

# REFLECTIONS

Grace OPC

## THE ONE-AND-ONLY

*By Pastor Brian De Jong*

Among the sacred cows of our day is the concept of pluralism. The Oxford English Dictionary defines pluralism as “a condition or system in which two or more states, groups, principles, sources of authority, etc., coexist.”

There are some respects in which pluralism is commendable. At a summer cookout, there will be some who enjoy burgers and others who prefer brats. For the burger lovers to co-exist with the brat enthusiasts is good and right – to each his own! It would be foolish to suggest that burgers are good and brats are evil. It is merely personal preference.

But it is a whole different matter when it comes to religion and theology. Isaiah strongly challenges idolaters who preferred “other gods” over Jehovah:

*Isaiah 45:<sup>21</sup> “Declare and set forth your case; Indeed, let them consult together. Who has announced this from of old? Who has long since declared it? Is it not I, the LORD? And there is no other God besides Me, A righteous God and a Savior; There is none except Me. <sup>22</sup> “Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth; For I am God, and there is no other.*

The fact of the matter is quite clear – there is one and only one God. He is the Lord – Jehovah – the great “I am.” There is no god beside Him, and anyone who claims to worship some other deity is deceiving themselves.

As the One-and-Only God, He has a

unique claim on the worship, devotion, love, obedience and service of all men. After all, He is their Creator and Sustainer. They owe their very existence to Him and Him alone.

Not only is He the Unique Creator and Sustainer, but He declares Himself to be “a righteous God and a Savior.” Therefore He calls and He commands all the ends of the earth to “turn to Me and be saved.” He alone can and does save those who turn to Him in repentance and faith. No one else can do so, because there simply is no other god.

The matchlessness of God must be remembered as we live our lives in a pluralistic

society. Voices all around woo us to tolerate any and every other god as legitimate contenders to the throne of heaven. We are urged to accept Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Mormonism, New Age Spirituality and even Satanism as morally equivalent religious options.

If we dare voice any criticism of any other religion or sect or cult, we are branded as intolerant bigots who deserve to be voted off the island by the “tolerant” majority. And thus Christians are effectively cowed into silence.

Yet the One and Only God has not changed, nor will He ever relinquish His utterly unique status. And He still commands all people in these words: “You shall have no other gods before Me.”

Let us stand fast by reality – There is none except Him – the True God – the One-and-Only!



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### Mnemonics...

- *Session Meeting, 8th*
- *Missions Sunday, 13th*

# Song Thoughts

*From the Book of Psalms*



## Psalm 9

The subheading in the NIV for this Psalm tells us that Psalm 9 is a hymn written by David. The hymn was presented to the director of music to be used most likely for worship in the Temple. It is interesting to note that the tune, “The Death of the Son”, was specified to sing it. It would be more interesting to actually know what this tune was like and be able to sing beautiful Psalm in its original musical rendering. The fact that Psalm 9 is a true and pure hymn of praise and is meant to be sung adds a particular dimensional tone to its meaning and importance.

The Psalm begins with a high level of praise to God.

“I will praise you, O Lord, with  
all my heart;  
I will tell of all your wonders.  
I will be glad and rejoice in you:  
I will sing praise to your name, O  
most high.” Vv. 1, 2

These words are words of praise to the highest level. To understand this thought it is important to think about what “praising” is. When God is praised, his name is lifted (raised) up. When God is praised, his people are recognizing who God is in all his attributes. Then God is glorified! When God is glorified expression of thankfulness are more meaningful and valuable.

By David’s example he raised his praise to God with his voice—he sang. That is what one does when he/she sings praise. God wants each individual to use his/her mouth. He does not want his people to meditate their praise to him nor fold the hands and bow the head and praise God in silence.

We who are benefitting from this Psalm of praise must not have the idea that singing praises to God should occur only in church during the worship

service. Expressing praise with the voice is appropriate anytime the heart senses a reason for it. After all, the praise David expressed in the Psalm did not happen first in his church (the Temple) but happened first in his private moments.

Why did David sing his praises? He did this because he was happy and joyful in his heart (v. 2). It can be said that his rendering of praise was genuine because of the happiness and joyfulness he experienced was in his heart. This is why he could say, “I will praise you, O Lord, with all my heart.”

Verse 2 says that David was happy and joyful which makes him sing songs of praise. In verses 3 through 12 David sings about what caused him to burst out expressions of praise. What precipitated these outbursts? David looks back and remembers God’s goodness to him; he cites many great works that God did in his life.

- God turned back David’s enemies v. 3
- David knew that God was on his side during his times of trouble v. 4
- God judged righteously in dealing with David’s enemies v. 4
- God judges the whole world righteously v. 8
- God governs with justice v. 8
- God was a refuge for David v. 9
- God did not forsake David when he was in trouble v. 10
- God did not ignore David’s out cries for help vv. 10, 12

In church worship do we not sing, “Praise God from whom all blessings flow?” Praise comes from our lips when we stop for a minute to remember specific blessings God has given us in our life because he is faithful in his work. God wants to know that we know and recognize the specific ways he has blessed us.

Consider praising God day by day, hour by hour. As we do our daily responsibilities, expressing praise to God is a good thing to do when we recognize that something happened or did not

## *Song Thoughts Continued...*

happen because God was with us. Recently I was parked in a supermarket parking lot. When I was done shopping, packed the purchases into the car, and was backing out of the parking space to leave, I stopped the car because I was out far enough to make the needed turn and proceed forward in order to leave the parking lot. When the car was stopped, I was shocked when I looked out the rearview mirror and became aware that a black SUV had momentarily pulled behind me waiting to pull into a parking space on the opposite side being vacated by another car. I realized immediately that had I decided to back up just a little more to give myself just a little more room for swinging forward I would have put a large dent in the SUV's rear side door. I recognized that there was definite cause right then and there to praise God and thank him for intervening to prevent the inevitable accident. Then there is Anna of French descent from Louisiana. She and her husband moved to Texas in order to minister to the poor Mexicans in Donna Texas and over the border in Mexico. Kate and I met her during our volunteer work for a huge food pantry to prepare and distribute food boxes to the poor. Anna was always happy and was always aware of God's goodness. She always could find a reason to "Praise Jesus" which she spoke many times. Every time volunteers showed up to either pack the food boxes or distribute them, Anna would greet you with "Praise Jesus! Thanks for coming."

One of the beautiful things that David does in this Psalm is relate the praise to prayer. He does this in the second part of the Psalm, vv. 12-20. David offers a prayer to God in the last section of the Psalm.

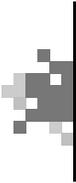
How does relating praise to prayer work in David's mind? What is the connection? Looking back to the first section of the Psalm David's vocal outbursts of praise came as a response from remembering God's wondrous works in his life during his times of trouble while King Saul was pursuing him in order to destroy him. Other troubles continued to plague David as well. David knew as we know and experience that trouble and trial continue to come to us throughout our life. David

knew that because God was faithful in being his stronghold and refuge (v. 9) he could depend upon him for help in the future. So David with great conviction prays that God would continue to do the same works for him again in the future. This teaches us that we can pray to God for help more than once. This demonstrates David's trust in the Lord. Notice the similarity of the specific things he included in his prayer.

- Lift me up from the gates of death v.13
- Continue to give David a joyful heart that remembers God's faithful work and praises Him for it v. 14
- God's continued justice in dealing with enemies vv. 16, 19
- God's righteous judgment of the wicked v. 17
- Again David asks God to continue to turn back his enemies v. 20

There is one very important point that our attention must be drawn to. The question must be asked, "What right do any of us including King David have to ask or expect God to do anything for us? How do we dare to lift the name of God up by praising him? Verse 13 is the key verse to teach us the answer. David did not approach God on the basis of any goodness in himself or anything he had done. He did not give himself any credit. He recognized that only God is good and merciful. All that God does for his people is done because he is a merciful God. David believed that he needed God's mercy because he was a sinner; so his first petition was to pray for God's mercy. This is the only foundation upon which David or you and me can petition God for anything and expect God to reward us. God's mercy through Jesus Christ is the only foundation which makes it possible for you and me able to "declare your praises of the Daughter of Zion and rejoice in your salvation."

Final thought: What is the chief end of man?" The Westminster Catechism reminds us that "Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him forever." Remembering God's goodness and his



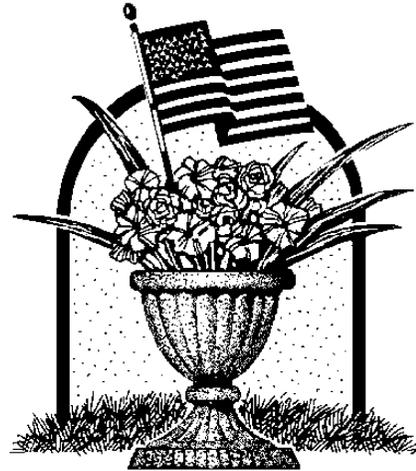
## *Song Thoughts Concluded...*

wondrous works leads us to praise him; praising him leads to glorifying him, glorifying God leads to enjoying Him.

To the praise of our great God and His glory!  
Richard Nagle



***Remember Our Soldiers  
Who Are Fighting  
and Have Fought  
for Our Freedoms***



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# New Address



# In Memory of Antoinette

by Harlan W. Harmelink

It was one of those nasty spring days in Sheboygan; cold, windy, damp and not a ray of sunshine. And of course, a bone-chilling rain. It was one of those days to stay inside with a cup of coffee, book and Gospel music.

There was one problem however— it was communion Sunday— a very important day— and there really wasn't any excuse to stay home. Besides that, we live less than two miles from the church! We went, but it could have been with more of a joyful heart.

It's always good to come to church a few minutes early and experience fellowship with other people. This late afternoon, when we arrived at church, Bob Boss had his vehicle under the church canopy doors wide open, with Antoinette sitting inside. I have seen Antoinette many times in our church, but this time there was something different; she had a 'glow' that just seemed to radiate from her! She just captivated me by her presence. How could a 98 year old person, in a wheelchair with many aches and pains be so joyful?

Her son Ivan was waiting to escort her down the aisle and I could feel the love flowing from mother and son as Ivan asked her, "Mom, how are you doing?" "I'm doing good, Ivan."

The next little incident made me chuckle to myself: Antoinette wasn't happy where Ivan stopped her chair— she wanted to sit closer to the front!

I never gave it much thought about the service after that. How could I ever have an excuse for not attending church, when Antoinette, age 98, came through bad weather to attend a communion service?

When I head the next day that at 3 a.m. Antoinette's journey on earth had ended, shivers went through my spine. What had I witnessed that night at Grace OPC? What had I learned?

Did she know her journey was almost over? I do know one thing: she was ready!



# June Birthdays



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## Comments on Finances

*From Joel Moody*

General Fund receipts for April totaled \$12,366.66 as compared to the budget of \$12,408.20, while General Fund disbursements for April totaled \$11,388.94. April year to date General Fund receipts totaled \$48,571.28 as compared to the budget of \$52,734.70 (a shortfall of \$4,163.42), while April year to date disbursements of \$49,624.87 were \$3,109.83 below budget. Through the end of April, the General Fund has decreased by \$874.18. General Fund receipts through April were 1.9% below last year's total, while disbursements were 0.2% above last year.

Benevolence Fund Receipts for April totaled \$2,436.20 as compared to the budget of \$1,479.17. Year to date benevolence receipts through April totaled \$6,096.22, while the budget amount was \$5,750.00. Each month, \$475.00 is sent to Worldwide Outreach for the General Missions outreach of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. In addition, \$200.00 is

sent each month to the Midwest Presbytery's Church Extension Committee. During April, \$2,450.00 was directed to the Hub-Spokes Missions Program (\$1,050.00 for the Wingards (on furlough from Uganda), \$1,000.00 for the Hopps (Haiti), and \$400.00 for Rev. Don Ritsman's missions expenses). During June, \$600.00 is scheduled to be sent to several seminaries (the recipients have not yet been designated) and \$600.00 is scheduled for the Kings Men support that assists churches in acquiring a building. Designated gifts for the Kings Men are above and beyond this \$600.00 amount.

Giving for the Capital Expansion Project through April has reached 39.4% of the projected amount. The outstanding Mortgage and Promissory Notes balance was \$171,362.44 as of the end of April 2010.



Grace OPC

# June 2010

*Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ*



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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2 Prayer Meeting, 7:00 p.m.	3	4	5
6	7 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.	8 Session Meeting, 6:30 p.m.	9 Prayer Meeting, 7:00 p.m.	10	11	12
13 Missions Sunday	14 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. <i>Pine Haven Study, 1:30 p.m.</i>	15	16 Prayer Meeting, 7:00 p.m.	17	18	19
20	21 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.	22	23	24	25	26
27 Lord's Supper, (p.m.)	28 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. <i>Pine Haven Study, 1:30 p.m.</i>	29	30			

# Jenna's Mission Trip to Canada

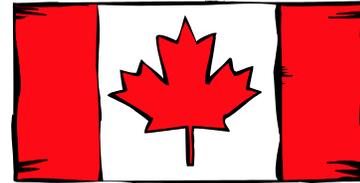
In a month, Jenna De Troye will be on her way to Winnipeg, Canada for a Short-term Missions Trip called "Winnipeg Challenge." The object is, "to glorify God, to reach out to our newest neighbours in Winnipeg with the gospel..., and to partner with local churches to spur them on to further service in their community."

According to the website, this trip, "is varied and intense. Over the course of the event, the participant receives training focusing on the Word, evangelism and how to reach people of several major world faiths. He/she is then put into situations where the training provided can be applied."

The trip will begin on Saturday, July 17th and span the whole next week with

participants coming home on Sunday, July 25th. Activities will include, "door-to-door visitation in typically high immigrant locations, personal evangelism at local hang outs, practical service through volunteering at local organizations, and cross cultural ministry as the team visits local religious sites."

Jenna can use your prayers as she embarks on this exciting ministry opportunity.



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## Pen-Pals Needed!!

From: Michael Mulenga  
To: Rev. Ivan & Carla De Master

*Hi Mum and Dad,*

How are you doing in America? I and my family are fine. I am just extremely busy with studies. We are going to start writing exams for the post graduate course in Management that I am taking with Polytechnic of Malawi. Once again, thank you for the assistance that you offered to me. Carolyn is back from high school. She has typed the following message for you. I haven't edited anything. She is in grade 9 at a Girls High School. Below it is:

*Dear Carla,*

How are you Ivan and Carla in America? The main purpose of writing this letter is, I just want to ask you if there are children who can

make friends with children here in Malawi, There are almost TEN children who can become PENPALS with them.

I am going to be happy if they are going to be found. They should be children who fear GOD.

Lastly warm and tender greetings to your church members, your children, Demaster and not forgetting your self.

Yours truly,  
CAROLYN.

~~~~~  
Mum and Dad, How are Christians at Grace Church? I really miss them so much. I remember those days when we were eating Nsima at the Church.

God bless you  
Son in Malawi, Michael Mulenga

## Turtle Cheesecake Bars



- ★ 2/3 cup butter/margarine, softened
- ★ 2 cups flour
- ★ 2/3 cup brown sugar
- ★ 1 cup chopped pecans

Mix together, reserve 1 cup for topping. Pat into a 9x13 pan. Bake 15 minutes at 350°. Cool.

### Filling:

- ★ 2—8 oz. cream cheese, softened
- ★ 1 tsp. vanilla
- ★ 2/3 cup sugar
- ★ 4 Tbsp. milk
- ★ 1 Tbsp. lemon juice
- ★ 2 eggs

### Additional Ingredients:

- ★ 1 cup pecans
- ★ 2 cups chocolate chips
- ★ 1 cup carmel topping

Mix together until smooth. Put on crust— 1/2 pecans/chocolate chips & carmel topping than filling/ than other half of above and the 1 cup crumbs. Bake 25 minutes at 350°.

(Carmel topping can be made by boiling together 2/3 cup margarine and 2/3 cup brown sugar. Boil together 45-60 seconds. Let cool.)

*Phyllis Nyhof*

“The eyes  
of all look  
to You,  
And You  
give them  
their food in  
due time.  
You open  
Your hand  
And satisfy  
the desire of  
every living  
thing.”



Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ

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## Did You Know?

- ★ Do you know who Catherine Van Bora was?
- ★ If you guessed the wife of the famous reformer, Martin Luther... you were right!
- ★ Did you know that we know she was born on, "29th of January, the year 1499," from a metal on a necklace she received from Luther?"
- ★ Did you know that she had joined a convent but thanks to the Lord's work through Luther, the

eyes of Catherine & several others at the convent were opened through the reading of God's Word?

★ Did you know that this brave woman escaped from the convent she was a part of in an empty barrel on a cart along with 8 other nuns?

★ Did you know that Luther first came to Catherine with a marriage proposal from another man, which she refused?

★ That eventually he found out, through another, that she actually preferred him & they were soon after married?

★ That together they had six children whom she continued to raise after his death in 1546?

★ Did you know that she followed him home six years later after contracting tuberculosis following an accident she received after a fall from a run-away carriage?

★ Did you know that Martin Luther said this about her, "...Through mercy she is very well, and is complacent, obedient, and obliging in every respect, in a greater degree than I could have hoped for— God be thanked! So that, I would not exchange my poverty for the wealth of Croesus."

*Information & quote found in... Wheeler, Noelle Daughters of Destiny. (Texas: Mantle Ministries, 2000) Pg. 135-145.*

