4. Of particular concern is the 'son of man' rendering in the following, which

was approved by Synod 1983. According to the 2008 Bible Versions Study Committee all but five of our churches use the NIV. It is widely appreciated for its readability and general flow. For many, the text has become greatly familiar and it has been used as the source for Scripture memorisation. Churches and members have a significant financial investment in the copies they own. While approval for the 1984 NIV (including reprints until 2010) would remain in force, non-approval of the 2011 edition may lead to the eventual demise of the NIV in our churches. We recognise that these are weighty reasons against a

change which we do not propose lightly.

+RCNZ *Synodical Minutes* 2011,
www.rcnz.org.nz

What about studying the Confession of Faith?

Well, you might wonder, I did study it once, why should I do it again?

Or you might not have studied it and wonder what help could it possibly be. Isn't it more of an older church document that was more useful in the 16th century than what it is now?

If you are thinking along these lines, you definitely need to study the Confession of Faith. As a Confession of the Biblical Faith it answers the most important questions anyone could ask in this world. Questions like who God is, what He has done, how we fit into His picture, the place of the Church, and so on. It goes on to look at specific help for us in our everyday lives, all based on God's Word alone.

To help you do this in helpfully sized parts, you will find on the Narre Warren part of our denominational website a sermon link where you can find a series of sermons on the Westminster Confession of Faith, with Study Guides, to help you follow and understand it.

Look it up—see what you find.

removes the possibility of Jesus Christ being considered as a possible fulfillment: Psalm 8:4: 'What is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?'

5. While it would be usual practice to first have a study committee make an evaluation of a revision to an authorised translation, Synod needs to act quickly to stem a potential flood of badly translated Bibles from entering the churches. The CBMW evaluation provides ample, well-documented evidence to support such a decision.

6. The NIV has enjoyed extensive popularity within our churches since it

Up to 150 Ministers Ready to Leave Kirk

A 14 November 2011 article by Severin Carrall in *The Guardian* titled "Gay Clergy Row Threatens Mass Resignations from Church of Scotland" reports that up to 150 ministers from the Church of Scotland (COS) may leave the Kirk due to objections to the ordination of homosexuals. The disaffected clergy may eventually form a new denomination.

The schism is the largest in the COS since 1843 when 474 minis-

ters left to form the Free Church of Scotland.

+ *The Guardian*,
reader@guardian.co.uk
+ *Church of Scotland*, 121 George Street, Edinburgh EH2 4YN, Scotland, 0131-225-5722
+ *Free Church of Scotland*, catherine@freechurchofscotland.org.uk

Prescribed Search / Youth Work

DECEMBER 2011

SENIOR and INTERMEDIATE (Intermediate omit questions 1 and 8)

RUTH chapter 3

1. What were Naomi's instructions to Ruth that night when she went to the threshing floor? (2 verses)
2. Write out the verse where Boaz promises to do the part of a kinsman.
3. Why did Naomi tell Ruth when she came home, 'to sit still'?

chapter 4

4. Why did the other kinsman nearer of kin than Boaz refuse to do the part of a kinsman?
5. Of what did Boaz say the elders and all the people were witnesses? (2 verses)
6. In what words did the women bless Naomi? (2 verses)
7. What was the name of Ruth's son? How was he related to David?
8. Find the verse in Christ's genealogy in Matthew chapter 1 where Ruth is mentioned.

JUNIOR

RUTH chapter 3:9--18

1. What did Boaz promise to do for Ruth if her nearer kinsman would not do the kinsman's part?
2. When Ruth came home and told her mother-in-law what had happened, why did Naomi tell her to "sit still"?

chapter 4

3. Boaz called the elders and people to be witnesses of two things. Whose land had he bought, and whom had he acquired as his wife? (2 verses)
4. What name did Naomi's neighbours give Ruth's child? What relation was he to David?

Please send the answers to:
 Mrs I Steel
 PO Box 942
 Epping NSW 1710
 Or email to: iesteel@gmail.com

Children under the Banner

From: 'Search and Solve: Bible Activity Sheet',
 by Betty De Vries,
 [Illustrated by Donna Greenlee]
 Baker Books, 1998

Messages from Heaven

Several times in the Bible angels appeared with a message from God to special people. Use the Bible references to find the names of those people. Write their names on the lines; then find their names in the word search puzzle below.



- Genesis 16:7 _____
- Numbers 22:31 _____
- Judges 6:12 _____
- Matthew 1:20 _____
- Luke 1:11 _____
- Luke 1:27 _____
- Luke 2:9-10 _____
- Acts 1:10-11 _____
- Acts 8:26 _____
- Acts 12:7 _____
- Revelation 1:1 _____

H	A	Z	Y	R	A	M	H	O
S	H	E	P	H	E	R	D	S
M	A	C	D	I	S	N	A	P
A	G	H	A	T	O	N	J	R
A	A	A	E	E	O	O	T	R
L	R	R	D	O	S	I	L	E
A	E	I	O	E	L	O	S	T
B	G	A	P	H	I	L	I	E
J	O	H	N	J	A	N	E	S
D	I	S	C	I	P	L	E	S

Books in the Banner

Review of 'Between the Times: the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Transition, 1945-1990' (Willow Grove: OPC) by Carl Trueman

This year marks the seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. To mark the occasion, well-known scholarly historian, Reformed pundit and OPC elder, D. G. Hart, has written a history of the years 1945 to 1990. Love him or hate him, everything Hart publishes is always provocative and well-written. The book is worth reading both for insights into the specific history of the OPC and for the lens it provides for seeing wider developments in conservative American Protestantism from the perspective of confessional Presbyterianism.

A couple of preliminary remarks are in order. First, it may seem flippant to note this but the book is attractively produced, marking a definite improvement on the usually dull and occasionally scary aesthetics of earlier OPC publications which appear to have been designed as a direct means of proving that people do not buy books because of their covers. Second, the book is not a straightforward narrative history. Rather, Hart takes a series of themes and traces each one separately throughout the specified period. Thus, we learn about the rationale surrounding the production of a hymn book, struggles for identity within the broader conservative Presbyterian context, ecumenical relations, debates over social engagement, and relations with Westminster Theological Seminary. Hart has done a remarkable amount of meticulous research, but the book is not only detailed: it is also full of provocative analysis.

A Careful Distinction

For those familiar with Hart's other work, some standard themes emerge: the careful distinction between confessional Presbyterianism and liberalism on the one side, evangelicalism on the other; the emphasis on ecclesiology as a crucial factor in the career of J. Gresham Machen; and a suspicion of anything which might smack of revivalism or, to use the old fashioned

word, 'enthusiasm.' Those who know where Hart is coming from can spot the points at which he strains to be dispassionate, but on the whole he manages not to allow his personal commitments in these areas greatly to distort his narrative.

Key to the OPC is J. Gresham Machen. Now appropriated by broader evangelicalism as a champion of orthodoxy, Hart shows how Machen in his own day was first and foremost a churchman. Within the OPC, according to Hart, this notion - that churchmanship is the primary locus of Christian identity -- has been subject to challenge throughout its history. Indeed, one of the ironies of Hart's narrative is the fact that the OPC, as a small church born out of conflict and countless stories of personal sacrifice, was from the start a church with several strong identities; much of her subsequent history can thus be seen as involving struggles over precisely which would triumph. Hart also points out that the OPC, despite her reputation for exclusivity, has twice voted to put herself out of existence. The first time, in 1981, she voted to join the PCA, who then rejected her approach. This was on the grounds that the PCA was worried that the OPC might be deviant on justification thanks to the influence of controversial Westminster professor, Norman Shepherd. The second time, in 1986, the majority was again for union but failed to achieve the necessary two-thirds vote. Anyone who thinks the OPC is not ecumenically minded might want to reflect on how often their own denomination has voted to disband.

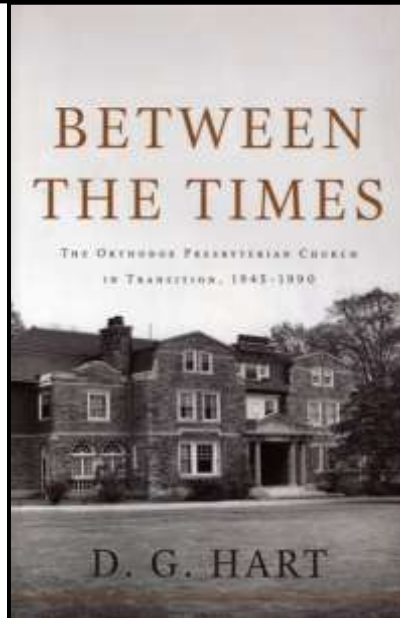
Throughout the book there are fascinating vignettes of influential OPC figures, from Machen himself, to the early Westminster faculty, to later figures such as Harvie Conn and Richard Gaffin. Westminster Theological Seminary is a constant theme but Hart also devotes a whole chapter to her. His narrative is his familiar one of the broadening of Westminster to accommodate less generically high

Presbyterian constituencies. One or two Westminster friends have told me they thought him a little unfair here; as an outsider to the culture of Westminster, I was not offended by anything he said in this context. The chapters on Christian education and the production of the Trinity hymnal were admittedly not the ones I thought would be most inspiring -- and they did not disappoint on that score -- but they do serve to show the care and thought that must be used in such contexts.

A High View of the Church

The book is timely in one more way. It will help those who are committed to seeing the future of the Church in terms of parachurch, big tent evangelical organizations to understand why some of us are less than enamoured of such ambitions. Much of Hart's narrative highlights the dialectical tension within the OPC between those who wished to maintain a high Presbyterianism and those who saw connection with the broader evangelical movement as the key to the future. This is particularly clear in the reported epistolary exchange between Richard Gaffin and John Frame in the denomination's magazine, *New Horizons*, in 1989. Frame was pushing for a more generic evangelical identity, Gaffin wanted to stress the distinctive ecclesiastical particularity of normative Biblical Christian life. Hart is worth quoting at this point: The characteristic of Orthodox Presbyterianism was the Reformed doctrine of the church in which membership in a particular communion was not a supplement to Christian identity, but its embodiment. As Gaffin explained in his exchange, the OPC was not merely a denomination; 'it is a Church, a Church that exists by divine warrant.' As such, he added, 'Biblical Presbyterianism has no place for loyalties torn between the denomination and the local congregation, or for greater

loyalty to either one.' (p. 317)
 In today's US conservative evangelical world, this is a stunning statement and repays careful reflection. The numbers of leading men who are involved in church-like parachurch organizations are significant; the organizations themselves are often impressive, and they arguably do much good when they are kept firmly in their place as hobbies and not primary contexts for Christian identity or action. But if and when church identity is supplanted by parachurch identity, all manner of problems ensue. Theology becomes truncated and, ultimately therefore, the gospel becomes vague. Accountability structures are nebulous and tend to come down to behind-closed-doors discussions among elite self-selected councils, many of which have high proportions of the same people serving on them. Divided loyalties facilitate silence on key issues and the emasculation of truly prophetic voices. The theological trend in such groups seems ever downward even as the amount of practical power



and influence wielded by the functionally unaccountable seems always to be growing as they master the new media, plant churches by Skype and promote their causes with ruthless aplomb. And the silence about the grim effects of this is too often deafening as the co-opted find that many of

their own vested interests collide with the need for plain speaking. Hart's story shows that the OPC may have sacrificed a place at the beer tables and the wine bars where the Beautiful Young Things gather, but the result has been gain rather than loss in those areas which really matter.

I am not one of those who are uncritical of Darryl Hart; indeed, within the OPC herself, our shared denomination, I would probably not be counted as an ally of his causes. Yet I am deeply grateful for this book; not only for its clarity and the insights it has given me into my own chosen spiritual home, but also for the way it brings into sharp relief much of the sub-par phenomena out there which claim the titles of Reformed and confessional. The OPC is small, cranky and has her many faults; and, honestly, I for one would not be anywhere else at this juncture in American conservative Protestant history.

+ www.Reformation21.org



'The Ordination of Elders,' by John Lorimer, 1891

"This picture from a bygone age still has the power to speak today of the solemnity involved in the installation of elders and the seriousness of the task. Many of us may well 'dress down' in comparison to our forebears, but the awesome (in the strict sense of the word) nature of the elder's calling and role remains the same. This famous painting is thus testimony to a way of life now passed in its fashions and style but perennial in its importance and gravity."

~ Dr. Carl Trueman, Professor of Historical Theology and Church History at Westminster Theological Seminary.