

# REFLECTIONS

The Monthly Newsletter of Grace OPC

## ENDURANCE IN THE LONG RUN OF LIFE

*By Pastor Brian De Jong*

One of the helpful descriptions of the Christian life found in Scripture is the race analogy, as employed by the writer of Hebrews. In the twelfth chapter of that great epistle, he reminds believers to “run with endurance the race that is set before us...” Now this is not a fifty-yard dash that is described. Rather, it is a long-distance run – life as a marathon.

While that metaphor aptly describes life in general for the average human being, it is even more fitting for the Christian life. Our life of faith is very much like a marathon. We start at the starting line, when we first come to trust in Christ as our Lord and Savior. And then we run. Mile after mile, year after year – we’re always running forward, always making progress toward our goal.

The marathon analogy fits for other reasons, too. There are other runners competing – Christian living is not an individual event for isolated participants. We run with others, and they run with us. Together, we are all headed for a finish line – toward a goal. In most marathons, most runners are not so much competing against one another as they are striving to simply finish the race. They want to be able to say, as Paul said, “I have finished the course, I have kept the faith.” It is comforting to know that there is a finish line – this race doesn’t continue endlessly and forever. Moreover, the Christian life is like an endurance race in that there is a course marked out for us. A marathon runner must follow the prescribed path or he risks being disqualified. To finish the race you must follow the path marked out for runners.

So how do we go about “running with

endurance the race set before us?” Hebrews 12:1-3 provides three keys to willing runners. The first key is to lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us. Before runners set out on their marathon, they take off their warm-ups. Anything that could trip them is discarded, lest their legs become entangled and they be kept from running. A frank



and honest assessment of our own “entanglements” is crucial if we are to “run with endurance.” What sins keep you from running effectively? Are you willing to cast them aside in order to run with endurance?

The second key is to “fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith.” Look unto Jesus, the front-runner and the pace setter. He is the perfect model of endurance. He endured terrible hostility from sinful men. He endured the shame and pain of the cross. He endured to the point of shedding His own blood. Look to Him, and He will empower you to run your race by faith.

The final key is to remember the great cloud of witnesses surrounding us. In the stands are those who have gone before us, and have run their race to its conclusion – the men and women listed in Hebrews 11 – men like Abel and Enoch, Noah and Abraham, Sarah and Isaac, Jacob and Joseph – Moses, Rahab, Gideon, Samson, David, Samuel and the prophets. All these urge us on. They call out to us, “Press on! Don’t quit! Keep running!” And when we cross the finish line, they will be there to welcome us, and to congratulate us on having finished the course, and having kept the faith!

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# THE ESSENCE OF CORPORATE WORSHIP

*by R. B. Kuiper*

The Lord Jesus commanded individual worship when He said: "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly" (Matthew 6:6). Joshua must have had in mind — perhaps not exclusively — family worship when he vowed: "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15). Scripture abounds in references to church worship. For instance, it is said of Jesus: "As his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day" (Luke 4:16). The context informs us that He participated in worship there. And the author of Hebrews admonished his readers not to forsake the assembling of themselves together (Hebrews 10:25). This mode of worship has been described as public or common, but perhaps the best name for it is corporate worship, for that name designates it as worship by a body, even the body of Christ.

In its worship the glory of the Christian church is manifested resplendently. That will become clear from the consideration of the sublime essence of corporate worship.

## WITH GOD

The tabernacle of the old dispensation was known as the tent of meeting. Was it called by that name because the people of God were wont to meet one another within its precincts? Possibly so, but there was a far more important reason. God Himself said: "There I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by my glory" (Exodus 29:43). God and His people met in the sanctuary.

Referring, no doubt, to a gathering of His disciples for worship, the Son of God said: "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20).

In a very real sense God's people of the new dispensation draw even closer to God in worship than did His people of the old dispensation. In the tabernacle and the temple God dwelt in the holiest place of all. Only once a year, on the great day of atonement, one man, the high priest, was permitted to enter that place. Even he might not enter without sacrificial blood, which he had to sprinkle on the mercy-seat in order to make atonement for his own sins and those of the people. But when Christ died on Calvary's cross, the veil separating the holiest of all from the rest of the sanctuary was torn in two from the top to the bottom (Matthew 27:51). This signified that since the shedding of Christ's atoning blood all believers are privileged to come at any time into the immediate presence of the Holy One of Israel.

How lofty a conception of corporate worship Scripture presents! When God's people assemble for worship they enter into the place where God dwells. God meets them, and they meet God. They find themselves face to face with none other than God Himself. Their worship is an intimate transaction between them and their God.

If the church were fully conscious of that truth, what dignity and reverence would characterize its worship! Of levity and frivolity there would not be a trace. The worshipers would exclaim, as did Jacob at Bethel: "How dreadful is this place! This is none other than the house of God and this is the gate of heaven" (Genesis 28:17). Realizing that they are standing on holy ground, they would, as it were, remove their shoes from their feet, as did Moses when God spoke to him from the burning bush (Exodus 3:5). As John, when on Patmos he saw in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to His feet and girt about the paps with a golden girdle; His head and His hair white like wool, as white as snow; His eyes as a flame of fire; His feet like unto fine brass as if they burned in a furnace; His voice as the

## Kuiper Continued...

sound of many waters; His right hand clasping seven stars; His mouth holding a sharp two-edged sword; His countenance shining as the sun in His strength — at this resplendent sight fell at His feet as dead (Revelation 1:13-17), so would every wor-shiper.

Since corporate worship is offered to God in a meeting of God and His people, it must consist of two sorts of trans-actions. In some, as the reading of Scripture, the preach-ing of the Word and the benediction, God addresses His people and they worship by rever-ently attending. In others, as prayer, song and the offering of gifts, they respond in holy fear to what God has spoken. In every part of their worship God's people either listen to God or reply to God.

What glory for the church that the great God condescends thus to commune with it and that it is privileged thus to commune with Him!

### OF GOD

Worship originates with God, not with man.

The desire to worship the true God is wrought in the human heart by His Spirit. But for the renewing grace of God, men would turn their backs upon Him. They might worship idols, as many do, but not Him of whom it is written: "Thou art God alone" (Psalm 86:10). No man would ever seek after the living God if the living God did not first seek him.

Every act of worship, too, is evoked by God. God com-mands His children to worship Him, and they obey. They love Him because He has first loved them. They praise Him for all the benefits He has bestowed upon them. They adore Him both for what He is and for what He does. Each act of their worship is performed in response to His revelation. Each word they utter in His presence is spoken in reply to His Word.

And may they never forget that what God says to them is of incomparably greater im-portance than anything they can say to Him.

Nor would God's people know how to render worship worthy of the great and holy God if He Himself had not instructed them. If He were a man, however illustrious, they might well discover through their own imagination what would please Him, for in that case they could put themselves in His place. But the truth is that He is God. Only through revelation can man know Him at all. And even thus it re-mains impossible for man to com-pre-hend Him, for the finite cannot contain the infinite. There-fore

it is sacrilege for man to worship God according to his own devices. Never may the creature assay to wor-ship the Creator in any manner not pre-scribed by the Creator.

What has been said constitutes a most impor-tant principle governing the content of worship in general and of corporate worship in particular. Sad to say, not all churches subscribe to it. The church of Rome takes the position that every-thing is permissible in public worship which is not forbidden by the Word of God. That has led to a multitude of unscriptural and even anti-scriptural ele-ments in its worship. Some Protes-tant churches, too, which have not purged out all Romish leaven, take the same position. The Re-formed churches have upheld the principle that only that is permissible in the content of public worship which has the positive sanction of Holy Scripture. And that principle is Biblical. It is plainly implicit in the second commandment of the moral law (Exodus 20:4-6). While the first commandment forbids the worship of false gods, the second forbids worship of the true God in a wrong way. In the words of the West-minster Shorter Catechism, "The second commandment

*"When God's  
people assemble  
for worship they  
enter into the place  
where God dwells.  
God meets them,  
and they meet  
God."*

## Kuiper Continued...

forbiddeth the worshiping of God by images, or in any other way not appointed in his-Word” (Question 51). And the Lord Jesus said of the scribes and Pharisees of His day: “In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men” (Mark 7:7).

Lest the principle under discussion be misunderstood, it may be remarked that it does not apply to such mere circumstances of public worship as, for example, the place of meeting, and that it takes into account the fact that, while some teachings concerning worship are explicit in Scripture, others are implicit, as, for instance, the setting aside in the new dispensation of the first day of the week for corporate worship. It may also be observed that most Reformed churches hold that Scriptural sanction of the elements of common worship need not always come as a command, but may also come in the form of permission. For example, Scripture nowhere commands the church to commemorate the Saviour’s birth on the twenty-fifth of December, or for that matter, on any other day; yet few will deny that the church is at liberty to do so. And those who insist on this liberty contend that such divine institutions as the passover and the holy supper are evidence that the commemoration of important events in the history of redemption is pleasing to God. Thus they claim positive Scriptural sanction for the celebration of the so-called Christian festivals.

The principle stands that there is room in the content of corporate worship only for that which God Himself has appointed. And that is an emphatic way of saying that in its very essence corporate worship is of God.

### UNTO GOD

It can hardly be denied that in their worship

services God’s children sometimes have evil aims. Not infrequently their aim centers on themselves, not on God. That makes their aim evil. Perhaps they go to church to have their craving for theatricals or entertainment satisfied. They want to see “a good show” and have “a

*“...it may never be forgotten that the salvation of men is a means to the glorification of God.”*

good laugh” or, still better, “a good cry.” For the minister the temptation is ever present to seek his own glory. All too often he looks forward to the plaudits of men rather than the divine approval. To put it popularly, he is out to “make a hit” for himself. Such worship is worship of self, not of God. It can only be an abomination in God’s sight.

The danger is no less real that the aim of the worshiping church will be distorted. What should be secondary is made primary. What should be a means is regarded as the end. Christians go to church to enjoy the communion of saints. That certainly is good, but only so far as it goes, and it does not go nearly far enough. They should go to church to have communion with God. Worship services are conducted in the hope that sinners may be saved through the preaching of the Word. Most assuredly that is good, but it may never be forgotten that the salvation of men is a means to the glorification of God. Saints go to church that they may be built up in faith, hope and love. That, too, is excellent, but it again is only a means to the highest of all ends — the honor of God.

Corporate worship must be unto God. When properly performed, it is unto God. It is oriented to the glory of God rather than the blessedness of man, and it aims at man’s blessedness only as a means to the end of God’s glory.

All that the Christian does must be done to the glory of God. That holds even of his eating and drinking (I Corinthians 10:31). But in noth-

## Kuiper Continued...

ing does he glorify God as directly as in worship, and in nothing does the church glorify God as immediately as in its corporate worship. It stands in the very presence of God. It is overawed by the holiness and majesty of God. It prays: "Hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:9, 10). It chants in adoration:

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty!  
Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee;  
Holy, Holy, Holy, Merciful and Mighty!  
God in Three Persons, blessed Trinity!

Now, if ever, it has an eye single to the glory of God.

Nor is that all. Not only does the church glorify God in its services of worship, but through those services its members are stimulated to do all their living to God's glory — to serve God not merely on the Lord's Day, but all the days of the week; not merely in God's house, but also in their homes; not merely on the day of rest, but also in their daily work; not merely when partak-

ing of the holy supper, but also when eating their daily bread; not merely when singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, but also when listening to the symphonies of Brahms; not merely when praying, but also when play-ing. Even while engaged in corporate worship, God's children appropriate the quaint but meaningful petition of George Herbert:

Teach me, my God and King,  
In all things Thee to see;  
And what I do in any thing  
To do it as for Thee.

And, pondering the phrase, "for the glory of God," they sing:

This is the famous stone  
That turneth all to gold;  
For that which God doth touch and own  
Cannot for lesse be told.

*Taken from The Glorious Body of Christ by R. B. Kuiper, Chapter 51, p. 346-352.*

## Church Potluck



# September Birthdays



*Happy  
Birthday!!!*

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## Pine Haven Contest

The new Pine Haven assisted living apartments will be under construction soon. They are conducting a contest to determine the name of the new facility. The individual submitting the successful entry will have his or her name engraved on a brass plaque and placed at the base of a tree to be planted near the facility. The only stipulation is that “Pine Ha-

ven” be in the name at the beginning, middle or end. All entries should be submitted by Friday, September 8, 2006 to Charlene Bebeau at 531 Giddings Avenue, Sheboygan Falls, WI 53085 or via e-mail at [cbebeau@pinehaven.org](mailto:cbebeau@pinehaven.org).

Use all your creativity.





Grace OPC

# September 2006

*Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ*



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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2 Men's Study 7:30 a.m.
3	4 Women's Bible Study 6:30 a.m.	5 Session Meeting 6:30 p.m.	6 Prayer Meeting 7 p.m.	7	8 Roofing Project	9 Roofing Project
10 Missions Sunday <i>Youth Group</i> Meadow View Ministry 2:00 p.m.	11 Women's Bible Study 6:30 a.m.	12 Pine Haven Study 1:30 p.m.	13 Prayer Meeting 7 p.m.	14	15 Presbytery	16 Presbytery
17 Missions Potluck	18 Women's Bible Study 6:30 a.m. <i>Theology Class</i> 3:00 p.m.	19	20 Prayer Meeting 7 p.m.	21	22	23 Women's Presbyterial 9:00 a.m.- 3:00 p.m.
24 Lord's Supper	25 Women's Bible Study 6:30 a.m.	26 Pine Haven Study 1:30 p.m.	27 Prayer Meeting 7 p.m.	28	29	30

# Women's Presbyterial

Presbytery of the Midwest, OPC

September 23, 2006  
Bethel OPC, Oostburg, WI  
9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

## All in the Name of Jesus



### Theme Verse

And whatever you do, in  
word or deed, do everything  
in the name of the Lord  
Jesus, giving thanks to God  
the Father through him.

Come join us for a day of fellowship and encouragement.

Learn about the ongoing work of our denomination  
in the area of disaster relief.

You will be challenged to put your faith to work!

For information please contact:

LuAnn Lee

President



## A NOTE OF THANKS

Thanks to all of you who have helped us get through these last difficult months. Thanks for the cards, well-wishes, and hugs. Thanks to all of you who made delicious meals for us. Thanks to the De Jong girls who came and cleaned for us! And thanks to Pastor Brian for visiting with us on many occasions and reminding us of

God's wonderful love and grace. We covet your continued prayers as Sandy faces chemotherapy treatments starting in mid-September. We know that God is in control and will give us the grace to face every situation.

*~ Chris and Sandy Kaeiser*



# JESUS CHRIST, OUR ULTIMATE MENTOR

*written by Don Schlernitzauer*

“The Lord GOD has given me the tongue of those who are taught that I may know how to sustain with a word him who is weary. Morning by morning he awakens; he awakens my ear to hear as those who are taught. The Lord GOD has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious; I turned not backward. I gave my back to those who strike, and my cheeks to those who pull out my beard; I hid not my face from disgrace and spitting. But the Lord GOD helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced; therefore I have set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame. He who vindicates me is near. Who will contend with me? Let us stand up together. Who is my adversary? Let him come near to me. Behold, the Lord GOD helps me; who will declare me guilty? Behold, all of them will wear out like a garment; the moth will eat them up.” (Isaiah 50: 4-9, ESV)

This is obviously a messianic passage, even though we don't often hear it referred to as such. It is about Jesus growing up, how the Father awakened Him morning by morning, teaching Him the Word. It also has reference to what He suffered during His passion.

But this passage not only has reference to our Messiah; it has to do with us, and with all those through the ages who have been or will be made one with Jesus through the gospel.

For me one of the most intriguing verses in the Scriptures is John 17: 19 where Jesus expresses to His Father that He sanctifies Himself that His disciples may be sanctified in truth. I believe this statement of Christ has reference to both His active obedience (His fulfillment of all the law) and His passive obedience (the stripes and death He suffered for us).

Jesus active obedience even led Him to wash His disciples' feet, after which He said, "...I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done unto you" (John 13: 15). Paul wrote to the Corinthians (I Cor. 11: 1), "Follow my example as I follow Christ," and Peter (I Pet 5: 3) urged

the elders to whom he wrote to be "examples to the flock."

So we see the cascade of events, Jesus setting the high example, the Apostles emulating Him, the elders following the Apostles, and the flocks following them. So unfolds the reality of Jesus' words, "I sanctify myself that they might be sanctified in truth."

Going back to our Isaiah 50 passage, what can we learn from the pattern our Lord Jesus sets here? Verses 4-5 point us to God's Word: (remember John 17:19, "...sanctify them in truth.") Notice the credit is given to the Father, for He is the one who teaches, He is the one who awakens ears by His Spirit. But notice in verse 5 the pattern of young Jesus, the example we are to follow; we are not to be rebellious, we are not to turn back from knowing and living God's Word.

Note also in verse 4 what we are to do with this Word hidden in our hearts—we are to minister to the weary, sustaining them through that Word just as Jesus did. In verses 6-7 we see that as Christ suffered greatly, we too can expect in smaller ways to be rejected in this ministry. But we are not to lose confidence and resolve, for we will not stand alone; God will be right there with us.

As we meditate on verse 9, we know that none of His tormenters was able to justly accuse Christ. That's because He was in His obedience thoroughly righteous. As we serve God, the Accuser wants us rendered ineffective by guilt (as in Zechariah 3), but the sanctifying truth is that through His passive obedience "we have become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5:21).

As we launch our mentoring program, may these verses remind us we need to receive and live God's truth, we need to help others do the same, we should expect opposition, but nothing should deter us from this task, for God Himself is with us.

## *Desiring God* by John Piper

*Book Review by Samantha De Jong*

“What is the chief end of man?” the Westminster Divines ask. “Man’s chief end,” you mechanically reply, “is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.”

Have you ever really thought about this familiar answer from the catechism? How can one both glorify and enjoy the Creator? Doesn’t glorifying God usually lead to conflict with the world and even suffering? Perhaps you think glorifying God is our duty in this life, and the enjoyment comes in Heaven. John Piper offers a different answer in his book, *Desiring God*. Building on the idea that glorifying and enjoying God are not two distinct ends but one, he proposes that God wants us to glorify Him by enjoying Him. Many Christians, he explains, base their lives on the belief that to seek one’s own pleasure is evil, and that to do good for the happiness it brings you is selfish. Leaning heavily on Scripture and quoting the insights of

Blaise Pascal and C.S. Lewis, however, Piper rejects that notion, suggesting instead that pursuing pleasure is not wrong, but that to prefer mundane earthly attractions, to the much greater and truer joy found in intimate communion with God is ludicrous. Lewis compares this folly to, “An ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea.” Having established that God wants His people to delight in His person, Piper gives detailed attention to aspects of the Christian experience, showing in each chapter how to cultivate the joy of knowing God, and how the true happiness we will find in Him should affect daily life.

Decades before *Desiring God* was written, John Newton wrote, “Fading is the worldling’s pleasure, all its boasted pomp and show. Solid joys and lasting treasure none but Zion’s children know.” May this thought-provoking book point you to the only path of solid joy and lasting treasure.

## TIME CHANGE

Starting September 3rd, our morning worship service will begin at 9:00 am. The Session has approved this change to allow extra time for fellowship after the morning service. Sunday School will begin at 10:40 and conclude by 11:30.



### “Death by Chocolate” Cake

- 1/2 cup cocoa
- 1 3/4 cup sugar
- 1 cup margarine (softened)
- 3 eggs
- 1/2 cup (4 oz.) sour cream
- 2 tsp. baking soda
- 3/4 tsp baking powder
- 3/4 tsp. salt
- 2 tsp. vanilla
- 3 cups flour
- 1 1/4 cup water

Cream fist three ingredients together. Beat eggs and sour cream into the creamed mixture. Add soda, salt, vanilla and baking powder. Blend flour and water alternately into chocolate mixture. Pour batter into three greased 9 inch round pans. Bake at 350 for 25 minutes.

#### Frosting:

- 8 oz. unsweetened chocolate squares (1 pkg)
- 3/4 pkg (12 oz.) semi-sweet chocolate chips
- 1 cup dark corn syrup
- 2 tsp vanilla
- 2 lbs. powdered sugar
- 1/2 cup softened butter or margarine
- 1/2 cup water

Melt chocolates. Stir in syrup and vanilla. Add remaining items. Beat until smooth. Frost cake using 1/4 frosting between each layer and the rest for top and sides. Use a metal spatula dipped in hot water if hard to spread. Refrigerate cake at least one hour before serving. (Note: this also works well as a frosting for yellow cake.)

*Steve Boss*



“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?”

# Books of the Bible

*from Antoinette De Master*

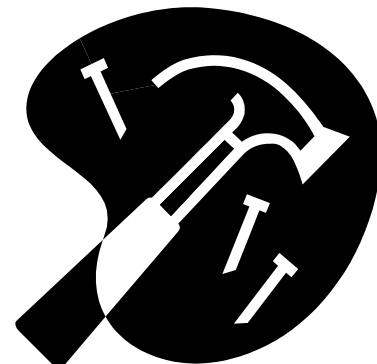
There are 30 books of the Bible in this paragraph. Can you find them? This is a most remarkable puzzle. It was found by a gentleman in an airplane seat pocket, on a flight from Los Angeles to Honolulu, keeping him occupied for hours. He enjoyed it so much, he passed it on to some friends...One friend from Illinois worked on this while fishing in a John boat. Another friend studied it while playing the banjo. Elaine Taylor, a columnist friend, was intrigued by it she mentioned it in her weekly newspaper column. Another friend judges the job of solving this puzzle so involving, she brews a cup of tea to help her nerves. There will be some names that are really easy to spot. That's a fact. Some people, however, will soon find themselves in a jam, especially since the book names are not necessarily capitalized. Truthfully, from answers we get, we are forced to admit it usually takes a minister or a scholar to see some of them at the worst. Research has shown that something in our genes is responsi-

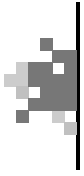
ble for the difficulty we have in seeing the books in this paragraph. During a recent fund raising event, which featured this puzzle, the Alpha Delta Phi lemonade booth set a new record. The local paper, The Chronicle, surveyed over 200 patrons who reported that this puzzle was one of the most difficult they had ever seen. As Daniel Humana humbly puts it, "The books are all right here in plain view hidden from sight" Those able to find all of them will hear great lamentations from those who have to be shown. One revelation that may help is that books like Timothy and Samuel may occur without their numbers. Also, keep in mind, that punctuation and spaces in the middle are normal. A chipper attitude will help you compete really well against those who claim to know the answers. Remember, there is no need for a mad exodus, there really are 30 books of the Bible lurking somewhere in this paragraph waiting to be found.

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## Roof Project

The trustees have set aside September 8-9 (Friday-Saturday) as days to work on the roof project, with Sept. 15-16 as rain dates. All those interested in helping are asked to talk to Tim Boss.





# Getting to know... Antoinette De Master

*compiled by Harlan Harmelink*

## Antoinette De Master Continued...





Proclaiming the  
Excellencies of our  
Lord Jesus Christ.

The Monthly Newsletter  
of Grace OPC

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CHECK OUT THE WEBPAGE:  
[WWW.OPC.ORG](http://WWW.OPC.ORG)

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Did  
You  
Know  
?

★ J. S. Bach's parents died when he was 10 years old so he lived with his brother?

★ Bach played the violin & viola as well as the organ?

★ Bach walked two hundred miles to see Dietrich Buxtehude,

another Christian organist, play?

★ Bach loved German chorales & some of this can be seen in his arrangements in the "Orgelbüchlein" or "little organ book"?

★ Bach composed music as well ("The Heavens Declare Thy Glory", 113)?

★ In his own words, his work was, "To the glory of God alone in the highest and to further the learning of everyone."

*Information found in The Gift of Music, by Smith & Carlson(1995), pg. 31-38.*

Antoinette De Master, continued...