

REFLECTIONS

Grace OPC

WORLDVIEW AWARENESS

By Pastor Brian De Jong

Do you ever wonder what in the world is going on in our culture? Why are things changing so radically and so rapidly? We all have a sense that the ground around us is shifting, but what does it all mean? And more importantly, how should we react?

Some while back I was listening to a discussion held at Reformed Theological Seminary between their new Chancellor, Dr. J. Ligon Duncan, and Dr. Albert Mohler. Mohler is the President of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. He is a good friend of Dr. Duncan, and is a leading thinker in evangelical circles.

In the course of this discussion, Dr. Duncan spoke about a daily update from Dr. Mohler called “The Briefing.” It is an analysis of current events from a distinctively Christian worldview. I was curious.

So a couple of weeks ago, I started listening to “The Briefing” and became intrigued. Now I can honestly say that I am hooked. Not only is this a good source of up-to-the-minute news, but it evaluates current events from a Biblical viewpoint.

Some of the events that Mohler discusses are impossible to miss – for instance, the racial tensions in Ferguson, Missouri. Other items fly under the radar and are entirely possible to miss – such as the growing marijuana culture and its effects.

What I like about Mohler’s analysis is

that he delves into why things are happening, and what they mean. For instance, in talking about the racial problems arising from Ferguson, he showed how racism is being put forward as the new “organizing principle” for secular culture. It is a pagan substitute for the Christian doctrine of “original sin.” This is not just Mohler’s own idea, but he quotes widely from sources that either make the same point, or demonstrate how racism has become a functional doctrinal equivalent.



In that same episode, Mohler explained how a Grand Jury works, and why it is an important safeguard within our legal system. It keeps the rule of law from becoming a form of tyranny in the hands of the mob majority. I had never heard the Grand Jury system explained, nor had any idea of why it is such a vital component of our judicial system.

Another reason I enjoy “The Briefing” is that it gives me information that I didn’t know before – and probably wouldn’t have known otherwise. For instance, were you aware that a major newspaper in Colorado now has a “pot critic” whose job is to go to marijuana markets, buy samples, get high, and then write about his experiences? Something like a restaurant critic, but different...

One area of great concern for many Christians is the rising popularity of “Gay marriage” in our culture. We are uneasy about that development, but can’t entirely explain why it’s so dangerous...

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Mnemonics...

- Fellowship Dinner, 7th
- Pizza & Bowling, 30th

ZEAL

by J. C. Ryle

"It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing."—Gal. 4:18.

Zeal is a subject, like many others in religion, most sadly misunderstood. Many would be ashamed to be thought "zealous" Christians. Many are ready to say of zealous people what Festus said of Paul: "They are beside themselves,—they are mad." (Acts 16:24)

But zeal is a subject which no reader of the Bible has any right to pass over. If we make the Bible our rule of faith and practice, we cannot turn away from it. We must look it in the face. What says the Apostle Paul to Titus? "Christ gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, *zealous* of good works." (Titus 2:14.) What says the Lord Jesus to the Laodicean Church? "*Be zealous* and repent." (Rev. 3:19.)

My object in this paper is to plead the cause of zeal in religion. I believe we ought not to be afraid of it, but rather to love and admire it. I believe it to be a mighty blessing to the world, and the origin of countless benefits to mankind. I want to strike a blow at the lazy, easy, sleepy Christianity of these latter days, which can see no beauty in zeal, and only uses the word "zealot" as a word of reproach. I want to remind Christians that "Zealot" was a name given to one of our Lord Jesus Christ's Apostles, and to persuade them to be zealous men.

I ask every reader of this paper to give me his attention while I tell him something about zeal. Listen to me for your own sake,—for the sake of the world,—for the sake of the Church of Christ. Listen to me, and by God's help I will show you that to be "zealous" is to be wise.

- I. Let me show, in the first place, *what is zeal in religion.*
 - II. Let me show, in the second place, *when a man can be called rightly zealous in religion?*
 - III. Let me show, in the third place, *why it is a good thing for a man to be zealous in religion?*
- I. First of all, I propose to consider this question.

"What is *zeal* in religion?"

Zeal in religion is a burning desire to please God, to do His will, and to advance His glory in the world in every possible way. It is a desire which no man feels by nature,—which the Spirit puts in the heart of every believer when he is converted,—but which some believers feel so much more strongly than others that they alone deserve to be called "zealous" men.

This desire is so strong, when it really reigns in a man, that it impels him to make any sacrifice,—to go through any trouble,—to deny himself to any amount,—to suffer, to work, to labour, to toil,—to spend himself and be spent, and even to die,—if only he can please God and honour Christ.

A zealous man in religion is pre-eminently *a man of one thing*. It is not enough to say that he is earnest, hearty, uncompromising, thorough-going, whole-hearted, fervent in spirit. He only sees one thing, he cares for one thing, he lives for one thing, he is swallowed up in one thing; and that one thing is to please God. Whether he lives, or whether he dies,—whether he has health, or whether he has sickness,—whether he is rich, or whether he is poor,—whether he pleases man, or whether he gives offence,—whether he is thought wise, or whether he is thought foolish,—whether he gets blame, or whether he gets praise,—whether he gets honour, or whether he gets shame,—for all this the zealous man cares nothing at all. He burns for one thing; and that one thing is to please God, and to advance God's glory. If he is consumed in the very burning, he cares not for it,—he is content. He feels that, like a lamp, he is made to burn; and if consumed in burning, he has but done the work for which God appointed him. Such an one will always find a sphere for his zeal. If he cannot preach, and work, and give money, he will cry, and sigh, and pray. Yes: if he is only a pauper, on a perpetual bed of sickness, he will make the wheels of sin around him drive heavily, by continually interceding against it. If he cannot fight in the valley with Joshua, he will do the work of Moses, Aaron, and Hur, on the hill. (Exod.

Zeal Continued...

17:9—13.) If he is cut off from working himself, he will give the Lord no rest till help is raised up from another quarter, and the work is done. This is what I mean when I speak of “zeal” in religion.

We all know the habit of mind that makes men great in this world,—that makes such men as Alexander the Great, or Julius Cæsar, or Oliver Cromwell, or Peter the Great, or Charles XII., or Marlborough, or Napoleon, or Pitt. We know that, with all their faults, they were all men of one thing. They threw themselves into one grand pursuit. They cared for nothing else. They put every thing else aside. They counted every thing else as second-rate, and of subordinate importance, compared to the one thing that they put before their eyes every day they lived. I say that the same habit of mind applied to the service of the Lord Jesus Christ becomes religious *zeal*.

We know the habit of mind that makes men great in the sciences of this world,—that makes such men as Archimedes, or Sir Isaac Newton, or Galileo, or Ferguson the astronomer, or James Watt. All these were men of one thing. They brought the powers of their minds into one single focus. They cared for nothing else beside. And this was the secret of their success. I say that this same habit consecrated to the service of God becomes religious *zeal*.

We know the habit of mind that makes men rich,—that makes men amass mighty fortunes, and leave millions behind them. What kind of people were the bankers, and merchants, and tradesmen, who have left a name behind them, as men who acquired immense wealth and became rich from being poor? They were all men that threw themselves entirely into their business, and neglected every thing else for the sake of that business. They gave their first attention, their first thoughts, the best of their time, and the best part of their mind, to pushing forward the transactions in which they were engaged. They were men of one thing. Their hearts were not divided. They devoted themselves, body, soul, and

mind to their business. They seemed to live for nothing else. I say that if you turn that habit of mind to the service of God and His Christ it makes religious *zeal*.

(a) Now this habit of mind,—this zeal was *the characteristic of all the Apostles*. See for example the Apostle Paul. Hear him when he speaks to the Ephesian elders for the last time: "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry that I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God." (Acts 10:24.) Hear him again, when he writes to the Philippians: "This one thing I do; I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 3:13, 14.) See him from the day of his conversion, giving up his brilliant prospects,—forsaking all for Christ's sake,—and going forth to preach that very Jesus whom he had once despised. See him going to and fro throughout the world from that time,—through persecution,—through oppression,—through opposition,—through prisons,—through bonds,—through afflictions,—through things next to death itself, up to the very day when he sealed his faith with his blood, and died at Rome, a martyr for that Gospel which he had so long proclaimed. This was true religious *zeal*.

*“Zeal in
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(b) This again was the *characteristic of the early Christians*. They were men “every where spoken against.” (Acts 18:22.) They were driven to worship God in dens and caves of the earth. They often lost every thing in the world for their religion's sake. They generally gained nothing but the cross, persecution, shame, and reproach. But they seldom, very seldom, went back. If they could not dispute, at least they could suffer. If they could not convince their adversaries by argument, at any rate they could die, and prove that they themselves were in earnest. Look at Ignatius cheerfully travelling to the place where he was to be devoured by lions, and saying as he went, “Now do I begin to be a disciple of my Master, Christ.” Hear old Polycarp before the Roman Gov-

Zeal Continued...

ernor, saying boldly, when called upon to deny Christ, "Four score and six years have I served Christ, neither hath He ever offended me in any thing, and how then can I revile my King?" This was true *zeal*.

(c) This again was *the characteristic of Martin Luther*. He boldly defied the most powerful hierarchy that the world has ever seen. He unveiled its corruptions with an unflinching hand. He preached the long-neglected truth of justification by faith, in spite of anathemas and excommunications, fast and thickly poured upon him. See him going to the Diet at Worms, and pleading his cause before the Emperor and the Legate, and a host of the children of this world. Hear him saying,—when men were dissuading him from going, and reminding him of the fate of John Huss, "Though there were a devil under every tile on the roofs of Worms, in the name of the Lord I shall go forward." This was true *zeal*.

(d) This again was *the characteristic of our own English Reformers*. You have it in our first Reformer, Wickliffe, when he rose up on his sick bed, and said to the Friars, who wanted him to retract all he had said against the Pope, "I shall not die, but live to declare the villanies of the Friars." You have it in Cranmer, dying at the stake, rather than deny Christ's Gospel, holding forth that hand to be first burned which, in a moment of weakness, had signed a recantation, and saying, as he held it in the flames, "This unworthy hand!" You have it in old father Latimer, standing boldly on his faggot, at the age of seventy years, and saying to Ridley, "Courage, brother Ridley! we shall light such a candle this day as, by God's grace, shall never be put out." This was *zeal*.

(e) This again has been *the characteristic of all the greatest Missionaries*. You see it in Dr. Judson, in Carey, in Morrison, in Schwartz, in Williams, in Brainerd, in Elliott. You see it in none more brightly than in Henry Martyn. Here was a man who had reached the highest academical honours that Cambridge could bestow. Whatever profession he chose to follow, he had the most dazzling prospects of success. He turned his back upon it all. He chose to preach the Gospel to poor benighted

heathen. He went forth to an early grave, in a foreign land. He said when he got there and saw the condition of the people, "I could bear to be torn in pieces, if I could but hear the sobs of penitence,—if I could but see the eyes of faith directed to the Redeemer!" This was *zeal*.

(f) But let us look away from all earthly examples,—and remember that zeal was pre-eminently the characteristic of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ Himself. Of Him it was written hundreds of years before He came upon earth, that He was "clad with *zeal* as with a cloak," and "the *zeal* of thine house hath even eaten me." And His own words were "My meat is to do my Father's will, and to finish His work." (Psalm 69:9; Isaiah 59:17; John 4:34.)

Where shall we begin, if we try to give examples of His zeal? Where should we end, if we once began? Trace all the narratives of His life in the four Gospels. Read all the history of what He was from the beginning of His ministry to the end. Surely if there ever was one who was *all zeal*, it was our great Example,—our Head,—our High Priest,—the great Shepherd of our profession, the Lord Jesus Christ.

If these things are so, we should not only beware of running down zeal, but we should also beware of allowing zeal to be run down in our presence. It may be badly directed, and then it becomes a curse;—but it may be turned to the highest and best ends, and then it is a mighty blessing. Like fire, it is one of the best of servants;—but, like fire also, if not well directed, it may be the worst of masters. Listen not to those people who talk of zeal as weakness and enthusiasm. Listen not to those who see no beauty in missions, who laugh at all attempts at the conversion of souls... Beware, lest in joining a cry of that kind you condemn the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Beware lest you speak against Him who has "left us an example that we should follow His steps." (1 Pet. 12:21.)

Alas! I fear there are many professing Christians who if they had lived in the days when our Lord and His Apostles walked upon earth would have called Him and all His followers enthusiasts and fanatics. There are many, I fear, who have more in common with Annas and Caiaphas,—with Pilate and Herod,—with Festus and Agrippa,—with Felix and Gallio,—

Zeal Continued...

than with St. Paul and the Lord Jesus Christ. And now, in conclusion, let me try to apply this subject to the conscience of every person who reads this paper. It is a warning subject, an arousing subject, an encouraging subject, according to the state of our several hearts. I wish, by God's help, to give every reader his portion.

(1) First of all, let me offer a warning to all *who make no decided profession of religion*. There are thousands and tens of thousands, I fear, in this condition. If you are one, the subject before you is full of solemn warning. Oh, that the Lord in mercy may incline your heart to receive it!

I ask you, then, in all affection, Where is your zeal in religion? With the Bible before me, I may well be bold in asking. But with your life before me, I may well tremble as to the answer. I ask again, Where is your zeal for the glory of God? Where is your zeal for extending Christ's Gospel through an evil world? Zeal, which was the characteristic of the Lord Jesus; zeal, which is the characteristic of the angels; zeal, which shines forth in all the brightest Christians: where is your zeal, unconverted reader?—where is your zeal indeed! You know well it is nowhere at all; you know well you see no beauty in it; you know well it is scorned and cast out as evil by you and your companions; you know well it has no place, no portion, no standing ground, in the religion of your soul. It is not perhaps that you know not what it is to be zealous in a certain way. You have zeal, but it is all misapplied. It is all earthly: it is all about the things of time. It is not zeal for the glory of God: it is not zeal for the salvation of souls. Yes: many a man has zeal for the newspaper, but not for the Bible,—zeal for the daily reading of the *Times*, but no zeal for the daily reading of God's blessed Word. Many a man has zeal for the account book and the business book, but no zeal about the Book of Life and the last great account,—zeal about Australian and Californian gold, but no zeal about the unsearchable riches of Christ. Many a man has zeal about his earthly concerns,—his family, his pleas-

ures, his daily pursuits; but no zeal about God, and heaven, and eternity.

If this is the state of any one who is reading this paper, awake, I do beseech you, to see your gross *folly*. You cannot live for ever. You are not ready to die. You are utterly unfit for the company of saints and angels. Awake: be zealous and repent!—Awake to see the *harm* you are doing! You are putting arguments in the hands of infidels by your shameful coldness. You are pulling down as fast as ministers build.

You are helping the devil. Awake: be zealous, and repent!—Awake to see your childish *inconsistency*! What can be more worthy of zeal than eternal things, than the glory of God, than the salvation of souls? Surely if it is good to labour for rewards that are temporal, it is a thousand times better to labour for those that are eternal. Awake: be zealous and repent! Go and read that long-neglected Bible. Take up that blessed Book which you have, and perhaps never use. Read that New Testament through. Do you find nothing there to make you zealous,—to make you earnest about your soul? Go and look at the cross of Christ. Go and see how the Son of God there shed His precious blood for you,—how He suffered and groaned, and died for you,—how He poured out His soul as an offering for sin, in order that you, sinful brother or sister, might not perish, but have eternal life. Go and look at the cross of Christ, and never rest till you feel some zeal for your own soul,—some zeal for the glory of God,—some zeal for extension of the Gospel throughout the world. Once more I say, awake: be zealous, and repent!

(2) Let me, in the next place, say something to arouse those *who make a profession of being decided Christians, and are yet lukewarm in their practice*. There are only too many, I regret to say, in this state of soul. If you are one, there is much in this subject which ought to lead you to searchings of heart. Let me speak to your conscience. To you also I desire to put the question in all brotherly affection, Where is your zeal?—Where is your zeal for the glory of God, and for extending the gospel throughout the world? You know well it is very low. You know well that

*“Go and look
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Zeal Continued...

your zeal is a little feeble glimmering spark, that just lives, and no more;—it is like a thing “ready to die.” (Rev. 3:2.) Surely, there is a fault somewhere, if this is the case. This state of things ought not to be. You, the child of God,—you, redeemed at so glorious a price,—you, ransomed with such precious blood, you, who are an heir of glory such as no tongue ever yet told, or eye saw;—surely you ought to be a man of another kind. Surely your zeal ought not to be so small.

I deeply feel that this is a painful subject to touch upon. I do it with reluctance, and with a constant remembrance of my own unprofitableness. Nevertheless, truth ought to be spoken. The plain truth is that many believers in the present day seem so dreadfully afraid of doing harm that they hardly ever dare to do good. There are many who are fruitful in objections, but barren in actions;—rich in wet blankets, but poor in anything like Christian fire. They are like the Dutch deputies, recorded in the history of last century, who would never allow Marlborough to venture anything, and by their excessive caution prevented many a victory being won. Truly, in looking round the Church of Christ, a man might sometimes think that God's kingdom had come, and God's will was being done upon earth, so small is the zeal that some believers show. It is vain to deny it. I need not go far for evidence. I point to Societies for doing good to the heathen, the colonies, and the dark places of our own land, languishing and standing still for want of active support. I ask, *Is this zeal?* I point to thousands of miserable guinea subscriptions which are never missed by the givers, and yet make up the sum of their Christian liberality. I ask, *Is this zeal?* I point to false doctrine allowed to grow up in parishes and families without an effort being made to check it, while so-called believers look on, and content themselves with wishing it was not so. I ask, *Is this zeal?* Would the apostles have been satisfied with such a state of things? We know they would not.

If the conscience of any one who read this paper pleads guilty to any participation in the shortcomings I have spoken of, I call upon him, in the name of the Lord, to awake, be zealous, and repent. ... At all events, try to do something for God and Christ,—something against ignorance and sin. Give, collect, teach, exhort, visit, pray, according as God enables you. Only make up your mind that all can do something, and resolve that by you, at any rate, something shall be done. If you have only one talent, do not bury it in the ground. Try to live so as to be missed.

There is far more to be done in twelve hours than most of us have ever yet done on any day in our lives.

Think of the *precious souls* which are perishing while you are sleeping. Be taken up with your inward conflicts if you will. Go on anatomizing your own feelings, and poring over your own corruptions, if you are so determined. But remember all this time souls are going to hell, and you might do something to save them by working, by giving, by writing, by begging, and by prayer. Oh, awake! be zealous, and repent!

Think of the *shortness of time*. You will soon be gone. You will have no opportunity for works of mercy in another world. In heaven there will be no ignorant people to instruct, and no unconverted to reclaim. Whatever you do must be done now. Oh, when are you going to begin? Awake! be zealous, and repent.

Think of *the devil*, and his zeal to do harm. It was a solemn saying of old Bernard when he said that “Satan would rise up in judgment against some people at the last day, because he had shown more zeal to ruin souls than they had to save them.” Awake! be zealous, and repent.

Think of *your Saviour*, and all His zeal for you. Think of Him in Gethsemane and on Calvary, shedding His blood for sinners. Think of His life and death,—His sufferings and His doings. This He has done for you. What are you doing for Him? Oh, resolve that for the time to come you will spend and be spent for Christ! Awake! be zealous and repent.

(3) Last of all, let me encourage *all readers of*

*“Oh, resolve
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Zeal Concluded...

this paper who are truly zealous Christians.

I have but one request to make, and that is *that you will persevere*. I do beseech you to hold fast your zeal, and never let it go. I do beseech you never to go back from your first works, never to leave your first love, never to let it be said of you that your first things were better than your last.—Beware of cooling down. You have only to be lazy, and to sit still, and you will soon lose all your warmth. You will soon become another man from what you are now. Oh, do not think this a needless exhortation!

It may be very true that wise young believers are very rare. But it is no less true that zealous old believers are very rare also. Never allow yourself to think that you can do too much,—that you can spend and be spent too much for Christ's cause. For one man that does too much I will show you a thousand who do not do enough. Rather think that “the night cometh, when no man can work” (John 4:4),—and give, collect, teach, visit, work, pray, as if you were doing it for the last time. Lay to heart the words of that noble-minded Jansenist, who said, when told that he ought to rest a little, “What should we rest

for? have we not all eternity to rest in?”

Fear not the reproach of men. Faint not because you are sometimes abused. Heed it not if you are sometimes called bigot, enthusiast, fanatic, madman, and fool. There is nothing disgraceful in these titles. They have often been given to the best and wisest of men. If you are only to be zealous when you are praised for it,—if the wheels of your zeal must be oiled by the world's commendation, your zeal will be but short-lived. Care not for the praise or frown of man. There is but one thing worth caring for, and that is the praise of God. There is but one question worth asking about our actions: “How will they look in the day of judgment?”

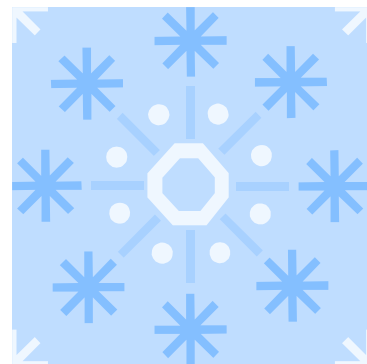
From the book, Practical Religion, “Zeal” by J.C. Ryle.



Pine Haven Capital Campaign

Pine Haven Christian Communities is beginning their capital campaign to raise funds to support the expansion project in north Sheboygan Falls at their Haven Drive Campus. When complete, the campus will offer Sheboygan County seniors a full continuum of care - from the existing Prairie Crossing Apartments, to assisted living, rehabilitation, and memory care. Your gift toward this project can help. For more information, see the flyers that will be distributed Thanksgiving week - or visit

www.pinehaven.org/project-donation-needs/

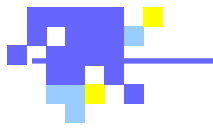


December Birthdays



Wedding Anniversaries

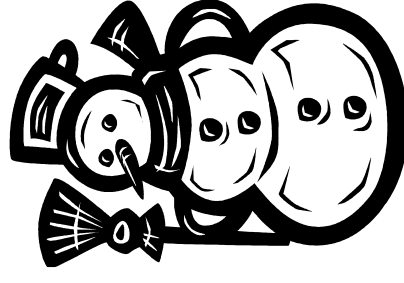




Grace OPC

December 2014

Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ



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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3 Prayer Meeting, 7 p.m.	4	5	6
7 Evening Fellowship Meal	8 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m. <i>Pine Haven Study, 1:30 p.m.</i>	9	10 Prayer Meeting, 7 p.m.	11	12	13
14 Missions Sunday	15 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.	16 Session Meeting, 6:30 p.m.	17 Prayer Meeting begins 3 week break	18	19	20
21	22 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.	23	24	25	26	27
28 Meadowview Manor, 3 p.m. <i>Lord's Supper, (p.m.)</i>	29 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.	30 Pastor Brian's Bowling & Pizza Party	31			

Comments on Finance

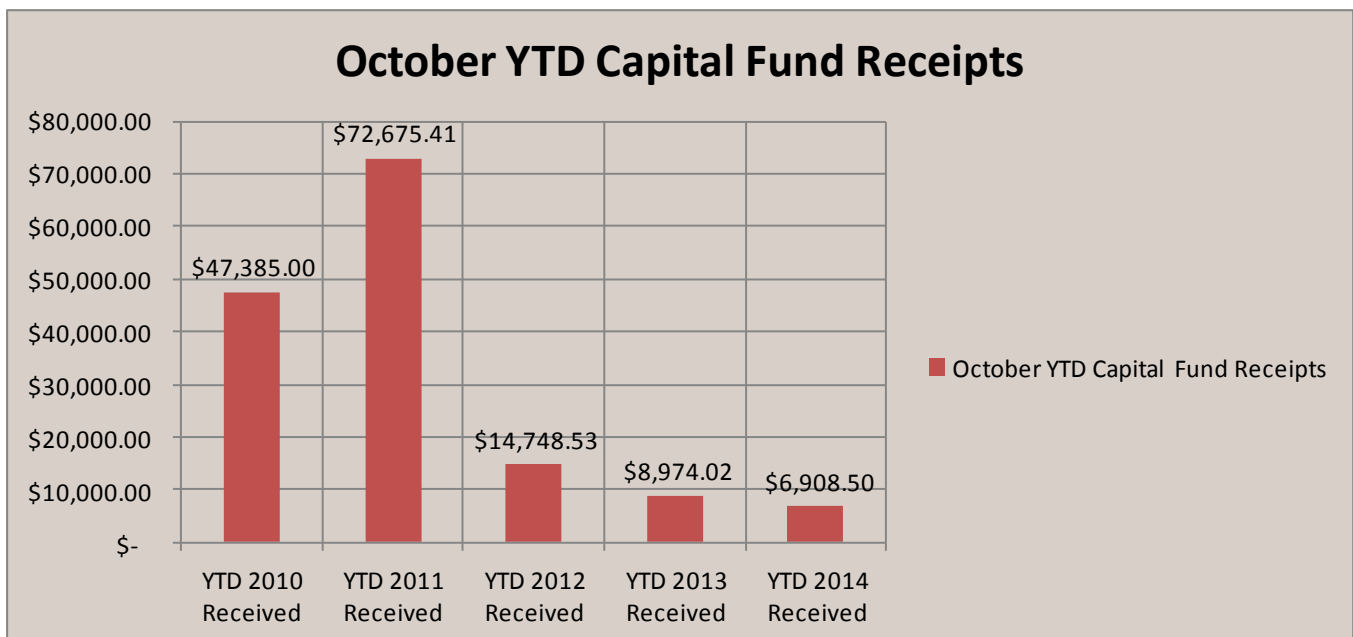
by Joel Moody

General Fund receipts for October totaled \$12,124.02 as compared to the budget of \$13,005.37, while General Fund disbursements for October totaled \$18,465.31. October year to date General Fund receipts totaled \$128,956.40 as compared to the budget of \$139,807.87 (a shortfall of \$10,851.47), while October year to date disbursements of \$130,785.65 were \$9,022.22 below budget. Through the end of October, the General Fund has decreased by \$1,744.17. Year to date General Fund receipts for October were 7.0% below last year's total on an average Sunday while disbursements were 1.4% above the prior year.

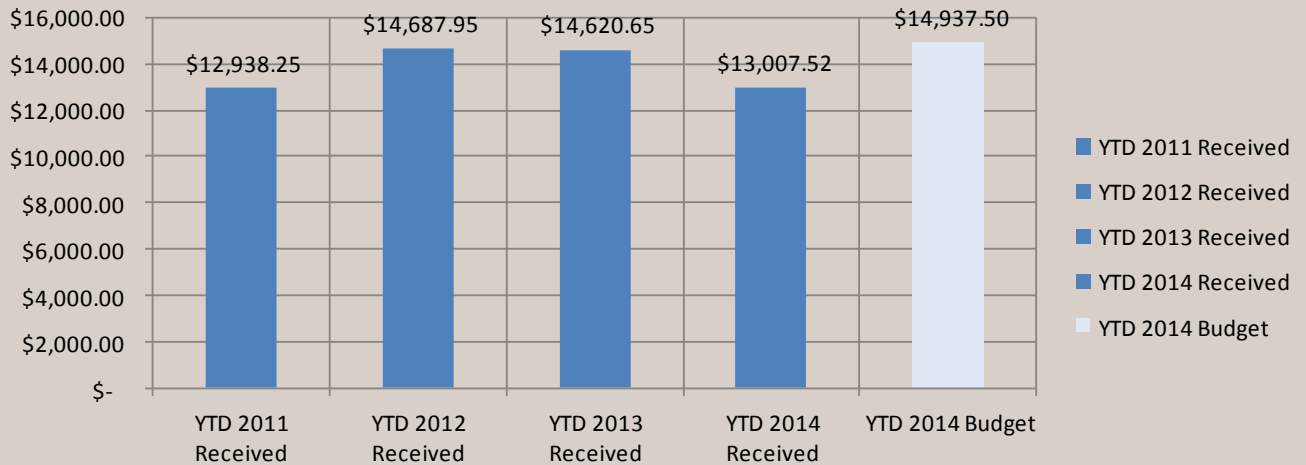
Benevolence Fund Receipts for October totaled \$1,197.00 as compared to the budget of \$1,493.75 (a shortfall of \$296.75). Year to date Benevolence Fund Receipts through October totaled \$13,007.52 and were below budget by \$1,929.98. Please refer to the graph for a historical trend of benevolence receipts as well as the current benevolence budget. ...

October Year to Date giving for the **Capital Fund** was \$6,908.50. Please refer to the Capital Fund

Graph that shows the historical giving for the years indicated in the graph. You may contribute to the Capital Fund by marking your gift as "Capital Fund" and placing it in the offering plate. Please note that the Capital Fund is used to pay for current and future needs that may exist to purchase additional equipment (such as the sound system, tables and chairs, etc.) or building-type items (such as a parking lot, driveway, furnace boiler, etc.). Since some capital needs are quite substantial in nature, resources to finance and pay for these projects can take years to pay for them. Even though capital needs may not be large in the current year, we should wisely allocate our giving not only to current needs, but also to these future needs as well.

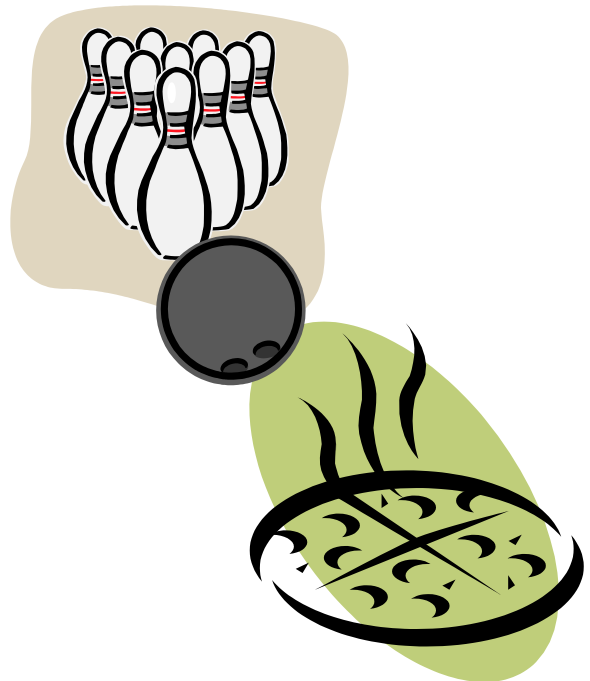


October YTD Benevolence Receipts Actual vs. Current Budget



Pastor Brian's Bowling & Pizza Party

Come to Pastor Brian's Annual Bowling & Pizza Party! It will be held on Tuesday, December 30th. Bowling will be from 3:00-5:00 p.m. at Odyssey Fun Center in Sheboygan Falls. The cost is \$5 per bowler. Pizza will be served starting at 5:30 p.m. at the church. Cost is \$3 per pizza eater. Don't forget to bring some of your favorite games to play after the meal. See Pastor Brian for more details.





Getting to know...

Book Reviews

by Carla De Master

Candle in the Darkness While We're Far Apart
By Lynn Austin

Some of us went to Cedar Grove to hear Liz Tolsma (author name) speak on the Trilogy she wrote on the Second World War: Tulips in the Snow; Daisies are Forever; and Remember the Lilies. When asked what authors she enjoyed reading, she mentioned Lynn Austin. As a result, I read the two listed above.

Candle in the Darkness takes place before, during, and after the Civil War. Through a series of providential events, a daughter of the south (Richmond, VA) lives with and is influenced by family in the north and works out her convictions in

dangerous situations and with little support from loves ones.

While We're Far Apart has people who are Jews and Gentiles in Hungary, as the conflict with Nazi Germany escalates. Prejudices are overcome by many as aid is given to unlikely people. Characters seem real and grow and change with encounters with others and reading the Torah or the Bible.

The style of writing Liz Tolsma uses is similar to that of Lynn Austin, getting the reader caught up in the people's lives, learning from the struggles to apply the Bible to life, and understanding in part what life was like in that period of history. Fiction often is a doorway to reading real history books.

Crafts

A couple of the ladies of our Church would like to get together once a month starting in January to work on crafts. You can bring your own knitting, crocheting, Sewing machine or whatever you are interested in doing. If you would be interested in making something for Pine Haven Corner Store they always need new items.

Time and date will be decided if we get enough ladies. See Carla or Ellen if you are interested



Prayer Meeting Break

Just a reminder that Prayer Meeting will be taking a break on the Wednesdays of December 17th, 24th, and 31st.





Session Digest

by Pastor Brian De Jong

The Session had its regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, November 11. Following our devotional time, we reviewed a number of regular reports. We also reviewed our fall family visits. One item that was of some concern was the growing deficit in our Missions and Benevolence giving. Every year the congregation adopts a missions and benevolence budget at our January congregational meeting. This is a way for our church to give to a variety of causes – both locally, regionally and around the world. The deficit currently stands at about \$2000. If this shortfall is not made up, some of our commitments will be left unfulfilled. The Session wished for the congregation to know a little about the various causes included in our missions and benevolence budget. The following is a summary, with our budgeted amount in parentheses.

...

Oatmeal Scotchies

- ★ 1 1/4 cups flour
- ★ 1 tsp. baking soda
- ★ 1/2 tsp. salt
- ★ 1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon
- ★ 1 cup (2 sticks) butter
- ★ 3/4 white sugar
- ★ 3/4 brown sugar
- ★ 2 large eggs
- ★ 1 tsp. vanilla
- ★ 3 cups quick or old-fashioned oats
- ★ 1 pkg. (11 oz.) butterscotch chips

1. Preheat oven to 375°.
2. Mix together flour, soda, salt & cinnamon in a bowl. Set aside.
3. Soften butter and mix with sugars until combined. Add in eggs and vanilla until all is incorporated. Add in flour mixture.
4. Add oats and chips and stir just until combined.
5. Drop by rounded teaspoons onto cookie sheet. Bake for 7-8 minutes for chewy cookies or 9-10 minutes for crispy. Remove to wire rack to cool.

“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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Spurgeon

Corner

“Therefore will the Lord wait that he may be gracious unto you.” (Isaiah 30:18)

God often DELAYS IN ANSWERING PRAYER.

We have several instances of this in sacred

Scripture. Jacob did not get the blessing from

the angel until near the dawn of day—he had to wrestle all night for it. The poor woman of Syrophenicia was answered not a word for a long while. Paul besought the Lord *thrice* that “the thorn in the flesh” might be taken from him, and he received no assurance that it should be taken away, but instead thereof a promise that God’s grace should be sufficient for him. If thou hast been knocking at the gate of mercy, and hast received no answer, shall I tell thee why the mighty Maker hath not opened the door and let thee in? Our Father has reasons peculiar to himself for thus keeping us waiting. Sometimes it is to show his power and his sovereignty, that men may know that Jehovah has a right to give or to withhold. More frequently the delay is for our profit. Thou art perhaps kept waiting in order that thy desires may be more fervent. God knows that delay will quicken and increase desire, and that if he keeps thee waiting thou wilt see thy necessity more clearly, and wilt seek more earnestly; and that thou wilt prize the mercy all the more for its long tarrying. There may also be something wrong in thee which has need to be removed, before the joy of the Lord is given. Perhaps thy views of the Gospel plan are confused, or thou mayest be placing some little reliance on thyself, instead of trusting simply and entirely to the Lord Jesus. Or, God makes thee tarry awhile that he may the more fully display the riches of his grace to thee at last. Thy prayers are all filed in heaven, and if not immediately answered they are certainly not forgotten, but in a little while shall be fulfilled to thy delight and satisfaction. Let not despair make thee silent, but continue instant in earnest supplication.



Morning, December 9th, by C. H. Spurgeon

Front Page Concluded...

...Mohler adeptly critiques this development as part of a larger social agenda to hyper-sexualize modern life. This is a war on the traditional family and redefines “marriage” along the lines of sexual behaviors rather than covenantal commitments. On this point, Mohler shows remarkable prudence in discussing delicate issues in a modest way. He is careful not to go into lurid details that might scandalize some and tempt others.

Lastly, I find this resource to be easily accessi-

ble for anyone familiar with modern technology. It can be downloaded in MP3 format, or streamed directly onto a smartphone, tablet or computer. With a couple of clicks on my phone, I can begin listening to “The Briefing” while I’m feeding my chickens in the morning. I begin my day with a good dose of Christian worldview analysis.

If you’re interested in checking this out, simply go to www.albertmohler.com and looking for the tab for “The Briefing.”

