

the tapestry



A WORSHIPING COMMUNITY OF GRACE

Faith Church, a Reformed Presbyterian congregation, is a member of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), a denomination faithful to the Scriptures, true to the Reformed Faith, and obedient to the Great Commission.

PASTOR'S PONDERINGS

BY JOHN ARMSTRONG JR.

I should be calling this "The Sabbatical Files." I'm on sabbatical and using articles dug up from the ancient ruins of what was once called The Beacon. Welcome to November and the "First Hymn." When we enter into worship, let us jump right in with the praise of Almighty God!

November 2008

In the last few months I have given you some of the rationale behind what we do in our corporate worship services. So far, I have discussed the prelude, the Welcome & Announcements and the Call to Worship. Now it is time for me to address the "Songs of Praise" or, if we are having communion, the first "Hymn" (commonly known as the Hymn of Praise). What goes into choosing the first thing we sing?

As has already been alluded to a couple of times, our first corporate musical expression in worship should be a song of praise to God. When we sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, we are *singing* our prayers and praises to God. When we pray, it is very appropriate to follow the acronym A.C.T.S. which stands for "adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and supplication." Notice the "A" is what we should pray first and that is "adoration." Is it not appropriate to come to God in worship first with adoration and praise? Of course it is! He is worthy of all our praise and it is fitting for us to sing it to Him.

Most of the time we begin our corporate worship services with two songs led by the Praise Team. These are to focus our attention on our great God. We try to choose music that is at once Christ-centered, Biblical, and singable. We want the entire congregation to be able to sing the music and fully participate in the praises of God. On the first Sunday of the month, we typically begin with a hymn accompanied by the organ. When this is the case we usually pick what I would refer to as a "big hymn," a rousing hymn of praise which should be sung in a robust manner. Music is powerful and it sets the stage for what follows in worship. If we sing half-heartedly with a lackadaisical approach, that is the attitude we'll bring into the rest of worship. If we sing with joy and strength, with our hearts fully-engaged, that is how we will continue as a congregation into the rest of worship.

As your pastor, the most common compliment I get from visitors is that we sing well. That is always so encouraging to me because good singing is usually a reflection of a good heart attitude toward the Lord. Even though we do sing well as a congregation, there are those that choose not to sing. If you are one of those people that will not sing, I would first challenge you to make a biblical argument for not singing during the corporate worship of God. Refusing to sing God's praises for whatever reason is indicative of a heart that needs to be examined before the Lord.

I have heard some people say they are not capable of singing well so they don't sing at all. Again, singing is a reflection of the heart's attitude toward God. I often

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jokingly say, "If you can't sing well, sing loud." The Lord delights in a believer making a joyful noise out of a love for Him. God is not so much concerned with your technical ability as He is with your heart attitude. Conversely, the Lord is not pleased with the person, who may sing beautifully, but sings without any heart commitment to Him.

We have begun to have occasional hymn sings and during those times I have asked Jane Page to give some basic instruction in singing. Come and participate in those events, especially if you don't think you sing very well. If you pay attention to some of those very basic principles and apply them, you will be amazed at the difference in your ability to sing. Let us together make the most of every opportunity to praise the Lord together in song for His glory and for our good, especially as we come before Him in corporate worship. 🎵

How We Got the Bible

by Bruce Brierly

This series on how we got the Bible came out of discussions I had with someone who took the position that the books of the Apocrypha were part of the canon. This is the teaching of the Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches. My argument was, since all are in agreement as to the 66 books of the Bible, and we all agree that God does not change and His Word is consistent with itself, then the teachings in the Apocrypha should be consistent with the teachings of the 66. Well, he countered that we can't agree on theology until we agree on the canon of Scripture. In other words, the church had the authority to determine the canon and the teachings of Scripture, not Scripture itself. That ended the discussions.

I have a fairly good understanding of Scripture. Having read most (but not all) of the Apocrypha once, I wanted to share my initial impressions. These are not the musings of a highly trained scholar, just some things that jumped off the pages at me.

Tobit: The thing that came to the forefront was what the angel Rafael said. This angel Rafael--who ministers in the presence of the Holy God, the God who cannot tolerate the slightest sin and demands pure holiness--this angel Rafael LIED about his identity for no apparent reason. An angel of the Lord lied! All he had to do was say, "I am Rafael, who stands in the presence of the Lord" and everyone would be mute!

A number of RC sources dismiss this, saying Rafael was hinting at who he was by saying he was Azariah, son of Hananiah. The name Azariah means "God has helped" and Hananiah means "God has shown mercy." That should have been enough for everyone to know he was an angel on a mission! But lots of people had names that meant something! Every excuse fails to explain how anyone could deduce from this that Rafael was an angel rather than yet another Hebrew whose name meant something.

1 & 2 Maccabees: In both, little was made of anyone receiving the position of High Priest from a Gentile king. There was a tone of disfavor, but given the fierce fighting in Maccabees for the purity of the temple I expected there to be more of a revolt about this. 2 Maccabees goes on for many chapters without much to be alarmed about until chapter 12, where they prayed for the dead, making "atonement for the dead, that they might be delivered from their sin" (2 Mac. 12:45). We know from pagan practice that people were being baptized for the dead even though they did not believe in the resurrection of the dead (1 Cor. 15:29). Nowhere in the 66 books do we see praying for the dead. This portion of 2 Maccabees is used to justify the concept of purgatory. Maccabees gives us a history of Israel and its practices, good and bad. There may be other passages in the Apocrypha used as justification for purgatory but I am only aware of this one passage.



Judith is a great story of Israel defeating its enemies through deception. The only problem is that at no point does this story coincide with the actual history of Israel. It's just fun, historical fiction.

Wisdom is a nice book, but you soon realize it is a regurgitation of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and some of the Psalms.

Baruch: I liked Baruch very much. I thought the last chapter, with the letter from Jeremiah to the captives in Babylon, contained tremendous satire about idolatry. There are a couple problems though. First, Baruch was not a prophet. Second, the book opens with Jerusalem and the temple being destroyed. They sent money to Jerusalem to buy burnt offerings, sin offerings, incense, and cereal offerings. But the temple was gone! Many had died of starvation, resorting to cannibalism, so there wasn't food to buy. There was no one and no temple in Jerusalem. The record does not match other Biblical accounts. In addition, the people seemed to have repented in Baruch, yet we see the exact opposite near the end of Jeremiah and in Ezekiel. Furthermore, "Baruch took the vessels of the house of the Lord, which had been carried away from the temple, to return them to the land of Judah--the silver vessels which Zedekiah the son of Josiah, king of Judah, had made." How did he do that? The King of Babylon had those under lock and key (Daniel 5:2). Lastly, how did Baruch get to Babylon? When Jerusalem was destroyed he and Jeremiah were led to Taphanes in Egypt (Jeremiah 43:5-7).

Baruch, then, has problems. Baruch ends with a letter from Jeremiah (at least some versions). This seems to give it credence, yet it contradicts Jeremiah in some of the places I just mentioned. If Baruch is correct, then the Book of Jeremiah is wrong. And if the Book of Jeremiah is wrong then Jeremiah's credentials as a prophet are false, the very credentials used in the argument that Baruch is canon. As great a read as the Book of Baruch is, why should I believe it when it is wrong about events, people, places, and calls the Book of Jeremiah into question?

I have not read all of the Apocrypha but the books that I have read cannot compare to the wisdom, truthfulness, and consistency of the Old Testament Books the entire church recognizes as part of the canon of Scripture.

Lord willing, next month we will talk about the New Testament canon.

Historic Missionaries You Should Know

martin (1959-2002) and gracia burnham

Martin & Gracia Burnham had been missionaries with New Tribes Missions for 17 years when their lives suddenly changed. While celebrating their wedding anniversary, they were kidnapped by a local militant group and held hostage for over a year. Sadly, Martin was killed during their rescue on June 7, 2002.

Gracia tells the gripping story of their captivity and spiritual growth in the book, *In the Presence of My Enemies*.

Gracia also authored *To Fly Again*, highlighting specific lessons God taught her husband and her while they were held captive. Her transparency as she shares lessons we all need to learn encourages the reader in contemplating a wide range of topics including revenge, worry, praise, joy, and impatience.

kindredgrace.com/missionary-heroes-stories

PERSECUTED

BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN Libya

Overview:

Libya has remained unstable and chaotic since the revolution and overthrow of its dictator in 2011. Three opposing governments vie for control, and the conflicts have severely damaged the country's infrastructure and made gospel work in the country extremely difficult. Many missionaries and indigenous believers have been killed in recent years, and gospel work in the country is ruthlessly opposed.

Major Religion:

97 percent of Libyans are Sunni Muslims. 2 percent are Christians.

Persecutor:

Extremist groups, including the Muslim Brotherhood and the self-proclaimed Islamic State (ISIS), operate throughout the country. Friends and family also severely persecute converts.

What It Means To Follow Christ In Libya

Life is difficult in Libya, and the difficulties are compounded for Christians and especially Christian converts from Islam. There are few believers in Libya, and it is extremely difficult for them to practice their faith openly. Christians are rejected by their Muslim families and friends. They are beaten, lose families and jobs, and are sometimes killed. It is unknown how many Christians are imprisoned in Libya.

Access To Bibles:

Access to Bibles is severely restricted; they are brought into the country with extreme difficulty and risk. Christians in Libya take great risks just to own a Bible, including digital formats used on smartphones and computers. Give Bibles



<https://www.persecution.com/globalprayerguide>

INTERN'S INSIGHTS

BY QUENTIN JOHNSTON

The "Already" and the "Not Yet"

I recently took a class at RTS (Reformed Theological Seminary) with Dr. Guy Prentiss Waters teaching "The Pauline Epistles." In this class, I heard this phrase, "the already and the not yet" more times than I could count. In my class reading requirement of Herman Ridderbos' *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*, I came across the words, "redemptive-historical" frequently. If I had a dollar for every time I saw the phrase, "redemptive-historical," let's just say I'd be rich!

"Redemptive-historical" is a phrase associated with what Biblical scholars call *historia salutis*—the history of salvation. The history of salvation refers to the grand sweep of God's story of redemption from Genesis to Revelation, from the Covenant of Redemption to the new heavens and the new earth—God's plan to redeem all creation. The "already and the not yet" denotes a particular era in redemptive-historical framework—the time between Jesus first and second coming.

Paul's ministry is essential to the study of this topic because he ministered to Gentile churches that struggled to understand how to live NOW in light of the coming age. Most of the controversies popping up in the Corinthian church were more than likely a result of an "over-realized" or better yet, a muddled view of eschatology (theology of the end times). For example, the Corinthians taught that there was no resurrection of the dead as Paul addresses in 1 Corinthians 15, because they likely saw that in a "Platonic" way, they were already "resurrected."

In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul powerfully rebukes this teaching and preaches the gospel and the hope we have in Christ from His first coming and His eventual second coming. "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ." (1 Cor. 15:22-23) Firstfruits is an agricultural term referring to a harvest.

When the firstfruits come, they guarantee the coming of rest of the harvest. Christ is the firstfruits of the dead! As He was raised to a spiritual body, so too, we will be raised to a spiritual body. The firstfruit is inextricably linked to the rest of the harvest. The rest of the harvest shares the same DNA as the firstfruits. In other words, Christ's resurrection is the first of two episodes of one event. Our resurrection (the harvest) is guaranteed because we are IN Christ.

Christ's resurrection marked the beginning of the end times. And now according to Scripture, believers are...

- already adopted in Christ (Romans 8:15), but not yet adopted (Romans 8:23);
- already redeemed in Christ (Ephesians 1:7), but not yet redeemed (Ephesians 4:30);
- already sanctified in Christ (1 Corinthians 1:2), but not yet sanctified (1 Thessalonians 5:23–24);
- already saved in Christ (Ephesians 2:8), but not yet saved (Romans 5:9);
- already raised with Christ (Ephesians 2:6), but not yet raised (1 Corinthians 15:52).

The tension of these truths is poignantly expressed in Paul's metaphor of the firstfruits. When a man proposes to a woman, he guarantees the eventual marriage with the sign of the ring. Although the couple is not yet married, they already live in a state of commitment. In a lot of ways, the Bride of Christ (that is, the Church) is in her "engaged" state. In a lot of ways, it is like the Church is already married to Christ, because we have been sealed by the guaranteeing power of the Holy Spirit—the same power that raised Jesus from the dead. But the marriage ceremony is still a little while off, and the full benefits of the marriage are yet to reach their consummation. For now, Paul exhorts, "to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ." (Titus 2:12-13)

Charlie Van Meter, What are the ten best books or authors you've ever read?



#5 The New International Greek Testament Commentary on the Book of Revelation

by G.K. Beale

The book of Revelation scares a lot of people; even John Calvin didn't write a commentary on Revelation. G.K., as he is known, is a Biblical scholar who currently is a professor at Reformed Theological Seminary in Dallas, Texas. He is an ordained minister in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, graduated from SMU, Dallas Theological Seminary, and holds a PhD from University of Cambridge.

For those of you who want to understand Revelation, this is the book. Dr. Beale explains how history unfolds, what all the symbols mean in context, what the future holds, what we can look forward to, and how Jesus is watching over His churches. For example, many people struggle with the 1,000 year reign in Revelation chapter 20, but Dr. Beale clearly shows how we are living in that reign even now. Learn about all the 'sevens,' 7 churches, 7 seals, 7 trumpets, 7 bowls, 7 angels, 7 cycles, and more. Who is the Beast of the Sea? the Beast of the Earth? the woman in chapter 12? Where is the church today?

This book can be read cover to cover or if you just want to check out certain symbols, events, or different subjects, you can go to specific chapters and read separately.

There are many other commentaries on Revelation such as William Hendrickson's "More Than Conquerors," Dennis Johnson's "The Triumph of the Lamb," Sam Storm's "Our God Reigns," and More, but Dr. Beale's is a cut above the rest. For your evening study, this book by G.K. will provide an expanding view of our omnipotent God. Enjoy.



Early Church FATHERS

Antiochene Fathers

These were connected in some way with the school of Antioch, which tended to use a more literal approach to the Scriptures.

IGNATIUS (69-110/5)

BISHOP OF ANTIOCH

Ignatius was a pupil of the apostle John, he became the bishop of Antioch in early second century and was executed in Rome in 110 or 115. The emperor Trajan, on a visit to Antioch, ordered Ignatius to be arrested. Trajan presided at the trial and ordered him to be thrown to the wild beasts at Rome. On his journey to Rome, he wrote a seven letters, including one to the Christians there begging them not to try and arrange his pardon, he longed for the honour for dying for his Lord. He urged unity in the Church, saying that there should be one bishop over each congregation to prevent splits and to correct beliefs. He condemned the Docetist ideas (Jesus being pure spirit being, only seeming to be a man). He put a high value on communion. He wrote seven works including The Glory of Martyrdom, Hatred of Heresies and The Authority of Clergy, giving us a valuable record of first century church life.

CHRYSTOSTOM (345-407)

BISHOP OF CONSTANTINOPLE

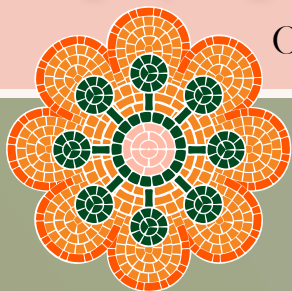
John Chrysostom was born in Antioch and brought up by his Christian mother. He was trained as a lawyer and in rhetoric in Antioch, but was baptised about 370 and became devoted to Christian asceticism. For ten years he left the city for a more rigorous monasticism in the mountains, which ruined his health. He returned to the city and became a great preacher in Antioch, emphasising the cross and ethics. He was known as 'The golden mouth' because of his brilliant expository preaching. He was made bishop of Constantinople in 398 and soon angered the emperor's wife by his attacks on sin and immorality in the church and her opulent living. In 404, he was deposed and exiled where he later died, after being briefly recalled to Constantinople. His theology was expressed primarily in his sermons, where he used a more literal and grammatical exegesis of the scriptures. Chrysostom was one of the great men of God within the official church. He bemoaned the failure of the power of God in his own and other preacher's lives, wanting a recovery of the miraculous.

www.julianspriggs.co.uk/Pages/ChurchFathers



Featured FACES

OF FAITH CHURCH



Lydia Hutchinson

How long have you been coming to Faith?

"A Long time!"

Where do you serve at church?

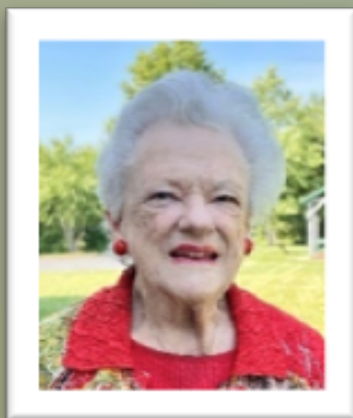
"The choir; participating in Meals to Members"

What work do you do?

"Breeding and showing Cairn Terriers"

Share an interesting fact about yourself.

"I am a judge at dog shows and have judged in over a dozen other countries, as well as numerous places in the U.S.A. I have been judging for 61 years."



Richard and Helen Boveroux

How long have you been coming to Faith?

Over 17 years

Where do you serve at church?

Anywhere we can such as the book table, VBS, and craft activities.

What work do you do?

Richard: I am a cyber professional working for the Department of the Navy at Strategic Systems Programs in the Washington Navy Yard. Helen: Retired from various aspects of the medical field.

Share an interesting fact about yourselves.

Richard: I met Helen thanks to God's intervention through my Aunt Betsy, who wasn't a believer and hadn't been living in the NJ area for over 25+ years. When I returned from RTS to NJ, I was looking for a PCA church, but couldn't find the one I was looking for on a map because the town wasn't listed on maps. After all, it was part of another larger town. My Aunt was visiting my mother, asked about my church search and when I told her I couldn't find Covenant Presbyterian in Short Hills, NJ, she piped right up and said she knew where that was and gave me excellent directions. Helen: She was baptized by immersion in a very cold lake 50 miles south of Lake Placid in the Adirondack Mountains in the month of May.

Collin & Megan Kenny Emilia "Emmy" Kenny

How long have you been coming to Faith?

Collin - 25 years (since I was 15, brought by the Nics). Megan - 17 years

Where do you serve at church?

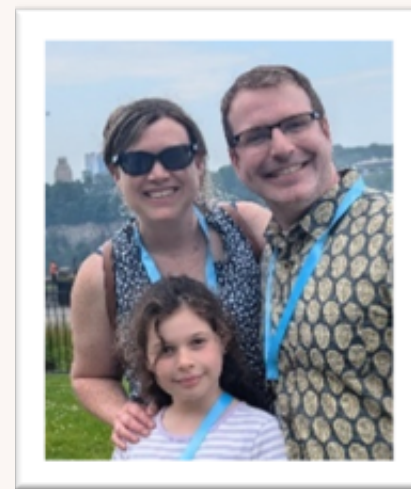
Collin - Music Ministry. Megan - Nursery and VBS

What work do you do?

Collin - Assistant Principal at Frederick Classical Charter School. Megan - 6th grade math teacher Windsor Knolls Middle School.

Tell us a little about your family!

We are a happy family of three. Emmy loves music and dancing. She is currently learning flute and clarinet, while dabbling in the other instruments around the house. She dances jazz, ballet, and tap. Megan is an avid reader and enjoys gardening. Finally, Collin is enamored by string instruments; if it has frets and strings, he may have it!





TRUNK TREAT





**"But if we walk in the light,
as he is in the light, we have
fellowship with one another,
and the blood of Jesus, his
Son, purifies us from all sin"**



PRAYER FOR US

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
There is a growing interest in Spiritual
things right now as our culture begins to
see the emptiness in its self focus. Move
mightily across our nation to reap a
bountiful harvest of souls, a harvest that
will impact our way of life, our politics, our
pop culture, our national conversation.

And while we watch Your glory expand in
the hearts and minds of our countrymen, I
pray You would equip us to be ready for
the numbers who will step eagerly into
our sanctuary here at Faith Church.
Create an energetic revival in our own
souls by stirring up the passion of Your
amazing grace and unquenchable love.
Let us see it afresh and come to You,
longing for more, as the deer pants for
water. And let us be ready, with ideas
primed and set, to disciple this new
generation with the same patience and
faithfulness we have received from You.

May Your Kingdom Come in all its glory, Lord Jesus, kicking back the darkness
from its hijacked places, and establishing peace where there was none before;
and may we be standing keenly at the ready to welcome Your people in and to
really love them and to train them well.
Amen.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY November

- 4 Isaac Nyarko
- 13 Monica Paire
- 14 Gwen Grant
- 18 Tyler Veldhuizen
- 19 Terri Brierly
- 19 Kim Cramer
- 19 Dave Johnston
- 21 Dave Klecan
- 22 Grace Rochford
- 24 Stephanie Essimengana
- 27 Rich Rochford
- 30 Bert Hauver



WEEKLY

Sundays:

- 9:15am Sunday School
- 10:15am Fellowship
- 10:45am Worship
- 5:00pm Youth Group
- 5:30pm Evening Worship / Meal
(1st Sundays only)

Mondays:

- 7:00pm Choir Rehearsal

Every Other Tuesday: (11th, 25th)

- 12:00pm Men's Bible Study

Wednesdays:

- 12:00pm Men's Lunch Bunch
- 7:00pm Prayer meeting

Thursdays:

- 7:00pm ESL Ministry

Fridays:

- 10:30am Fiber Fellowship

Saturdays:

- 10:30am Downtown
Christian
Fellowship

MONTHLY

Third Saturdays, (15th)

- 8:30am Men's Breakfast
- 8:45am Women's Bible Study **

Third Sundays, (16th)

- 12:00pm Fellowship Meal

"Happy Thanksgiving"



Faith Church

Sunday School for All Ages 9:15am
Worship Service 10:45am
Evening Worship, 1st Sundays 5pm

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