

REFLECTIONS

The Monthly Newsletter of Grace OPC

REMEMBERING YOUR LEADERS

By Pastor Brian De Jong

When I first entered the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, I thought it somewhat curious that the OPC venerated the late Dr. J. Gresham Machen. I understood that Machen had played a pivotal role in the founding of the OPC, and I had read Machen's Introduction to the New Testament. But for the life of me, I couldn't understand all of the "hoopla" surrounding this man.

Since that time, I have had the opportunity to study Dr. Machen's life and writings more carefully. Gradually I "got it." A closer acquaintance with this godly and gracious defender of the faith has made me appreciate his tenacity, his courage and his visionary outlook. I am the better for having "known" him, albeit from a distance. I suspect that many of the founding fathers of the OPC would have said the same thing.

Now you may wonder, is this simply a case of a minister being conformed to the "corporate culture" of the denomination? Am I just becoming a "company man?" I think not. Rather, I am trying to take Hebrews 13:7 to heart.

That verse reads as follows:

"Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith." It is the duty of every Christian to remember their leaders. This obviously is referring to leaders in the

Church – "who spoke the word of God to you." Not only should we listen to their teaching from the word of God, but we should study their conduct and examine their faith. We should be knowledgeable enough that we could describe not only their faith and their conduct, but also the "result" of their faithful lives.



Then, having remembered their faithful obedience and meditated upon their godly behavior, we are to "imitate their faith." We should walk in their footsteps and follow their examples with the expectation that we, like them, will enjoy the results of godly living.

This obviously puts a burden on church officers – especially upon ministers. It is essential that church leaders believe the gospel themselves, that they speak the word of God to the people, and that they conduct their lives in an exemplary fashion. Leaders must set a good example of faith, diligence, commitment, obedience and piety.

At the same time, each Christian has a duty to "remember" and to "imitate." Remember and imitate past and present leaders of the church of Jesus Christ. Ponder them, study their lives, contemplate their faith, know the "outcomes" of their commitments. Such a thorough study is a reward in itself!

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June 2006

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Mnemonics...

- Men's Breakfast & Study, June 3rd
- Youth Group, June 4th
- Session Meeting, June 20th
- Men & Boy's Cook-out, June 10th

The Saints' Everlasting Rest by Richard Baxter

Reviewed by Pastor De Master

The Saints' Everlasting Rest is an encouraging and challenging book. Taking the verse of Hebrews 4:9, "There remains a rest to the people of God," Richard Baxter contemplates the rest that awaits the Christian. He stresses the excellencies of this heavenly rest, and the joy and blessings we can now have as we dwell on what Christ has secured for us. He contemplates God's love for each of us. "He returns love for love; nay, a thousand times more; as perfect as we shall be, we cannot reach his measure of love. Christian, you will be then brimful of love; yet love as much as you can, you shall be ten thousand times more beloved. Do you think you can over-love him? What! love more than Love itself? Were the arms of the Son of God upon the cross, and an open passage made to his heart by the spear, and will not arms and heart be open to you in glory; did he begin to love before you loved and will he not continue now; did he love you, an enemy, you a sinner, you, who even loath yourself, and own you when you did disclaim yourself, and will he not now immeasurably love you, a son; you, a perfect saint; you, who returns some love for love? You who tend injuriously to question his love: doubt of it now if you can. " p. 45

Baxter spends time on motivating his readers to make the effort to contemplate these heavenly glories. He recognizes how tied we are to this earthly life, how distracted and lazy we Christians tend to be. He writes, " If your heart draw back, force it to the work: if it loiter, spur it on; if it step aside command it in again: if it would slip away and leave the work, use your authority; keep it close to the business, till you have obtained your end. Stir not away, if it may be, till your love do flame, till your joy be raised, or till your desire or other graces be lively acted. Call in assistance also from God; mix ejaculations with your cogitations and soliloquies; till having seriously pleaded the case with your heart, and reverently pleaded the case with God, you have pleaded yourself from a clod to a flame; from a

forgetful sinner to a mindful lover; from a lover of the world to a thirster after God; from a fearful coward to a resolved Christian; from an unfruitful sadness to a joyful life. In a word, what will not be done one day, do it the next, till you have pleaded your heart from earth to heaven, from conversing below to a walking with God' and till you can lay your heart to rest, as in the bosom of Christ, in this meditation of your full and Everlasting Rest. This is the sum of these precedent directions."

Richard Baxter wrote the book (the first edition) in 1650. He was a young pastor in England. He struggled with health problems and with difficult circumstances. There was war in England. Many suffered and died in the war. It was during this time that he was drawn to contemplate his everlasting rest. He would daily walk in the New Jerusalem and overlook the promised land like Moses standing on Mt. Nebo. He writes, "your joys will be spiritual, and prevalent, and lasting, according to the nature of their blessed object; you will have comfort in life, and comfort in death. When you have neither wealth nor health nor the pleasure of this world, yet will you have comfort. Comfort, without the presence or help of any friend, without a minister, without a book; when all means are denied you, or taken from you, yet may you have vigorous, real comfort. Your graces will be mighty, and active, and victorious; and the daily joy which is thus fetched from heaven, will be your strength."

The book I read is an abridged version, about 160 pages. The original work consists of some 800,000 words. I find this abridgment to be something that is not quickly read. It helps to read a portion, and then to think about what he has said. I read parts of it to Carla, parts that I found especially powerful. This book is not much read today but it was widely known and influenced many for 200 years.

The reading of this book would be helpful to any Christian who desires a closer walk with God. (My copy has a price of \$3.50 and it was on sale for \$.75 when I bought it.) Perhaps a copy could be purchased for the library.

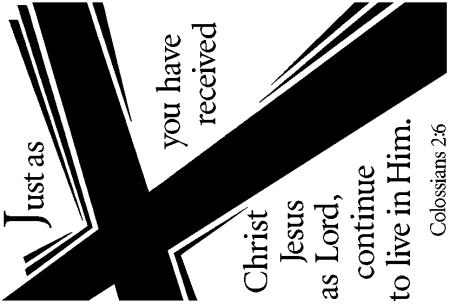
June 2006



*Show ing forth the
excellencies of
Jesus Christ*



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3 Men's Bible Study, 7:30 a.m.
4 Youth Group	5 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. <i>Theology Class</i> 3 p.m.	6	7 Prayer Meeting 7 p.m.	8	9	10 Men & Boy's Cookout 11:00 a.m.
11 Missions Sunday	12 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.	13 Pine Haven Study, 1:30 p.m.	14 Prayer Meeting 7 p.m.	15	16	17
18	19 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.	20 Session Meeting, 6:30 a.m.	21 Prayer Meeting 7 p.m. <i>General Assembly</i>	22 GA	23 GA	24 GA
25	26 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. GA	27 Pine Haven Study, 1:30 p.m. GA	28 Prayer Meeting 7 p.m. GA	29	30	31



Church Office:
4930 Green Valley Ln
Sheboygan, WI 53083

Phone: 920-565-2160
Email:
graceopc@juno.com
brianne.dejong@earthlink.net

JUNE BIRTHDAYS



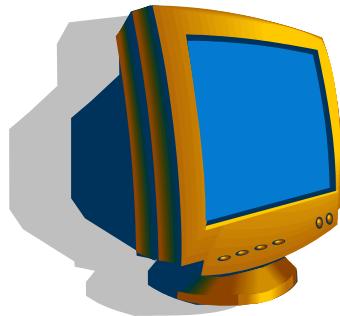
*Happy
Birthday!!!*

Father & Son Cookout & Baseball Game

The annual Cookout & Baseball Game will be held on Saturday, June 10th. Men & boys are invited to come for a time of food & fun.



E-mail Correction



Camp Westminster

The Sixth Annual Presbytery “Camp Westminster”, will be held Monday, July 31 through Friday, August 4 at the Green Lake Conference Center in Green Lake, WI. This year the Rev. Bruce Hollister, pastor of New Covenant Community OPC in New Lenox, IL will be speaking on the topic of the Holy Spirit. If you plan to attend and have not made your reservation, you need to do so quickly. The rooms, cabins and campsites

that are being held for our group will be released on Thursday, June 1. After that date, reservations are taken on a first come first served basis as to what remains available. Please see the poster and brochures on display. You may make your reservation by phone or email



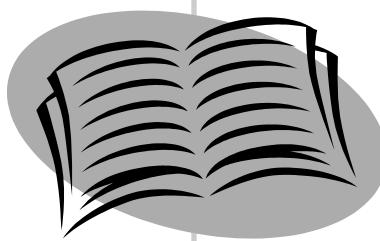
CA TECHISM CLASS

From Harlan Harmelink

Growing up in the small Dutch community of Cedar Grove was pretty much okay. Just about everyone we knew was of Dutch heritage. Once in a while a stranger would move into the area, but that was rare. We did have a catholic boy in our school class, but he got accepted right away because he was good at sports and a nice kid; plus, his step-mother was Dutch! Monday night at 7 p.m. was catechism class at all the churches in town: First Reformed, First Presbyterian and Calvary OPC. All high schoolers attended whether you wanted to or not. You didn't have a choice, you just did it.

My church was Calvary and my pastor was the Rev. Robert King Churchill. He liked his middle name of "King", but it was his mother's maiden name so there wasn't any special meaning to the word. Rev. Churchill did have a real goal for us teenagers, and that was for us to learn the Shorter Catechism. I was always glad it wasn't the Longer Catechism because the shorter was hard enough!

Question number one was fairly easy to memorize: What is the chief end of man? Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. However, the answers got longer and harder to memorize as they went along. Example: question number 31, What is effectual calling? Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, whereby, convincing us of our sin and misery, enlighten-



ing our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, He doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel.

I can still hear my mother ask me on Monday after school - "Harlan, did you memorize your catechism questions?" "Yes, Ma, I'm working on it" was my usual reply.

We boys usually got to church about 6:30 p.m. for a crash course in memorizing. Everyone

seemed to have the same fear, "please don't call on me to recite in front of the whole class. Rev. Churchill". That's one reason we usually sat in the last row of the metal folding chairs (in the church basement), and slunk way down in

our seats, hoping the minister wouldn't see us. I always got disgusted with the preacher's daughter because she always knew the answers and would wave her hand to get her father's attention!!!

Ever so often Rev. Churchill would test us. Talk about pressure! Everyone had to write from memory the correct words of the catechism questions. What did we boys do? We copied from some kid who did know the answer! I wonder if we thought we were fooling God and the minister????????? (many years later I am ashamed of that).

You know what? 50 years later I can still rattle off from memory some of those answers. Not all 107 of them, but quite a few. And you know what else? All of us who cheated, turned out all right. One of us even got to marry the preacher's daughter!

Ask the Pastor!

By Pastor Brian De Jong

Back in our days in Illinois, I had the opportunity to participate on a local Christian television program called “Ask the Pastor.” The format was simple – a panel of pastors came to the studio and fielded call-in questions from the audience. For about an hour we would answer any and all inquiries – ranging from “Where did Cain’s wife come from?” to “Could you please explain the Trinity?”

Though some of the questions were better than others, it seemed significant that people had the opportunity to ask their questions, and to hear a variety of answers. Sometimes the questions were about the Bible. Often we fielded practical questions that touched people’s day-to-day lives. Occasionally we even had a serious theological question. I enjoyed the experience, and remain convinced of the importance of “asking the Pastor.”

Recently Elder Mark Berenschot suggested that we include a question-and-answer feature in Reflections – an avenue for the congregation to ask questions and read the responses. It seems to me a good way to convey truth that will be helpful to our members.

There are several ways that you can submit questions. Probably the best way is in writing. If you can either jot down your question, or send me an email, then I will be less likely to forget it. You could also talk to me – either in person or on the phone. If you

want to slip a note under my office door, that would work fine. (Probably the only way that won’t work is if you expect me to read your mind. Mind-reading is one of my most outstanding weaknesses, and more than likely your unasked question will remain unanswered.)

Submitted questions can be either signed, or anonymous. I do reserve the right to answer certain questions through other routes – such as one-on-one dialogue. Some topics are of such a nature that a broadly published response would not be wise – we’ll make those decisions on a case-by-case basis.

So what kind of questions could you “ask the Pastor?” I am always willing to try to tackle queries about the Bible. I can also handle questions about church history or theology. You might want to find out about what a cult or another religion believes – that is appropriate. If you have basic counseling issues, I can handle some of those too. I am even willing to handle personal questions related to myself and my family. Most things are “in bounds” and there are few “dumb questions.” So go ahead, and ask your Pastor. And this much I can promise – that if I don’t know the answer, and can’t discover one through normal means, I will simply say, “Dunno...”

VALENTINE LEMON CAKE

1 yellowcake mix (18.25 oz.; see note)
1 jar (11 oz.) lemon curd (divided)
1 cup whipping cream
1 Tablespoon powdered sugar

Preheat oven to temperature specified in cake-mix instructions. Spray glass 9-by-13-inch baking pan with an oil-flour non-stick spray such as Baker's Joy.

Prepare cake mix according to package directions. (Ours called for water, 3 eggs and 1/3 cup vegetable oil.) Measure out 1/3 cup lemon curd and set aside. Add remaining lemon curd to cake batter and mix well.

Bake cake according to package directions or until toothpick inserted comes out clean. Remove from oven and cool completely.

While cake bakes, beat whipping cream until soft peaks form. Add remaining lemon curd and powdered sugar. Continue to beat until stiff. Refrigerate until cake cools. Frost top of cake with flavored cream. Serve at once or refrigerate until ready to serve. Makes 16 servings.

Leftovers will keep refrigerated, for several days.

Note: We tested this recipe using a Duncan Hines Moist Deluxe yellow cake mix. Lemon curd, which gives a light texture and lovely lemon essence to the recipe, is found in most supermarkets with the jellies and jams or with the imported foods. If your supermarket doesn't carry lemon curd, check a specialty shop.

Per Serving: 307 calories, 42g carbohydrates, 3g protein, 15g fat (5g saturated), 60mg cholesterol, 19 fiber, 241mg sodium. Calories from fat: 44%.

Harlan & Nancy Harmelink



“There is nothing better for a man than to eat and drink and tell himself that his labor is good. This also I have seen, that it is from the hand of God. For who can have enjoyment without Him?”

Phillip Maloko Nachonie, continued...

John Ploughman's Talks by Spurgeon

Book Review by Samantha De Jong

“Wisdom walks often in patched clothes,” wrote C. H. Spurgeon, and this certainly describes his book, John Ploughman’s Talks. In this book of essays, written from the perspective of a fictional farmer named John Ploughman, Spurgeon employs a veritable potpourri of amusing anecdotes, colloquial sayings, inspired proverbs, and vivid analogies, to address a wide variety of topics. John’s most forceful chapters are stern criticisms of the idle, grumblers, gossips, and spendthrifts. “A fellow who howls with the wolves, and bleats with the sheep, gets nobody’s good word unless it be the Devil’s,” asserts Spurgeon, speaking of two-faced men. Equally insightful, but more positive, are the essays on desirable characteristics, such as hope. “There is only one Rock to build good hopes on,” he writes, “and that is not Pe-

ter, neither is it sacraments, but the merits of the Lord Jesus. . . . There John Ploughman rests and he is not afraid of being confounded, for this is firm footing...” A final group of John Ploughman’s talks, including “Good Nature and Firmness,” “Keeping Your Eyes Open,” and “Hints as to Thriving,” offer a wealth of practical advice for everyday living. “Meddlers are sure to hurt their own characters,” warns the chapter on “Things Not Worth Trying,” “if you scrub other people’s pigs, you will soon need scrubbing yourself.” Best of all, John Ploughman’s Talks contains benefit for readers of all ages. Its conversational style and rural flavor make this short book a favorite among young children, while more mature readers will appreciate the depth of John Ploughman’s insights. Spurgeon’s wisdom, though it wears a patched coat in this colorful volume, is indeed a priceless resource.



Proclaiming the
Excellencies of our
Lord Jesus Christ.

The Monthly Newsletter
of Grace OPC

Worship: Grace OPC
4930 Green Valley Lane,

Church Office Phone: 920-565-2160
Email: graceopc@tds.net
briandejong@earthlink.net

CHECK OUT THE WEBPAGE:
WWW.OPC.ORG



Did You Know? ?

- ★ The first meeting of Grace Orthodox Presbyterian Church was on January 28, 1973?
- ★ Instead of a church building, the first congregation met in the home of Fred & Toni Barthels?
- ★ Rev. Henry Fikkert was in charge of the first service?
- ★ Among the pastors serving at Grace have been Rev. John Hilbelink (1st pastor), Rev. Jonathan Falk, Rev. Lawrence Eyres, Rev. Ivan De Master, and now Rev. Brian De Jong?
- ★ This congregation has fellowshipped together at many different locations throughout the years, including Christian High School?
- ★ The building we have now was bought in 1975 from the Church of the Nazarene?

Getting to know... Phillip Nachonie

compiled by Harlan Harmelink

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