

REFLECTIONS

Grace OPC

The Noetic Effects of Sin

By Pastor Brian De Jong

Part of my normal morning routine is to listen to “The Briefing” by Dr. Albert Mohler as I feed and water my chickens. This allows me to stay current with the news of our day, and cultural trends of significance.

Recently Mohler was talking about the decline of rationality in our culture, and the inability of many of our contemporaries to “think.” This is being noticed by people all across the political and social landscape, from conservatives to liberals, and everything in between.

Mohler used this contemporary discussion to bridge into the topic of the noetic effects of sin.

This term may be unfamiliar to you. It is an aspect of the fall that impacts the human mind. The Greek word for mind is “Noe”, so the effects of sin upon our ability to think and reason.

Paul speaks about these effects, particularly upon the unbeliever in his fallen state. In Ephesians 4:17-18 we read, “So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, ¹⁸being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart;”

These effects touch not only non-Christians, but Christians also. Here is where Mohler’s discussion became very interesting. At a conference several years ago, Mohler gave a talk on the Noetic

Effects of Sin, identifying 14 different types of intellectual fault that are connected to Adam and Eve’s fall into sin. Let me briefly run through Mohler’s list, and let you test whether you experience any of these:

Mohler’s first fault is ignorance – we do not know as we ought to know, but there are areas of knowledge that are blank in our minds. Are you ever forced to admit, “I don’t know”?

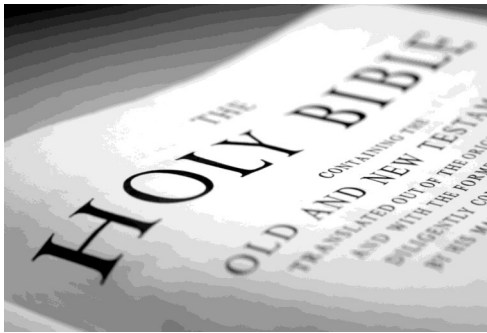
That comes from our fallenness. Flaw #2 is distractedness – the fact we cannot hold our concentration on any one thing for very long. The third problem will

sound familiar to some – it is forgetfulness. How often in Scripture aren’t we exhorted to “remember.”

Since the fall, we’ve become forgetful creatures.

Number four is a faulty perspective – not seeing things rightly or understanding them accurately. Mohler states, “Sometimes given our own faulty intellectual operations we fail to have the right perspective and thus we misjudge reality.” After that, we suffer intellectual fatigue as our minds (and our bodies) grow weary. A tired person doesn’t think clearly or carefully.

Inconsistencies is the next issue. We are sometimes so inconsistent that we become self-contradictory. We say one thing, then we do the opposite. We believe a principle, but we also harbor



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Mnemonics...

- **Church Workday May 13th, 8am**
- **Men’s Breakfast, May 20th, 7am**
- **Fellowship Lunch, May 21st**

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contrary principles. This can be a kind of intellectual hypocrisy.

Mohler also lists “failure to draw the right conclusion.” “We can be presented with absolutely correct data and still draw the wrong conclusion. That is very frustrating and we see that in others, we need to be able to see it in ourselves as well,” he says.

Intellectual apathy is his ninth problem – we simply don’t care enough to engage mentally. And then there is dogmatism or close-mindedness. We’re so certain we’re correct that we can’t listen to anything contrary to our conclusions. One of the most deadly sins is intellectual pride – a sense of superiority to all of the blockheads surrounding us.

The last two are miscommunication and partial knowledge – both strikingly commonplace. So how do you do on this test? Do you ever experience these?



An Unlikely Convert:

An Interview with Rosaria Butterfield

Submitted by Carla DeMaster

On June, 4th, 2014, the General Assembly had a pre-GA Evangelism Conference. The speaker, Ken Smith, is a retired pastor of the Covenanters (RCNA) denomination. The conference was very valuable. One of the people who was touched by the friendship of Pastor Ken and his wife was Rosaria Butterfield. In light of the new Sunday School series on homosexuality, it would be good to revisit Rosaria Butterfield’s book, *The Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert*. Rosaria was a professor of English at Syracuse University and she was also a lesbian. The interview **on the next two pages** sheds light on her steps to embracing Christ as her Savior.

It would be good to read her book.

An Unlikely Convert

Table Talk: Your book is titled *The Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert*. Could you explain some of your “secret thoughts,” and why you were an “unlikely convert?”

Rosaria Butterfield: I considered myself an atheist, having rejected my Catholic childhood and what I perceived to be the superstitions and illogic of the historic Christian faith. I found Christians to be difficult, sour, fearful, and intellectually unengaged people. In addition, since the age of twenty-eight, I had lived in monogamous lesbian relationships and politically supported LGBT causes. I co-authored Syracuse University’s first successful domestic partnership policy while working there as a professor of English and women’s studies. I was terrified to affiliate on any level with a worldview that called me, my life, my community, my scholarly interest, and my relationship sin. Add to this that I was working on a book “exposing” the religious right from a lesbian feminist point of view. I approached the Bible with an agenda to tear it down because I firmly believed that it was threatening, dangerous, and irrational.

But when I came to Christ, I experienced what nineteenth-century Scottish theologian Thomas Chalmers called “the expulsive power of a new affection.” At the time of my conversion, my lesbian identity and feelings did not vanish. As my union with Christ grew, the sanctification that it birthed put a wedge between my old self and my new one. In time, this contradiction exploded, and I was able to claim identity in Christ alone.

Table Talk: How has your story been received by Christians?

Rosaria Butterfield: The protagonist of *Secret Thoughts* is Pastor Ken Smith, who modeled to me organic Christian hospitality and the life-sustaining affection of neighboring. Christian readers have responded to Ken’s example and have been encouraged by it.

Table Talk: How has your conversion to Christianity been received by your former colleagues?

Rosaria Butterfield: At the time of my conversion, my colleagues and students treated me with suspicion and confusion. Understandably, many friends felt betrayed, exposed, and criticized by my conversion and the changes in my heart, life, and writing that this produced. When a person comes to Christ and repents of sin, this turning around makes enemies out of

former allies. And while this aftershock eventually led to Bible studies and many opportunities to share the gospel, it also destroyed friendships and allegiances. The exclusivity of Christ has rugged consequences.

Table Talk: How do you respond to someone who says that one can continue to live a homosexual lifestyle and yet also be a Christian?

Rosaria Butterfield: First, I always start by asking for the clarification about what she means by “Christian,” often requesting that she share her testimony (and offering to share mine as well). She may tell me that she is a Christian because she believes in Jesus and said the sinner’s prayer at a certain moment in her childhood. She also may tell me that she has a “high view” of Scripture and believes that the historic Christian church has misrepresented the issue of homosexuality. As I listen, I pray for the Lord to give me not only the words to say, but a transparent kindness that can uphold the weight of these words. I say I am glad that she believes in Jesus but I share that the Bible calls for more than that, as even the trembling demons believe in Jesus. The Bible defines a Christian in a fuller way, including an understanding that:

- (1) God set me apart from before the foundations of the world.
- (2) The Holy Spirit removed my heart of stone and replaced it with a heart of flesh, leaving me with justifying faith.
- (3) Jesus Christ infuses sanctifying grace through His hard-wrought love and blood.
- (4) Repentance and belief go together, as both are gifts of God and fruit of Christian living. Without repentance there is no salvation.

Sometimes at this point in the conversation, she will ask me where she might meet Jesus, because this is a different Jesus than the one that she knows. We open the Bible together, and I invite her to my house for dinner and church. Alternatively, if she tells me that she just interprets the Bible differently than I do, I then discuss how Jesus is inseparable from the Bible, and how the Bible is a unified revelation of God, fully true, inspired, and inerrant. At some point, if God allows, I suggest that we start reading the Bible together, reading systematically and not topically.

As you can see, I do not ask my questioner about why she identifies as lesbian or what this means to her, or when she first felt like a lesbian or had her first sexual experience. It is not that I don’t care, but if I start with *her*, I start in the wrong place. Instead, I start with the triune God, and call out the soul—



Butterfield Continued...

orientation of any person with whom I speak.

Table Talk: What is the biggest misconception evangelicals have about those who are a part of the “homosexual community”?

Rosaria Butterfield: Reformed Christians know that God’s elect people are everywhere, but one big misconception evangelicals have is the wholesale writing off of all people who identify as gay as God-hating reprobates. Another misconception is that a person’s homosexuality is the biggest and most life-defining sin of her life. When Ken Smith, the pastor the Lord used in my conversion, first met me, he knew that being a lesbian was not my biggest sin. My biggest sin was that I was an unbeliever.

Table Talk: What counsel would you give to Christians as they attempt to preach the gospel to those who experience same-sex attraction?

Rosaria Butterfield: First, we need to apologize for “gay jokes” that we said or condoned in silence.

Next, we must: (1) counsel people who have repented from homosexual sexual pacts and feel called to the heterosexual marriage;(2) encourage people who live daily with unwanted homosexual desires and feel called through justifying faith to celibacy, helping these brothers and sisters to resist temptation, secure accountability, and rely on the Word and on the fellowship of the saints to renew minds and affections;(3)lift the unearned burden of guilt off of the parents of children who identify as gay or lesbian; and(4) create meaningful community from within the membership of the church. To offer intentional commitment to members who are lonely and isolated, the church must demonstrate in everyday ways how we care for each other from cradle to grave. In the LGBT community in the 1990s, I learned the power of accompanied suffering, of standing together in grief as we faced the AIDS virus. The hospitality gifts I use today as a pastor’s wife, I honed in my LGBT community.

Pastorally, the Westminster Standards give us much wisdom about sanctification and offer helpful correctives to the unbiblical teachings of our day. It is important to tell people who struggle with sexual sin that their struggle is not proof that God is not working sanctification in them, because God knows that sanctification is both imperfect and incomplete in this lifetime. For the church to

lovingly counsel those who experience unwanted homosexual desire, she must steer clear of parachurch ministries that hold to a false understanding of sanctification (that it is complete in this lifetime) or an over actualized eschatology (that God wants you to experience perfection this side of the second coming). The Reformed church is much more competent to counsel because of the systematic theology that informs our understanding of law and grace.

Table Talk: What three things would you tell a Christian young person who is experiencing same-sex attraction and is tempted to self-identify as a homosexual?

Rosaria Butterfield: (1) Don’t embrace labels that God doesn’t use. God does not rank-order His beloved sons and daughters. If you are a believer, then your identity is in Christ and Christ alone. Memorize Colossians 3:1-4, remembering that “you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God” (v.3). Meditate on what it means to take refuge in Christ. And remember that union with Christ and the communion of the saints go together, so don’t isolate. (2) As you practice the ordinary means of grace– Bible reading, psalm singing, taking the sacraments– do so with the communion of the saints. Don’t isolate. Be a fully present member of your church. If you struggle with unwanted homosexual desires, tell you pastor, elders, and friends so that they know how to pray for you and love you. But don’t think that the fact of these feelings make you a dangerous person. A dangerous person is someone who either does not know what sin pattern percolates within him or foolishly believes that if he hides it, he is controlling it. (3) Know your enemy. Unwanted homosexual desire is not the unforgivable sin. It is a vestige of the fall, and as such, is a vestige of original sin, the ultimate “preexisting” condition. Daily, I ask the Lord: *Lord, how has my original sin distorted me, how is my indwelling sin manipulating me, and how is Satan enlisting me?* Your temptation pattern does not define you, but you must be armed for the battle, knowing that the victory is promised, in God’s timing, incomplete but powerful here on earth, and complete and full in eternity.

The History Behind

“*The Sands of Time Are Sinking*”

By Lynn Baatz



After the Sunday morning worship service on April 2nd, a question was raised among several of the ladies of the congregation: “What is meant by the term ‘seven deaths’ in the hymn *The Sands of Time Are Sinking*?” When Pastor Brian was asked this question, he suggested we search out an answer in the letters of Samuel Rutherford.

Samuel Rutherford was born in Scotland around 1600. At age seventeen, he entered Edinburgh College and obtained a Master of Arts degree in 1621. Shortly thereafter, he was appointed as a Professor of Humanity, a position he held until 1625. Although it is not certain when he became a Christian, based on his own writings it appears this occurred during his early adulthood. In 1627, he accepted a position as a pastor of a church in southern Scotland. Although it appears his ministry had little impact on the uneducated in his congregation, his preaching and writings did garner attention among more scholarly people. In Woodrow’s *Church History*, Rutherford was described as “one of the most moving and affectionate preachers in his time, or perhaps in any age of the church.”

Samuel Rutherford was exiled to Aberdeen when he refused to sign the Acts of Episcopacy and for writing against Arminian beliefs. Although he was not imprisoned, he was not allowed to leave the city of Aberdeen. In 1639, he became the Principal of the New College in St. Andrew. By 1643, he was one of the Commissioners from the Church of Scotland to the Westminster Assembly. It is believed he was the author of the Westminster Shorter Catechism. He also wrote a book (in Latin), *Rex Lex*, the main theme of which was that kings are also under the Law of Scripture. The book was burned in Scotland.

In 1651, Charles II was crowned king in Scotland, and Rutherford was commissioned to deliver an address in Latin to the prospective king. The main theme of this address was taken from his previously published book, *Lex Rex*, that even the king (or especially the king) is under the Law of God as revealed in Scripture. This address was not well received by Charles II, and ten years later, when Samuel Rutherford was very ill, he was summoned by Charles and accused of High Treason because of his comments during the address. Rutherford responded to the summons: “I behove to answer my first summons; and ere your day arrive, I will be where few kings and great folk appear.” Rutherford died shortly thereafter, and never actually was brought to trial on the charge of treason. It is said his last words were “Glory, glory dwelleth in Immanuel’s land.”

In his personal life, Rutherford faced much trial and grief as well. His first wife died before she reached thirty years old and their two children were taken away. He remarried at age forty and had seven children from that marriage. Sadly, six of the seven children preceded him in death.

Clearly, Rutherford did not shrink from controversy. However, it can be seen in his many letters that he was not an angry, bitter man. He obviously loved the Lord and had a great burden for the lost. Reading his letters invites us also to love the Lord and contemplate more fully all His blessings.

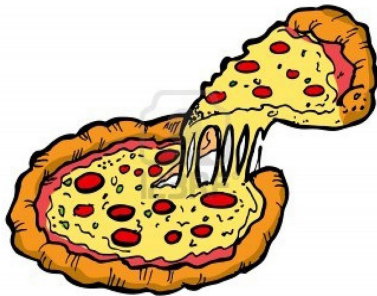
The hymn *The Sands of Time Are Sinking* was written by Anne Cousin, a Scottish poet and wife of William Cousin, a minister in the Free Church of Scotland. She wrote a poem in 1854 entitled, *The Last Words of Samuel Rutherford*, which was based on his letters. This poem had nineteen verses, five of which became known as this hymn. The words “seven deaths” is taken loosely from Rutherford’s letters; he referred to “ten deaths,” but Cousin changed it to “seven” as it worked better for the poetry. Rutherford’s meaning was this: even if the sufferings of life and death were compounded seven (or ten) times, this would still be negligible compared to the “glory, glory” in Immanuel’s land.

Excited for Spring?

We have plenty of garden space available on our church property for anyone interested in gardening. Our soil is good and we have easy access to water. Don't have tools? No problem! The master gardener, Harlan Harmelink, will help you. The ground will be plowed and ready sometime in May. Questions? Ask Harlan Harmelink, Sara TenPas, or Gail Moody



PIZZA RANCH FUNDRAISER



The Pine Haven Women's Auxiliary will be having their Pizza Ranch Fundraiser on Monday, May 15th, from 4:30-8:00pm at the Oostburg Pizza Ranch. 10% of all food purchased will be donated to benefit the residents of Pine Haven.

Pine Haven Corner Store

The Pine Haven Giddings Avenue & Haven Drive campuses feature a Corner Store that is open to the public. The store is open daily Monday through Saturday and offers personal care items, gifts, candy, cards, stamps, handmade crafts, homemade baked goods and seasonal merchandise for sale at very reasonable prices. Consider shopping there for Mother's Day or other occasions! The Corner Store is operated by volunteers and members of the Pine Haven Christian Communities Women's Auxiliary. All the proceeds made are donated back to the residents of Pine Haven.



Return to Uganda: An update on the Tuininga family



How does a family of 11 pack all of their belongings into 25 bags, say goodbye to family and friends in the United States, and travel back home to Uganda to restart ministry with dear friends there? The following is an email from Eric Tuininga describing their recent furlough and work in Uganda.

Diana Tuininga has an excellent and very candid blog that includes updates of their work in Uganda, as well as encouragements, prayer requests, and lots of pictures. It gives a great picture of their life and work there. Check it out at <http://tuiningasinuganda.blogspot.com>

Submitted by Anna TenPas

It is with joy that I report that our furlough was a blessing. We were in the USA from mid-September through mid-March. I really enjoyed visiting about 44 churches, giving presentations about the work in Uganda and often preaching. It was a blessing to see God's people in many states and provinces (North Carolina, Georgia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, Ohio, Michigan, Colorado, Idaho, Washington, Oregon, New Jersey, Alberta and Ontario.) I often found myself wishing that every believer could have the blessing of visiting so many churches, large and small, long-established congregations as well as recent church plants. Christ is building his church! I often also wish more believers could have the blessing of visiting churches around the world. It is truly a privilege to live in Uganda, ministering to the churches here, interacting with our brothers and sisters on this side of the world.

While on furlough our family stayed at a rented home in North Carolina as well as a home in Oregon for 1 month. It was a great time to visit family - most of our family we had not seen in over 4 years. We were able to get some good-quality medical treatment for Katelyn (broken back), Benaiah (asthma), and Diana (adrenal deficiency). We also continued homeschooling as we had time. All our daughter Denise's adoption requirements were completed, for which we praise God.

Since returning to Uganda two weeks ago we have been getting back into the swing of things. I am preparing to teach a course at Knox Theological College called "Overview of the Bible", beginning on April 18. I'm looking forward to this, as it is of great value to train future pastors and church leaders. It's also a lot of fun to study the Bible together. Over the past two weeks I have also attended Mbale Presbytery (made up of 10 congregations in the Mbale area), taught Sunday school, led a Bible study, visited with old friends, etc.

A few other things our family does in an effort to show the love of Christ in our neighborhood (we live near a slum area, where the church is located):

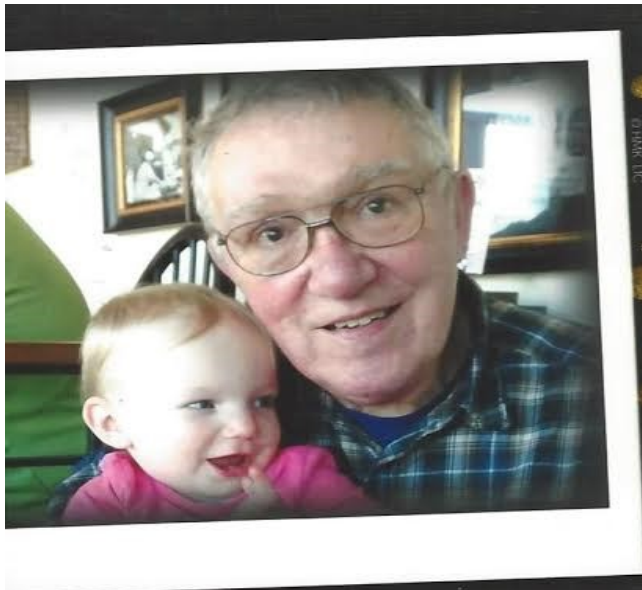
- #1. Breakfast club. Many boys and girls go to school here without breakfast or lunch. So we have grade-school children over for a breakfast club one morning per week from 6:30 to 7:00 am, in which we feed them breakfast and give a Bible lesson. To enter they have to say a memory verse. So far it is attended by about 60 children.
- #2. We also have the high school students from church over for supper, Bible study and prayer on Wednesday from 6:00 to 8:00 pm, attended by about 35 students. Many of them do not come from Christian homes, so this is a real opportunity for them to grow in Christian maturity.
- #3. Sunday evening we have what we call "circle time", in which neighborhood children come and after free time in which they can play, we have a time of singing, catechism, discussing the sermon from that day, prayer, and so on.

Thank you for praying for the growth of Christ's kingdom here in Uganda! The weather has been very dry and poorer people are suffering hunger, so please pray that the Lord will provide needed rain and food. Most of all pray for people to find salvation, eternal life, and daily sustaining joyful holiness in Jesus Christ!

In Christ,
-Eric Tuininga

May Birthdays

Ken Koehler	1st
Gracie Froh	6th
Jean Wilke	6th
Lona Tupper	8th
Steve Boss	9th
Ivan DeMaster	16th
Linda Damkot	17th
Stuart VerVelde	17th
Scott Onnink	20th
Don DeTroye	22nd
Shary DeTroye	25th
Deborah Arndt	27th



LET'S CELEBRATE

80

YEARS OF

Ivan De Master

Saturday, May 20 at Noon

Grace Orthodox Presbyterian Church
4930 Green Valley Lane, Sheboygan, WI
R.S.V.P. by to Carla De Master
at 920.452.5686 or pottersclay@milwpc.com-



Thank You!

To God be the glory, great things He has done!

We are so thankful to God for helping us through the tough journey of cancer treatment – two surgeries and 12 chemo treatments in the last 6 months. He surely answered prayers for guidance in my treatments. There were two adjustments made to my chemo and one prescription drug dropped, all which was timely and definitely God's guidance and help in getting me through. He encouraged us directly and also through our church family here at Grace. We still don't know how to thank you all enough for being willing to be used by God to minister to us in so many wonderful ways. We thank Him and we thank you, too.

Oh give thanks to the Lord! Call upon His name; make known His deeds among the peoples! 1 Chronicles 16:8, Psalm 105:1

Oh give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever. 1 Chronicles 16:34, Psalm 136:1, Psalm 118:1&29, Psalm 107:1, Psalm 106:1

Thanks so much for sharing Scripture with us, not only promises and encouragements, but challenges, too, in cards emails, texts, etc. Thanks, too, for all the many prayers on our behalf! God heard every one of them and is answering them all according to His perfect will and plan. Thanks, also, for the many wonderful gifts that were given to me, some anonymously, for which I haven't known who to thank. How very thoughtful and kind and fun! Thanks for many words of encouragement given one on one at church! All of these things and more have meant so much to us during these months and so, again, we thank you all!

Things we're learning:

- to accept God's will, even trials, as always His best for us, and used by Him for our benefit;
- the importance of the body of Christ including family, church family, and friends;
- to trust, serve, love, worship, adore, obey, and even rest in the Lord no matter what. You notice I say learning. That's because I don't feel we've / I've fully and completely grasped these things as we're supposed to. I always thought I did, but this challenge of cancer has shown me that I still need spiritual growth / increased faith in these areas, as well as in many others, I'm sure.

Lord, I believe, help Thou my unbelief. Mark 9:24

The Lord has done great things for us, and we are glad. Psalm 126:3

Love in Christ,
Debbie (and Bob)



Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ

Grace OPC

May 2017



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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1		2	3 Prayer Meeting	4	5	6
7	8	9 Session meeting 6:30pm	10 Prayer Meeting	11 Kitchen Shower 6pm	12	13 Church Workday 8am
14	15	16 Shawn's Bridal Shower 6:30pm	17 Prayer Meeting	18	19	20 Men's Breakfast 7am
21 Fellowship Lunch	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

SOCIAL FELLOWSHIP ACTIVITIES 2017

May 11, 2017	Ladies Banquet / Church Kitchen Shower	Ladies Group
May 16, 2017	Shawn Brulla Bridal Shower	Ladies Group
May 21, 2017	Wingard Welcome Lunch	Ladies Group
June 10, 2017	Bay Beach	Jeff Froh
June 22, 2017	Mini Golf	Wendy Froh
July 4, 2017	Golf – Sunset Hills	Jeff Froh
July 16, 2017	Fellowship Lunch	Men / Jason Will
July 28, 2017	Ice Cream Social / Backyard Game Night	Alyssa Arndt
August 10, 2017	Church Picnic	Ladies Group
August 19, 2017	Bike Trail Ride	Arndt / Boss
September 7-9, 2017	Church Campout at Kohler-Andrae	Pastor Brian
October 7, 2017	Progressive Supper Hospitality Night	Pastor / Ladies Group
October 20, 2017	Worldview Movie Night	Pastor Brian
November 4-5, 2017	Reformation Conference	Ladies Group
November 18, 2017	Harvest Home	Ladies Group
November 23, 2017	Thanksgiving Football Game	Josh / Steve
December 27, 2017	Bowling / Pizza / Game night	Pastor Brian
January, 2018	Milwaukee Domes Trip	Jonny Arndt
February 2, 2018	Taco / Game night	Wendy and Sara

Spring Workday



Our annual spring workday will be held this Saturday, May 13th, at 8am. Weather date will be the following Saturday, May 20th.

FELLOWSHIP LUNCH

There will be a fellowship lunch to welcome the Wingards on Sunday, May 21st, after Sunday School. Please see the sign up sheet on the bulletin board if you plan to attend.



JOHN PLOUGHMAN'S PICTURES IF THE CAP FITS, WEAR IT.

Renown English preacher Charles Haddon Spurgeon wrote several books under the pen name of "John Ploughman." The books were "plain talk to plain people" and represent homespun Christian wisdom for average folk. Not only are these books amusing, they are challenging and often very edifying. We will run these short chapters in coming issues of Reflections

FRIENDLY READERS,

Last time I made a book I trod on some people's corns and bunions, and they wrote me angry letters, asking, "Did you mean me?" This time, to save them the expense of a halfpenny card, I will begin my book by saying —

*Whether I please or whether I tease,
I'll give you my honest mind;
If the cap should fit, pray wear it a bit,
If not, you can leave it behind.*

No offense is meant; but if anything in these pages should come home to a man, let him not send it next door, but get a coop for his own chickens. What is the use of reading or hearing for other people? We do not eat and drink for them: why should we lend them our ears and not our mouths? Please then, good friend, if you find a hoe on these premises, weed your own garden with it.

I was speaking with Will Shepherd the other day about our master's old donkey, and I said, "He is so old and stubborn, he really is not worth his keep." "No," said Will, "and worse still, he is so vicious, that I feel sure he'll do somebody a mischief one of these days." You know they say that walls have ears; we were talking rather loud, but we did not know that there were ears to haystacks. We stared, I tell you, when we saw Joe Scroggs come from behind the stack, looking as red as a turkey-cock, and raving like mad. He burst out swearing at Will and me, like a cat spitting at a dog. His monkey was up and no mistake. He'd let us know that he was as good a man as either of us, or the two put together, for the matter of that.

Talking about *him* in that way; he'd do — I don't know what. I told old Joe we had never thought of him, nor said a word about him, and he might just as well save his breath to cool his porridge, for nobody meant him any harm. This only made him call me a liar, and roar the louder. My friend, Will, was walking away, holding his sides, but when he saw that Scroggs was still in a fume, he laughed outright, and turned round on him and said, "Why, Joe, we were talking about master's old donkey, and not about you; but, upon my word, I shall never see that donkey again without thinking of Joe Scroggs." Joe puffed and blowed, but perhaps he thought it an awkward job, for he backed out of it, and Will and I went off to our work in rather a merry cue, for old Joe had blundered on the truth about himself for once in his life.

The aforesaid Will Shepherd has sometimes come down rather heavy upon me in his remarks, but it has done me good. It is partly through his home thrusts that I have come to write this new book, for he thought I was idle; perhaps I am, and perhaps I am not. Will forgets that I have other fish to fry and tails to butter; and he does not recollect that a ploughman's mind wants to lie fallow a little, and can't give a crop every year. It is hard to make rope when your hemp is all used up, or pancakes without batter, or rook pie without the birds; and so I found it hard to write more when I had said just about all I knew. Giving much to the poor doth increase a man's store, but it is not the same with writing; at least, I am such a poor scribe that I don't find it come because I pull. If your thoughts only flow by drops, you can't pour them out in bucketfuls.

However, Will has ferreted me out, and I am obliged to him so far. I told him the other day, what the wrinkle said to the pin: "Thank you for drawing me out, but you are rather sharp about it." Still, Master Will is not far from the mark: after three hundred thousand people had bought my book it certainly was time to write another: so, though I am not a hatter, I will again turn cap-maker, and those who have heads may try on my wares; those who have none won't touch them.

So, friends,
I am,
Yours, rough and ready,
JOHN PLOUGHMAN.

COMMENTS ON FINANCE

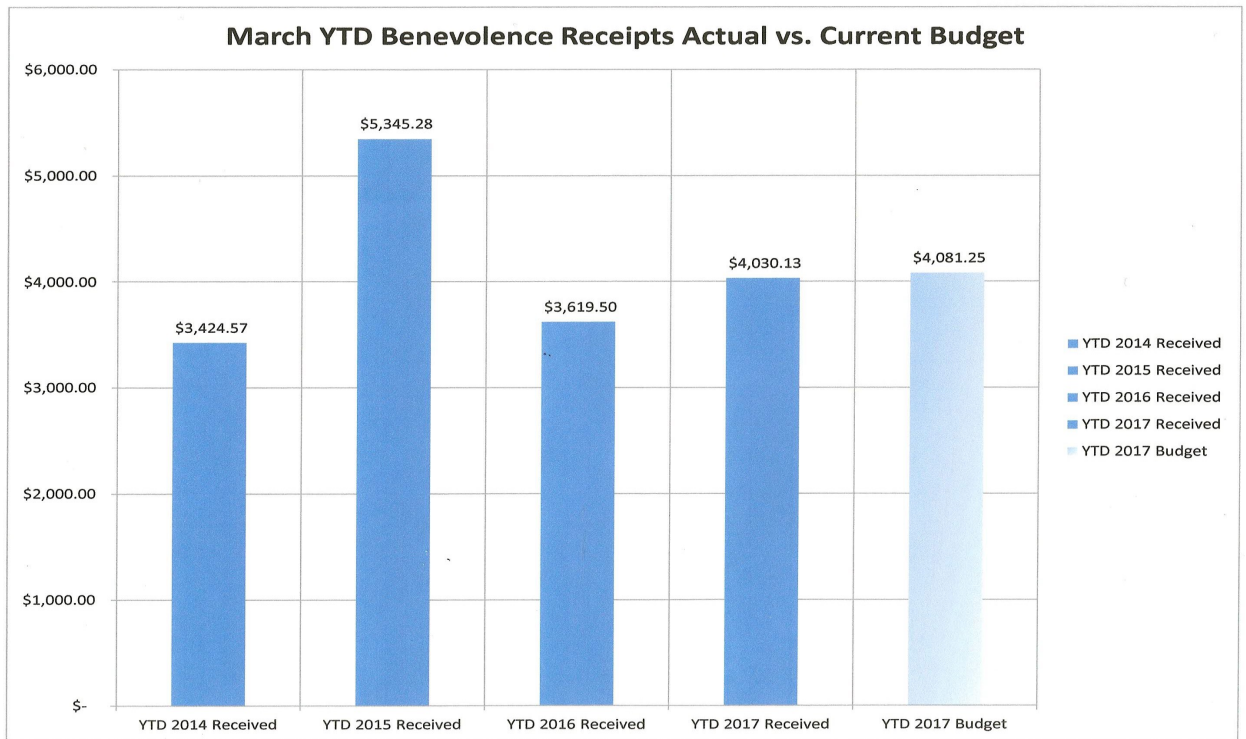
By Joel Moody

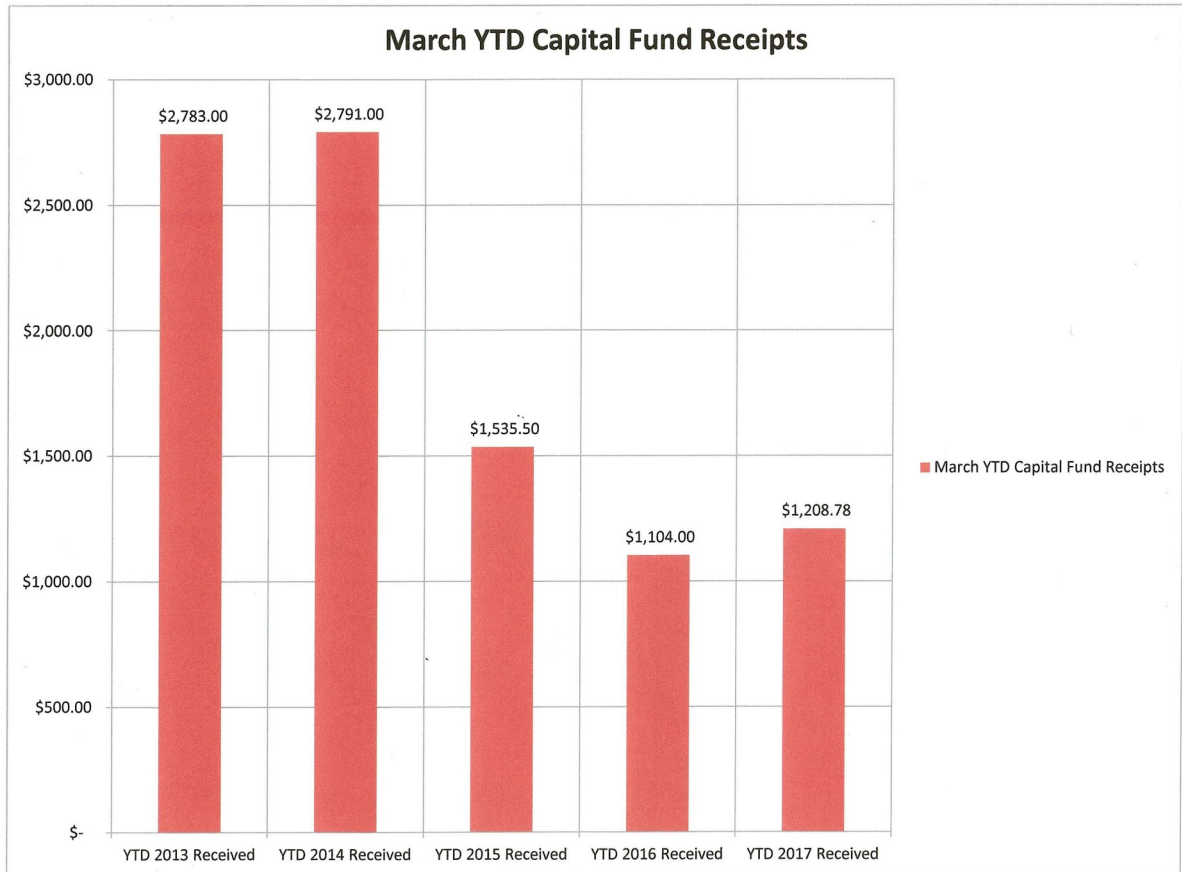
General Fund receipts for March totaled \$12,007.16 as compared to the budget of \$13,392.38, while General Fund disbursements for March totaled \$14,473.62. March year to date General Fund receipts totaled \$39,128.20 as compared to the budget of \$43,525.25 (a shortfall of \$4,397.05), while March year to date disbursements of \$37,296.08 were \$6,229.17 below budget. Through the end of March, the General Fund increased by \$1,856.79 due to lower than budgeted disbursements. Year to date General Fund receipts for March were 12.0% below last year's total on an average Sunday while disbursements were 15.3% below the prior year.

Benevolence Fund receipts for March totaled \$1,525.00 as compared to the budget of \$1,360.42 (an excess of \$164.58). Year to date Benevolence Fund Receipts through March totaled \$4,030.13 and fell short of budget by \$51.12. Please refer to the graph for a historical trend of benevolence receipts as well as the current benevolence budget. During March, \$500.00 was sent to Worldwide Outreach (WVO) for the General Missions outreach of the Orthodox Presbyterian church and \$200.00 was sent to the

Midwest Presbytery's Church Extension Committee (CHEX). In addition, \$600.00 was sent to Menomonie OPC in support of the church in Zoar.

March year to Date giving for the **Capital Fund** was \$1,208.78. 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 computers, 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. 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.





Kitchen Shower

Ladies, you are invited to join us for a kitchen shower, to benefit our own church kitchen, on Thursday, May 11th, at 6pm. If you choose to donate money or have suggestions for kitchen items, please put them in Arenda's mailbox by May 7th. Please remember to sign up on the bulletin board in the fellowship hall, if you plan to attend. Don't forget to wear your favorite apron!





Showing forth the
excellencies of Jesus
Christ

Grace OPC

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Spurgeon Corner

He was sore athirst, and called on the Lord, and said, thou hast given this great deliverance into the hand of thy servant: and now shall I die for thirst?"
Judges 15:18

Samson was thirsty and ready to die. The difficulty was totally different from any which the hero had met before. Merely to get thirst assuaged is nothing like so great a matter as to be delivered from a thousand Philistines! but when the thirst was upon him, Samson felt that little present difficulty more weighty than the great past difficulty out of which he had so specially been delivered. It is very usual for God's people, when they have enjoyed a great deliverance, to find a little trouble too much for them. Samson slays a thousand Philistines, and piles them up in heaps, and then faints for a little water! Jacob wrestles with God at Peniel, and overcomes Omnipotence itself, and then goes "halting on his thigh!" Strange that there must be a shrinking of the sinew whenever we win the day. As if the Lord must teach us our littleness, our nothingness, in order to keep us within bounds. Samson boasted right loudly when he said, "I have slain a thousand men." His boastful throat soon grew hoarse with thirst, and he betook himself to prayer. God has many ways of humbling his people. Dear child of God, if after great mercy you are laid very low, your case is not an unusual one. When David had mounted the throne of Israel, he said, "I am this day weak, though anointed king." You must expect to feel weakest when you are enjoying your greatest triumph. If God has wrought for you great deliverances in the past, your present difficulty is only like Samson's thirst, and the Lord will not let you faint, nor suffer the daughter of the uncircumcised to triumph over you. The road of sorrow is the road to heaven, but there are wells of refreshing water all along the route. So, tried brother, cheer your heart with Samson's words, and rest assured that God will deliver you ere long.

Evening, January 21st, C.H. Spurgeon

Bridal Shower

We will be having a Bridal Shower for Shawn Brulla (Nick Froh's fiancée) on May 16 at 6:30 at the church. There is a sign up sheet on the bulletin board in the fellowship hall. Shawn is registered at Bed, Bath, and Beyond.

