

REFLECTIONS

The Monthly Newsletter of Grace OPC

THE WRATH OF MAN

By Pastor Brian De Jong

Among the many benefits of our “Psalm of the Month” program is the forced attention to obscure verses. These are passages of Scripture that we might not otherwise notice, or ponder.

Such is the case with Psalm 76:10 “For the wrath of man shall praise You; With a remnant of wrath You will gird Yourself.” As we’ve sung these lines, have you secretly asked yourself, “What does THAT mean?”

The point that is being made is this: even when man is white-hot with anger against God, it inevitably brings God glory, honor and praise! The Lord turns even man’s wrath to His own good purposes, and in so doing He is served by man’s rebellion.

A couple of Biblical examples may help clarify. First, think about Joseph’s brothers and their vile act of treachery. Why did they sell Joseph into slavery? Because they hated him and wanted to be rid of him. They meant it for evil, but God used their wrath for good. Through that inexcusable action on the part of the brothers, God set Joseph on a course to save the entire world from starvation. Their wrath led to God’s praise!

Another example is the wrath of wicked Haman in the book of Esther. He seethed with rage against God’s people and desired their destruction. He

even built a monster gallows on which to hang his mortal enemy Mordecai. Yet God sovereignly turned all of Haman’s rage into humiliation, and by the end of the book it is Haman swinging from the gallows, while Mordecai is made Prime

Minister. Haman’s wrath praises the sovereign God! But the best example of all is that of Christ. Herod, Pontius Pilate, the Jews and the Roman soldiers all conspired together against God’s holy servant Jesus. In their malice they persecuted, abused and crucified the Sinless Son of God. And by that act of ultimate evil, the sins of God’s people were forever forgiven.

The wrath of both the Jews and the Gentiles brings eternal praise to God for His wise plan of redemption, sealed and secured on Calvary.

Now we should be very careful to remember that God’s sovereign uses of wickedness in no way excuse wicked people for their evil actions. It would be wrong to say, “Good came of this, so I am no longer guilty of any wrongdoing.” Such reasoning is itself sinful and should be opposed. Human beings are always responsible for their sinful deeds, no matter how God may use them to honor His own name.

That said, keep your eyes open as you read your Bibles and as you watch the world around you, and you’ll see that very often God glorifies Himself through the wrath of men!



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August 2009

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Mnemonics...

- *Session Meeting, 4th*
- *Church Picnic, 13th*

The Emergent Church

By Pastor Brian De Jong

In one of those random spare moments that life sometimes gives us, I was reading the side of a box of Jello. I discovered stern warnings about NEVER putting fresh pineapple or kiwi fruit into Jello. Why the brouhaha? If you put either or both into Jello, it will affect the Jello and prevent it from properly setting.

The emergent ‘church’ is like Jello with lots of fresh pineapple and kiwi mixed in – it doesn’t properly set. And trying to define this movement is about as easy as nailing that mixture to a wall.

Given our hair-raising experience of attending an emergent ‘church’ on our vacation, I think it is valuable to know a little bit about this movement. Understanding their perspectives will help us formulate our responses as Reformed Christians.

So what is the ‘Emergent Church’ all about? Historically speaking, this is a relatively new trend among broadly evangelical Christians that is leading them out of evangelicalism into uncharted territory. Their point of departure is a reaction against mega-church evangelicalism, complete with its church growth theories, business world management strategies, and hyper-individualism. Some who have come through Willow Creek or Saddleback type mega-churches have reacted against what they view as impersonal, plastic and phony. They are searching for something which is more genuine, real and authentic. They also want some sense of community, and meaningful connections with other people. They feel isolated and want to be reconnected to relationships.

Philosophically, their leading teachers have bought into “post-modern philosophy.” Postmodernism is also like Kiwi-laced jello – very hard to nail down. Among the things that postmodernism says is that previous generations have been far too dogmatic and too convinced they are “right.” Post-moderns have no such confidence and reject certainty. There is no overarching story that unites everything together into one coherent whole. All that we have is our own personal story – our own experi-

ence. So my story about me is what I cherish, but I can’t be too sure about anything beyond me.

Because they tend to reject absolutes, there is no certainty in the areas of philosophy, theology or ethics. Who is to say that homosexuality is wrong? For that matter, why is stealing or lying or murder wrong? Just live out your story and don’t try to judge anyone else by some “artificial” standard of right and wrong.

In the area of theology, the “emergents” want to focus primarily upon “Jesus.” To our ears that sounds good! What could be wrong with focusing upon Jesus? But as you listen to what they say, it becomes apparent that their “Jesus” is much different from our understanding of the Son of God. They tend to treat him like a great moral example who helped the poor and fed the hungry and developed “community” with his 12 followers.

This is not a Jesus who declares His unchanging absolutes, or who condemns sin in sinful men, or casts the reprobate into eternal damnation. Perhaps he is not even a sin-bearer, since that old idea of sin is much too confrontational and might offend outsiders.

In an article in a recent [New Horizons](#) John Muether has argued that the “emergent” crowd has borrowed heavily from liberal and neo-orthodox theologians. They are much like mainline Christians of the past century. Their Jesus is not the only Redeemer of God’s elect, but He is a model citizen that we should all emulate.

In the area of worship the emergents are a strange blend of ancient and contemporary. They profess to love the liturgies of the ancient church, and want to go back to the mysteries of ancient Christianity. For that reason they will borrow heavily from highly liturgical branches of the church, such as the Episcopal church. Yet they want to be ultra-trendy, cool, hip and ‘happnin.’ In our vacation experience, the “minister” was wearing khaki shorts, hiking boots and had his shirt tails untucked. Five different times during the service he invited us

Emergent Church Concluded...

to “sit down and talk over a beer.”

Their music also is the latest. Hymns can be used for the “ancient” effect, but fresh compositions of praise and worship music tend to dominate. We found the music to be unfamiliar, almost impossible to sing, individualistic and man-centered. Alternative musical instruments were also used. As much as I may like a fiddle and drums in Celtic music, it seemed out of place in a worship service. Also present in worship were candles and incense, adding to the aroma of mystery.

If there was a straw that breaks the camel’s back, it must be the “women’s issues.” The emergents boast that they want to move beyond the old “conservative/liberal impasse.” One of the areas that this supposedly happens is on the role of women in worship, and in leadership. To say that women should not be leading or teaching in worship would be too dogmatic and absolute for emergents. They are more inclusive, and welcome the participation of women in leading worship. During the service we attended, a woman read the Scripture text before the sermon, and a woman helped administer the Lord’s Supper. And no one else batted an eye!

In assessing this movement, it seems fair to say that they raise many important questions, but that

their answers are woefully inadequate. Some of their biggest concerns we would share – such as their dislike of radically individualized Christianity devoid of any sense of community. We respond with our doctrine of “the communion of the saints” as found in the 26th chapter of our Westminster Confession. They respond with a quasi-hippy version of communal living.

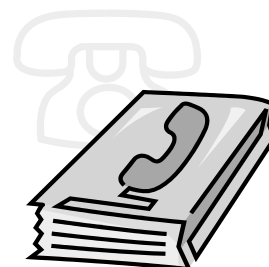
*“In the area
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All things considered, the emergent movement seems like evangelicals adrift without a rudder. They’re being pushed along by the currents of our culture, and their connection to orthodox Christianity is growing perilously weak. Though they are not really a “cult,” they seem far from being a true church either. They are like pineapple/kiwi Jello!

Do you want to know more about this movement? I would strongly suggest that you listen to a seminar given by Dr. Craig Troxel on the Emergent Church Movement at our Presbytery Conference a couple of years ago. Dr. Troxel is very easy to understand. You can download and/or listen from our Presbytery website – the Calendar and Activities sub-page found at <http://www.pmwopc.org/Cal.html>

New Church Directory!

Don’t forget to pick up a new church directory located in your mailbox or in the fellowship hall! If there are any errors in this edition, just let the church secretary know by e-mailing her at graceopc@tds.net or laying the changes on her desk so she can pass it along.



August Birthdays



Happy Birthday!!!

Comments on Finances

by Joel Moody

General Fund receipts for June totaled \$9,829.89 as compared to the budget of \$10,956.60, while General Fund disbursements for June totaled \$11,469.48. June year to date General Fund receipts totaled \$71,534.63 as compared to the budget of \$71,218.00 (an excess of \$316.63), while June year to date disbursements of \$74,151.02 were \$2,933.02 above budget. Through the end of June, the General Fund has decreased by \$2,442.93.

Benevolence Fund Receipts for June totaled \$1,532.50 as compared to the budget of \$1,462.50. Year to date benevolence receipts through June totaled \$9,658.18, while the budget amount was \$8,775.00. Each month, \$475.00 is sent to World-wide Outreach for the General Missions outreach

of the OPC. In addition, \$200.00 is sent each month to the Midwest Presbytery's Church Extension Committee. Please remember to pray for the ministries that our church helps to support.

Current year gifts directed towards the Capital Fund/Church Expansion Project totaled \$36,119.65 through the end of June (76.0% of what was expected for the entire current year). Just under 92% of 2008/9 expected gifts for the Capital Fund have been received through the end of June. There is half of a year remaining to achieve the additional 8% that is anticipated. In short, gifts are coming in faster for the Capital Fund than what has been anticipated. The bank mortgage payment that Grace Church is required to pay is \$2,076.00 per month.



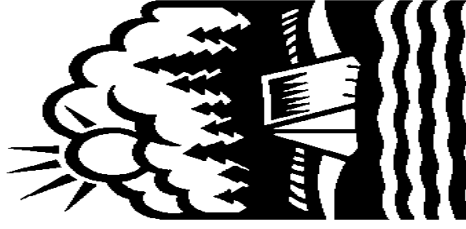
Grace OPC

August 2009

Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 Men's Study, 7:30 a.m.
2	3 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. <i>Camp Westminster</i>	4 Camp Westminster <i>Session Meeting, 6:30 p.m.</i>	5 Camp Westminster	6 Camp Westminster <i>All Presbytery Camp Meal, 5:30</i>	7 Camp Westminster	8
9 Missions Sunday	10 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.	11 Pine Haven Study, 1:30 p.m.	12	13 Church Picnic	14	15
16	17 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.	18	19 Prayer Meeting, 7:00 p.m.	20	21	22
23	24 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.	25 Pine Haven: Study, 1:30	26 Prayer Meeting, 7:00 p.m.	27	28	29
30 Lord's Supper, (p.m.)	31 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.					



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Cannot Be Shaken

By Charles Spurgeon

“That those things which cannot be shaken may remain.”
~ Hebrews 12:27

WE have many things in our possession at the present moment which *can* be shaken, and it ill becomes a Christian man to set much store by them, for there is nothing stable beneath these rolling skies; change is written upon all things. Yet, we have certain “things which *cannot* be shaken,” and I invite you this evening to think of them, that if the things which can be shaken should all be taken away, you may derive real comfort from the things that cannot be shaken, which will remain. Whatever your losses have been or may be, you enjoy *present salvation*. You are standing at the foot of His cross, trusting alone in the merit of Jesus’ precious blood, and no rise or fall of the markets can interfere with your salvation in Him; no breaking of banks, no failures and bankruptcies, can touch that. Then you are *a child of God* this evening. God is your Father. No change of circumstances can ever rob you of *that*.

Although by losses brought to poverty, and stripped bare, you can say, “He is my Father still. In my Father’s house are many mansions; therefore will I not be troubled.” You have another permanent blessing, namely, *the love of Jesus Christ*. He who is God and Man loves you with all the strength of His affectionate nature—nothing can affect *that*. The fig tree may not blossom, and the flocks may cease from the field; it matters not to the man who can sing, “My Beloved is mine, and I am His.” Our best portion and richest heritage we cannot lose. Whatever troubles come, let us play the man; let us show that we are not such little children as to be cast down by what may happen in this poor fleeting state of time. Our country is Immanuel’s land, our hope is above the sky, and therefore, calm as the summer’s ocean, we will see the wreck of everything earth-born, and yet rejoice in the God of our salvation.

Taken from Morning & Evening by Charles Spurgeon Evening, June 22.

Notes about the Building

From your Building & Grounds Trustees

The Building & Grounds Committee is looking for three or four individuals to serve on a committee to come up with a recommendation for decorating the narthex area. Please speak with Steve Boss if you might be interested in serving this way. Thanks.

~ the Building & Grounds Committee

Change to last month’s announcement: Coffee and beverages are allowed in the adult Sunday School classroom, just not in the classrooms surrounding the Fellowship Hall.





*2009 OPC
Ladies Conference*

*Saturday
September 26, 2009
from
9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.*



*Hosted by:
Grace OPC Church
1510 Greenbrook Blvd.
Hanover Park, IL*

*Guest Speaker:
Pastor Chris Sandoval*

*Topic
"3 4 Me: The Substitutionary
Work of Christ for His People"*



De Masters in Maine

From the De Masters

We have really appreciated that God put us here in Maine. We have experienced opportunities we didn't think we would see again and praise Him for each one. Ivan had his first funeral here; a very godly lady, Audrey Hawkes, whose parents were led to the Lord by Lawrence Eyres when he was a seminary student and calling in Portland on a summer assignment. He started a Bible study in their home and that influenced three generations, all who are walking with the Lord. We had visited Audrey five or more times, the last being outside on picnic benches with her daughter and a mutual friend we also visit.

This funeral happened the weekend that Ruth was here so some possible activities were put on hold. All worked out fine and we got to do a lot of things that we planned: seeing Boston for a day (freedom trail and unique restaurant); Portland art museum, lighthouses and the surrounding trails, Longfellow's boyhood home preceded by reading some of his poems, Casco Bay at sunset. The people at the church enjoyed meeting Ruth. Ruth's schedule of running caused her to see much of Portland as she whizzed by these huge brick edifices called houses. I cooked lobsters for the first time while she was here. What a simple process! How delicious!!!!

On the week that we have an early service with

Sudanese and English together, Ivan and I go to a different church in the evening to get acquainted with the congregations here. This past weekend we visited the Bangor Church. Pastor Hamilton was on vacation so we didn't get to see him again. We knew him in Florida. The people were very friendly. We got to stay overnight at the Dormans, Joel Moody's cousin. The Dormans have a beautiful family with six children. Four are still home. One hopes to become a pastor. We left early the next morning to get to Acadia National Park, with Cadillac Mountain in the center and Bar Harbor for the tourists on the edge. We hiked and enjoyed the rocky coast from a distance. I can see why Maine has the longest coastline of all the states. We ate at Moody's Diner on the way home. What a busy place!!

The pastoral search is on with a precandidate visit a week ago. Next weekend another will visit and after that serious action will take place. VBS starts on Monday, the 27th. We are praying for 30 kids and hoping that the Sudanese kids will be there. The King is Coming is the theme. Pray for us! Ivan started membership class with young Sudanese men.

Yet to come--lobster trapping and fishing with Mr. Willink, professor; a couple plays with participants from church; and ferry rides to islands.

Camp Westminster

Presbytery Family Camp will be held August 3-7 at the Green Lake Conference Center in Green Lake, Wisconsin. Rev. Ben Snodgrass will be speaking on "Imitating Jesus."



An All Presbytery Camp Meal will take place at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, August 6th if you want to spend just a day at the camp.

Fresh Apple Cake



“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?”

- ★ 4 cups peeled, sliced apples
- ★ 2 cups sugar
- ★ 2 cups flour
- ★ 1 1/2 tsp. baking soda
- ★ 2 tsp. cinnamon
- ★ 2 eggs
- ★ 3/4 cup vegetable oil
- ★ 2 tsp. vanilla
- ★ 1 cup chopped walnuts or pecans

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

In a large bowl, stir together apples and sugar. Add dry ingredients; stir well.

In separate bowl, whisk together eggs, oil and vanilla. Stir egg mixture into apple mixture, blending until thoroughly moistened. Stir in nuts. Pour into greased 9x13 pan.

Bake 50 minutes or until cake springs back when lightly pressed.

Phyllis Nyhof

Corner Store

Some ladies have been asking for the hours of the Corner Store at Pine Haven. They are Monday - Friday 9:30 a.m.—Noon and 12:30 p.m.



-1:30 p.m., and Saturday 1:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m.. The Corner store has many hand made items for sale as well as nice greeting cards for only 40 cents a piece.



**Proclaiming the
Excellencies of our
Lord Jesus Christ.**

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of Grace OPC

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OPC.ORG



- ★ Did you know that the Reformation influenced France?
- ★ Did you know that a few years before Luther's 95 theses, a man named Jacques Le Fevre wrote a book that promoted the idea that good deeds cannot "earn salvation"?
- ★ Did you know that Le Fevre went on to translate much of the New Testament into the native language but this was much as he desired to change the Roman Church?
- ★ Did you know that Luther's books found their way into France around 1518 and eventually were translated from Latin to French?
- ★ Did you know that the Catholics in France tried to shut down the spread of these ideas by writing up pamphlets... but to no avail?
- ★ Did you know that even in the royal court, there were secret Bible reading meetings going on through the work of the King's sister?
- ★ That finally in 1536 Calvin's Institutes were published and blazed through the land in the people's language of French?
- ★ That his work actually paved the way for an organized protestant church in the area as he wrote up, "a clear statement of doctrine, a form of public worship, and a system of church government?"
- ★ Did you know that many people in France had started meeting in homes in secret at this time but eventually by 1559 churches began to appear and in May of that year they had a first synod?
- ★ That this synod was very similar to our presbytery meetings & general assembly in that there were districts that had meetings of all the pastors and an elder (presbytery) and a larger meeting for every district in the land for all the pastors and an elder from each?
- ★ Did you know that it was during this time that the term "Huguenots" was coined for these people?

Taken from B.K. Kuiper, The Church in History (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1951), 264-269.

Church Picnic

The Annual Church Picnic will be held starting at 5:30 p.m. next Thursday, August 13th at Rochester Park in Falls. A map of the new location & the sign-up sheet are on the bulletin board. Please remember to bring your own tableware & drinks as well as any baseball gloves or bats for the game. Brats, hamburgers & coffee will be provided.

