

CAPTIVE THOUGHTS

SOVEREIGN GRACE PCA QUARTERLY

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CAPTIVE THOUGHTS

EDITOR'S NOTE

Now Herod was angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon, and they came to him with one accord, and having persuaded Blastus, the king's chamberlain they asked for peace, because their country depended on the king's country for food. On an appointed day Herod put on his royal robes, took his seat upon the throne, and delivered an oration to them. And the people were shouting, "The voice of a god, and not of a man!" Immediately an angel of the Lord struck him down, because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and breathed his last.

But the word of God increased and multiplied.

Acts 12:20-24

As you can see, our newly-formatted church newsletter has morphed into church magazine! This is what happens when you call an assistant pastor like Rob Dykes, a man with a prior life as a graphic designer. We're so thankful for our brother's gifts and his eagerness to share them.

Our desire in upgrading this communication is first and foremost to make it more used by our members. But secondarily, we also want this to be the kind of material you would be glad to share with a neighbor, a family member, or anyone else. Our goal is not to be a little more culturally "hip," but it is to reach out to our society in a voice and a format that is familiar and interesting to them. In addition to this printed version, we also will be making a digital version available on our website.

Our new name for our quarterly magazine will be **Captive Thoughts**, from 2 Corinthians 10:5: *"We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ."*

And that leads me to my final point. Our ultimate purpose in this publication is quite subversive – subversive of the dark and oppressive powers of this present evil age. When Herod, the great persecutor of the early church, embraced the adulation of himself as a god, the Lord struck him dead and he was eaten by worms. At the same time, through the ministry of the apostles, "the word of God increased and multiplied."

We wish to take every thought captive to Jesus Christ. We want to see the centers of idolatry in our culture replaced by the multiplied Word of God. Please pray to this end, and accept your own role in that holy multiplication process. Please share this new magazine with others!

Dean Turbeville, Pastor in Residence

CONTENTS

- 2 **Reformed Worship**
- 4 **New Website**
- 6 **Tell Me About Jesus**
- 8 **Psalm 2**
- 10 **Hope Amidst Heartbreak**
- 13 **Contend For The Faith**
- 14 **Featured Books**
- 15 **WIC Update**
- 16 **Missions Update**
- 18 **Meet a Member - The Jocks**
- 20 **Meet a Member - The Browns**

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ABOUT SOVEREIGN GRACE PCA

Sovereign Grace is a growing community in Charlotte which has been transformed by the Gospel of Jesus Christ and wants to know, worship and live for God. We invite you to join us on Sundays to hear God's Word preached, to sing, pray, and fellowship together. Sunday Schools begin at 9:45am and serve all ages. Morning Worship begins at 10:55am and Evening Worship begins at 6pm.

Join us on Wednesdays at 6:30pm for Bible study and prayer. Beforehand we have a church meal prepared by members at 5:45pm. For more information visit sovereigngrace.org

RECENT EVENTS

It seems like there is always something going on at Sovereign Grace. Since our previous *Sovereign Grace Quarterly*, WIC held their **Fall Frolic**, five deacons and two pastors were installed, and we embraced eleven new members.

A group of men participated in our semi-annual **Men's Golf and BBQ** outing in October, and another group also attended the **Men's Retreat** in Asheville where Rev. Sean McCann taught from Exodus 15-17. Below is pictured the men who attended (minus the four pastors).



October's **Fall Festival** saw a large group of members and neighbors enjoy a bouncy castle, games, petting zoo, pig pickin' and, of course, fellowship together as a family.

Our first **Scottish Ceilidh** was attended by 130 of the congregation in November. After eating Scottish food, we enjoyed an evening of lively

activity including Scottish music, poetry, song, and, of course, highland dancing (pictured)!



No Scottish Ceilidh would be complete without some Highland Games, and ours included 'haggis' throwing, caber tossing and tug of war.



Another highlight from the life of Sovereign Grace this last quarter is our seven-week **Life Explored Class**. Around half a dozen people have gathered on Thursdays to consider life and the foundations of the Christian Faith. We hope this class will be repeated in 2018.

UPCOMING EVENTS

December promises a **Church Greening** (2nd), **Advent Breakfast** (3rd), **Music Program** (3rd), **All Church Christmas Gathering** (10th), **Youth Christmas Party** (16th), and **Young Adult Christmas Party** (16th). For more information email danielle.belcher@sovereigngrace.org



REFORMED WORSHIP



Dr. William Barcley

One of my favorite parts of the Christmas season is singing the great Christmas hymns in our hymnal which combine biblically and theologically rich truths with beautiful, fitting music, many written by some of the greatest hymn writers and set to the music of some of the greatest composers in history. It is hard to beat Isaac Watts' "Joy to the World," which includes the marvelous line "he comes to make his blessings flow far as the curse is found" set to the uplifting music of George Frederick Handel. There is the great Charles Wesley hymn, "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" set to music by Felix Mendelssohn. My favorites also include the 5th Century hymn "Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence," which includes music arranged by the 20th Century composer Ralph Vaughn Williams. All of the Christmas hymns include both simple statements of worship and adoration, as well as profound theological truth (such as "God of God, Light of Light, Io, he abhors not the virgin's womb, Very God begotten not created"). These hymns represent the perfect biblical balance in worship by being both joyful and awe-filled. Most Christian churches will sing these hymns this Christmas season. There would be a revolt in the churches if they did not.

But sadly, after Christmas, most evangelical churches will turn away from rich, beautiful, historic hymnody and return to a steady diet of worship songs that lack the beauty and depth of the hymns they love so much at Christmas time.

This article will be the first in a series of articles on worship, discussing why we do what we do in worship and also explaining why we have not followed the modern trends in worship that have taken over evangelical—and even many Reformed—churches today.

Since we have recently celebrated the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation, let me begin by discussing the Reformation and worship. Often when we think about the Reformation, we think rightly of the rediscovery of the gospel, of the 5 "Solas" (Scripture alone, grace alone, faith alone, Christ alone, to the glory of God alone), and of the glorious biblical truth that we are justified by faith, not our own works. But Christians are often ignorant of the fact that the Reformation of *Worship* was just as important to the Protestant Reformation as *Theology*. In fact, the two (theology and worship) went hand in hand.

The great Reformer John Calvin, in his work *On the Necessity of Reforming the Church*, listed the two elements of the faith which make up "the whole substance of Christianity." These are: "a knowledge first, of the right way to worship God; and secondly of the source from which salvation is to be sought." Notice the order—worship is first and primary in reforming the church. Dr. Robert Godfrey, president of Westminster Theological Seminary in California, has commented, "Remarkably Calvin put worship ahead of salvation in his list of

the two most important elements of biblical Christianity." Actually there is a very good reason for this—namely, God is primary, not human beings. And we exist, as our catechism states, to glorify God and to enjoy him forever. If we exist to glorify and worship God, it is not only important THAT we worship, but just as important is HOW we worship him. The first two of the Ten Commandments teach us this. God is the object of our worship, and he alone dictates how we are to worship him.

The reformation of worship, however, is tied to the reformation of the theology of the church. For instance, "Scripture alone" has implications for worship—we worship only as Scripture dictates, not according to human innovations. "Faith alone" led to the primacy of the Word in worship—large portions read, expository preaching through books of the Bible, Scripture sung (recovery of Psalm singing, as well as other biblical hymns), etc. Why? Because "faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." "Grace alone" led to what Hughes Old calls "a full diet of praying" in worship. If we are dependent on God's grace, then we must be a people of prayer.

It is also vital to understand that the Reformers were not—and did not see themselves as—innovators in worship. In fact, the Reformers recovered the worship of the early church in its elements and in its simplicity. In this sense, the Reformers not only strove to be biblical in their worship, they also sought "catholicity" in worship (small "c"). They wanted to unify the church—both vertically and horizontally. In other words, they desired to be united with the historic church, and saw that as vital for the modern church being united across national and ethnic divisions.

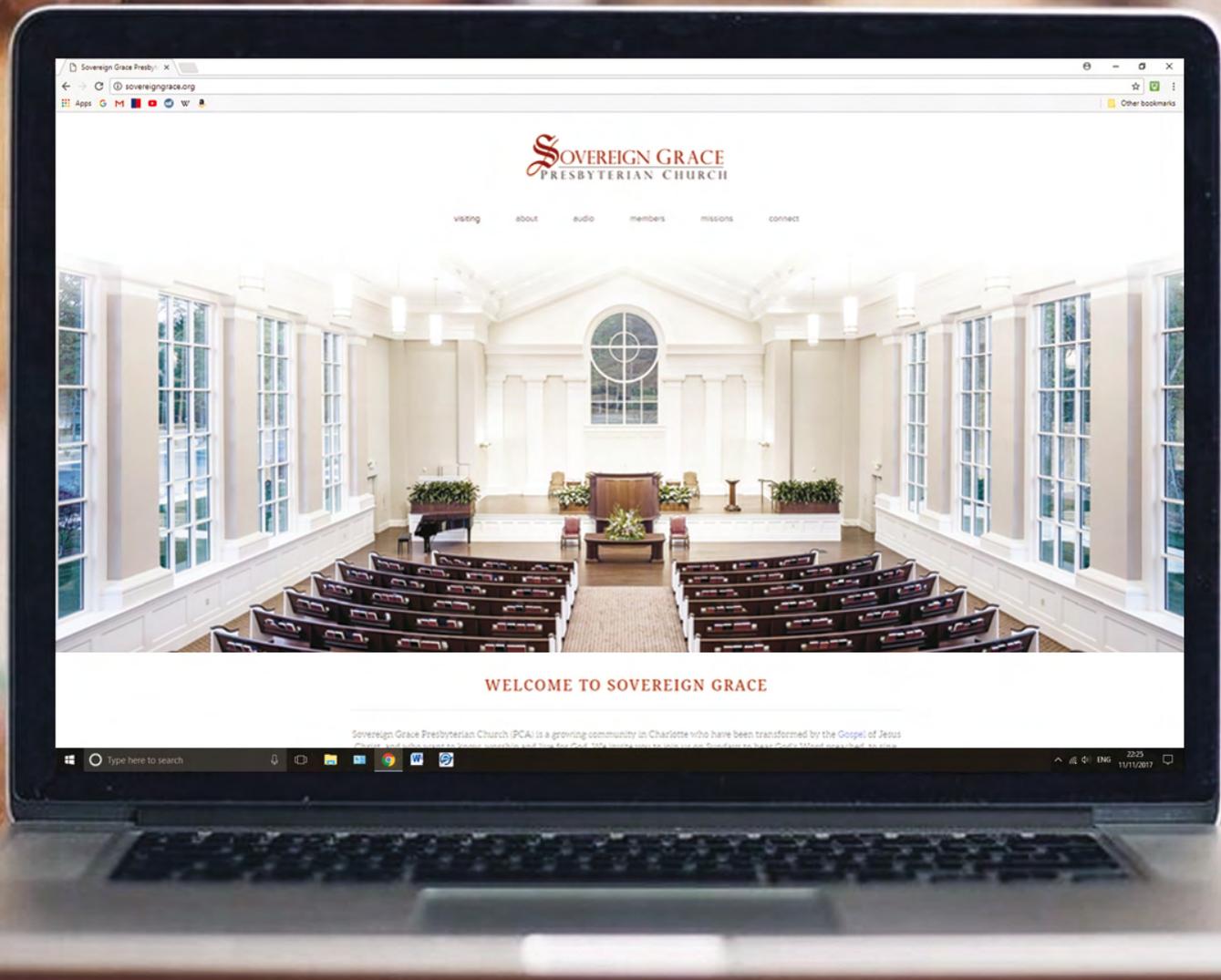
This is an important strength of what we call "historic Reformed worship" and one of the great weaknesses of so-called "contemporary worship." The latter, with its market-driven approach that attempts to appeal to a particular "consumer", actually ends up dividing and fragmenting the church. "Church growth" specialists tell us their method "works"—but at what cost?

Let's return to the theme of the church's music, focusing on our Trinity Hymnal. Earlier I referred to the richness of the Christmas hymns. But there is also a catholicity in them as well. In our Christmas hymns alone, we have hymns that date from the 4th and 5th centuries, from medieval times, and from the Reformation period and beyond, including several from the 20th century. In terms of national, cultural and ethnic backgrounds, our

Christmas hymns include Latin hymns, English, French, German and Polish carols, as well as an African American spiritual. If we broaden out to the hymnal as a whole we see an even greater diversity. Lyrics and tunes go back to the second century and extend through the 20th, and include contributions from Africa, Asia, Europe, and a variety of North American folk cultures. Countries represented include Finland, Greece, Poland, Russia, Syria, Egypt, England, Ireland and Wales. Of course, there are also many Jewish tunes in our hymnal, and if you include the Psalms that we sing (both in the hymnal and our Psalter), that means that a large portion of what we sing is from a little country in the Middle East called Israel.

This rich, diverse, expansive treasury of hymns best promotes the catholicity of the church. The church's "sacred music tradition" (as T. David Gordon calls it) is everybody's music because it is no single group's music. As Dr. Gordon said, the recent generations of Christians are the first to demand its own music in worship. He points out that his parents (like mine) grew up in the big band era. But they did not demand big band style music in church. It's also important to recognize that form and content go hand in hand. "Form" (i.e., musical style) is not neutral. A "pop" musical style, by virtue of its ubiquity (i.e., it's played everywhere) cannot carry weighty theological content. Inevitably the depth of the content is diminished. But more on this in upcoming articles.

The great hymns in our hymnal have stood the test of time. This is not to say that we should not sing new hymns. We do and will continue to sing carefully chosen newer hymns. But the cream always rises to the top. Some hymns currently in the Trinity Hymnal will not be included in future editions (and I'm thankful for that!). Some of the new hymns that we sing may or may not stand the test of time. Many of the Gaither hymns, for instance, that were popular in the 70's are non-existent in the church today. Hymnals are organic. They are constantly being revised. The strength of this is that good hymnals preserve the best from all of Christ's church throughout all generations. And this gives the church a catholicity and a unity that the contemporary worship movement cannot attain. The apostle Paul writes, "In Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female," to which theologian David Wells adds, "should we not also say that because we are all one in Jesus Christ, there is neither Builder nor Boomer, neither Xer nor child of the Millennium, city dweller or suburbanite, Westerner or Third Worlder?" That's our approach to worship, and we're sticking to it.



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sovereigngrace.org

SOVEREIGN GRACE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



TELL ME ABOUT JESUS



Rev. Dean Turbeville

My paternal Grandmother “prayed me into the Kingdom,” and probably into ministry too. I believe it, and no one can tell me otherwise! A devout Nazarene (and never seemingly bothered by the contradictions in some aspects of formal Nazarene theology and the scriptures she loved and taught children in Sunday School for decades), she prayed for me every day of my life. She prayed because she knew that only God can open the heart (Acts 16:14). That’s not an overstatement, by the way, about her praying for me daily. I believe she prayed for me every morning until her mind was clouded near the end of her life.

Doris Turbeville was not the only such influence in my childhood. Family friends gave me a big, hard-bound children’s book when I was just a two years old. Its title was *Tell Me About Jesus*. I have that book to this day, ragged and worn and marked up from years of children’s play and make-believe. There is a two-page spread of an illustration that I can still picture: florid angels thronging purple and gold night skies, and underneath them, humble shepherds and their sheep. It was a source of wonder to me as I grew up.

In Christian families who still celebrate the Christmas season (not all do, due to scruples about holidays, materialism, etc.), there is often a strong connection between family

and faith. Gift-giving often accompanies those family reunions, as does the enjoyment of food and drink. There is no reason, I believe, that these things should not be enjoyed, if not taken to excess. Paul wrote, *For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude; for it is sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer.* (1 Timothy 4:4-5)

The way the traditional Christmas season is “sanctified” for me is that it centers not in the previously mentioned gifts and family time, but in the Gift himself, the “Word of God made flesh,” Jesus, son of Mary. It is sanctified by being centered in study, reflection, and worship of Him. It is also centered in loving service to others.

During the weeks of Advent, I have customarily visited with church members in nursing homes, or who are shut-in, etc. If those elements are not there, my whole experience of the holiday is different. In those years when it has not been centered in those things, the associated seasonal gifts are hollow and unsatisfying. For Jesus Christ is not just the “reason for the season,” he is the beating heart of the celebration, its living *nerve*. As born-again believers, we cannot help but glory in the advent of God himself into our otherwise doomed world.

And so, I ask of Christmas only one essential thing: *tell me about Jesus*. For I have not outgrown the need to be enthralled with wonder at the condescension of God in Christ. I still need to have the eyes of my mind and heart widened by an angelic host appearing in the clear night sky to the lowest rung of Judean peasantry: shepherds guarding their flocks by night. I still need to feel the flames of praise in my heart when I sing with the saints, *“Glory to the new-born King!”*

“I ask of Christmas only one essential thing: tell me about Jesus”

But there is more than the promotion of personal piety at the heart of Christmas. My sister Jenni sent me an article today from the Gospel Coalition website by the writer Trevin Wax. It is entitled *“The Revolutionary Traditionalist”*. It includes this paragraph: *“The revolutionary traditionalist says no both to reinventing the tradition and also to turning into a museum relic. We are too deeply committed to the tradition to move its foundations or to simply leave it alone. We devote attention to its health and future. On the one hand, we object to actions or beliefs that compromise the foundations of the tradition. On the other hand, we find new ways to build upon and express the beauty of the inheritance.”*

Do you and I understand how revolutionary it is to believe in this ancient (but biblical!) tradition that God has unalterably intruded into the history of the world? Are *you* a revolutionary traditionalist? Do you comprehend the renewal of all things in the coming of Christ?

The true meaning of Christmas is found in that “ancient newness” that once came not only into the world, and not only into Mary and Joseph’s young lives, but into *our* own lives. Christ was born so that we would be born again. The promise that he will “make all things new” begins with him making *me* and *you* new. We must be born anew to enter the Kingdom of God.

But the promise expands outward from us (the church) to the whole world. God, in Christ, *is* making all things new. Whatever your views of the timeline and precise sequence of end-times events, if you are a Christian, you believe in the coming of a “new heavens and a new earth.”

And let’s be honest: that is a lot to believe; indeed, a lot for which to even *hope*. So it must be asked: is the Christian faith ultimately a naïve hope for a healed and refurbished world we shall never actually see? Is our faith in a new heavens and a new earth a pipe dream?

It seems that way at times, doesn’t it? From the petty rudeness of our fellow citizens in Charlotte traffic, to the reckless insults traded by world leaders in possession of nuclear weapons; from the sex traffickers and pornographers who thrive in an internet-driven world, to the men who abuse their power over women from Hollywood to our hometowns; from Islam’s oppression of millions to the secular West’s dehumanizing materialism and soul-diminishing individualism, in so many ways it seems that sin and wickedness are stronger today than ever before. And against that devilish juggernaut, we in Christ’s church are armed with --- what? --- our Bibles and our Sabbaths. Let that sink in.

How are we to believe in the full revolutionary implications of Christmas?

Certainly, when it comes to believing in God’s will and capacity to unite heaven and earth, it helps to be new creatures ourselves. If we are really to believe in the “regeneration to come” (Matthew 19:28) as our Lord Jesus called it, then we had better be regenerate ourselves! We are the first-fruits, after all! *Tell me about Jesus*.

And if we *are* believers who are in union with Jesus Christ in heaven by the Holy Spirit, then we will trust in his Word in scripture. And that Word tells us that God’s investment in the redemption of the world is absolute and unbreakable, and that, at the appointed time, all creation will be set free from its bondage to decay (Romans 8:21). In that Word, we see the seriousness of God’s purpose in the sending of his only-begotten Son. In fact, one of the most helpful ways to hold onto a confidence in the fullness of future redemption is to remember just what God has already given in Christ. (Yet again, we must say, *“Teach me about Jesus!”*) So, here is the way the Holy Spirit himself reasons: *“He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?”*

If you are struggling with mid-winter, post-modern gloom, and you want to be renewed by the revolutionary reality of Christmas, ask of it one thing: *Tell me about Jesus!*



Psalm 2

*Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain?
The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers
take counsel together, against the LORD and against his
Anointed, saying, "Let us burst their bonds apart and cast
away their cords from us."*

*He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in
derision. Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify
them in his fury, saying, "As for me, I have set my King on
Zion, my holy hill." I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to
me, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you. Ask of me,
and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of
the earth your possession. You shall break them with a rod
of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."*

*Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the
earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.
Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way,
for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take
refuge in him.*



HOPE AMIDST HEARTBREAK



Rev. Rob Dykes

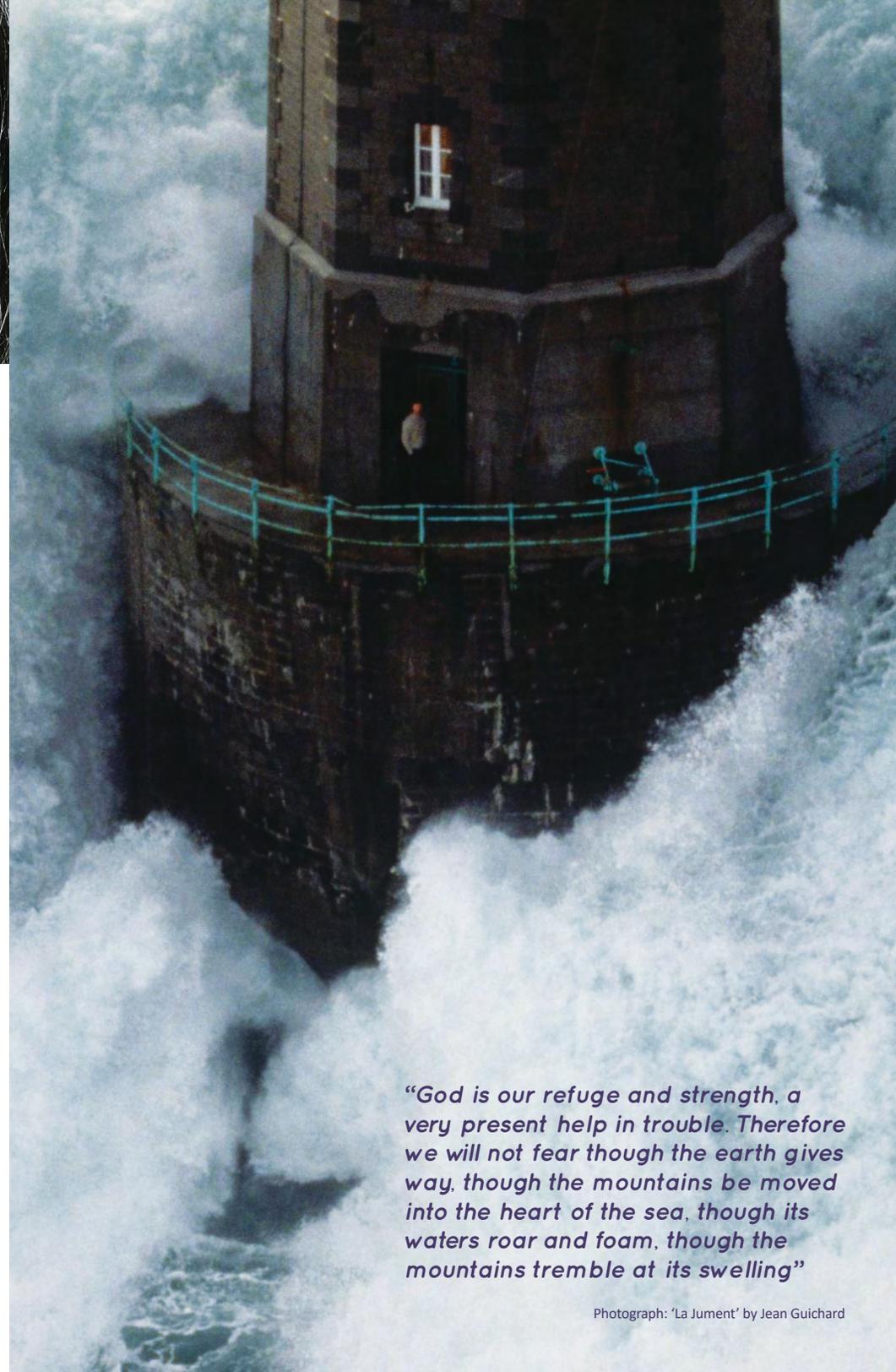
Job, probably a contemporary of Abraham, was 'blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil' (1:1). He was a wealthy and respected man, probably in a position of great authority.

Nevertheless, Job, one moment basking on the beach, suddenly was pounded with relentless waves of sorrow! Before he could catch his breath from the last wave, another suffocating swell crashed upon his head. Job all but drowned. He lost seven sons and three daughters! I cannot begin to imagine the unspeakable grief of losing one child, let alone ten. Just for good measure, Job also lost most of his wealth, and his health. He went from the heights of the earth to the deepest depths of incomprehensible woe. The book of Job is short, but no doubt Job could have written tomes on each of his lost sons and daughters. He could have recounted a thousand happy memories of lazy summer days with his children. He could have written volumes reflecting on his mourning and the untold tears that flooded from his eyes. He could have elaborated on the downfall of his health or material loss too. But he didn't.

The book of Job was crafted the way it was to give us other insights. Consider just two. First, God's will is not always for us to be wealthy, healthy and happy. The prosperity gospel is utterly unfounded! Sometimes God's people are poor,

unhealthy, and shed many tears. Sometimes God's will for us is heartbreak and pain. Yes The Lord gives, but sometimes He takes away. Indeed, 'oft' times He weaveth sorrow'. Rutherford asserted, 'Ye will not get leave to steal quietly to heaven, in Christ's company, without a conflict and a cross'.

Second, we learn we cannot always understand God's will. Sometimes God's providences are a foreign language. Sometimes we 'forget *He* sees the upper and [we] the underside' of His weaving of our lives. Job's cheeky 'friends' presumed to be the bee's knees at interpreting God's will. How foolish! God is transcendent. 'As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts'. We must remember that God is orchestrating 100,000 things in our lives and we are aware of, at best, a handful of them. 'There are windings and to's and fro's in His ways, which blind bodies like us cannot see', said Rutherford. We should not presume to know what God is doing, and we ought not to feel entitled to an explanation. In short, we should not 'contend with the Almighty' (40:2). Job learned this in chapter 38 onwards. God doesn't answer Job's questions, He doesn't yield to Job's demands, and He gives no explanation for dark providences. He simply reminds Job that He is God – most wise, eternal, infinite, omnipotent, fearful, creator God, and



"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling"

Photograph: 'La Jument' by Jean Guichard

that Job isn't. An accepting, indeed humbled Job, is left standing with hand on mouth.

But for all his questions and concerns, Job said something startlingly profound. Something magnificent. He said this: 'Though He slay me, I will hope in Him' (13:15).

"Though He slay me, I will hope in Him"

How astonishing! Mrs. Job said 'Curse God and die'. But Job said, 'Though He slay me, I will hope in Him'. We could understand if he said 'Though people slay me, I will hope in Him'. But no, Job said 'Though He slay me'. Though thunder and lightning from the hand of God crash down upon my feeble frame, I will hope in Him! Though my soul be crushed under the trampling of His foot, I will hope in Him! Though the one to whom I've poured out my heart, the one in whom I've sought comfort like a grazed-knee toddler in his mother's arms, the one in whom I've sought protection, the one who knows my deepest wounds, the one who sees my every tear, the one who discerns my darkest hour when it's hard to go on, the one who comprehends my every agony, the one to whom I reach with a helpless beggar hand, the one who is my closest friend - seemingly my *only* friend . . . though He slay me, I will hope in Him. He may do His worst, but my hope will not be moved. Remarkable!

Unlike the Scots, it seems that Americans could be accused of being fair-weather golfers. A fiendish crime! When the dark clouds and rain approach, the manicured golf courses lay vacant. Regardless of what side of the Atlantic we live, doubtless we all know Christians like that - fair-weather Christians. Those who trust God only in the sunshine. 'When my prayers are answered, when God smiles upon my circumstances, when things go well, when I'm blessed, I will hope in Him'. And perhaps, to differing degrees, we are all guilty of the same. But that ought not to be. 'We must be well pleased with God as a friend', says Matthew Henry, 'even when He seems to come forth against us as an enemy'. He continues, 'We must rejoice in God when we have nothing else to rejoice in, and cleave to Him, yea, though we cannot for the present find comfort in Him'.

Paul said 'We know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who

are called according to His purpose' (Romans 8:28). (Incidentally, all things work together for good not because we love Him, but because we are called according to His purpose). God *always* has His people's good in the forefront of His mind. He *always* cares! His everlasting arms are *always* underneath! He catches our *every* tear in His bottle! He *never* leaves us nor forsakes us! But in those times when it seems otherwise - in the mourning of loved ones, in the hospital bed, when family members stray, when the economy nips, when disappointments overtake, when loneliness encroaches, or when the bombs of this godless present evil age explode all around us - whatever it may be, we must hope in Him. In the macro and in the micro, we must 'rejoice in God when we have nothing else to rejoice in'.

"We must rejoice in God when we have nothing else to rejoice in"

When our lives hit bottom we can cry out with the writer of Psalm 46, *God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling.*

How do we know we can hope in Him? Well, because although God hasn't actually slain you, there is one He did slay. The beautiful Lamb of God was slain on the cross. Our Lord and King, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, was led like a lamb to the slaughter. And there, in the darkness of Calvary, He was slain by the stroke of justice. The one who perfectly hoped in God, who entrusted Himself wholeheartedly to the care of God even in the darkness of God-forsakenness, was slain. But on the third day victoriously He arose! So that we, like Job, can say 'I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last He will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. My heart faints within me!' (19:25-27). The atoning death and victorious resurrection, the ascension, session, and intercession of The Lord Jesus Christ, mean that you can hope in God. If you trust in Christ, if you are *in* Christ, you may hope in God, both now and forevermore.



CONTEND FOR THE FAITH



Kathryn Bowser

Over the past several months we have been spending time looking back to the time of the Reformation 500 years ago. As we look back, I want to focus in on one thing that was of high concern to the Reformers. They were clearly concerned with returning to the firm foundation of the Word alone, but they were also concerned with passing the system of doctrine and beliefs on to the next generation. They understood that they were "to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). They affirmed that there was one true faith which has been passed down through the ages, and they also believed that it was the calling of each generation to pass down to the next. One key way they did this was through the use of catechisms. It was common practice to use catechisms in training children and new converts to the Faith. Just how common and important this was can be seen in how many catechisms were developed during the Reformation and in the century following. John Calvin's, in particular, was intended to be used for children.

Yet the Reformers themselves were following the pattern given in Scripture. In Deut. 6:6-7, Moses says to the people of Israel, "And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by

the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise." We are to be diligent in passing the truths of the Word on to the next generation.

Following in that same biblical and reformed tradition, we at Sovereign Grace have a Catechism Class for elementary school children on Wednesday nights during our weekly Prayer Meeting. This is where we continue to lay the foundation of what it is we believe as Christians. We live in a time that is even more opposed to Christians and Christian faith than it was just 10-15 years ago. Many, if not all, of our covenant children will face greater hostility for their faith from the culture than we did. It is important that we lay a solid foundation for them and teach them well, that they also may, "contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints." As we have looked back in recent

"Let us also be attentive to how we pass the faith on to the next generation"

months to God's faithfulness to his Church, let us also be attentive to how we pass the faith on to the next generation, praying always that God would continue to build his church through our covenant children.

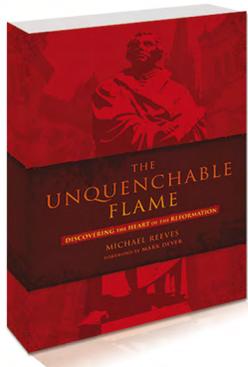


FEATURED BOOKS



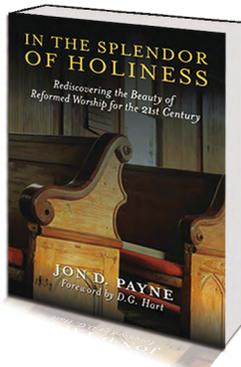
Dr. William Barclay

The Unquenchable Flame Discovering the Heart of the Reformation



Michael Reeves has become one of my favorite authors. His book *Delighting in the Trinity* is outstanding. But in this year of celebrating the 500th Anniversary of the Protestant Reformation, I strongly encourage you to read this short, readable, enjoyable study of the Reformation and its main characters. Not only does Reeves present a lively--and sometimes entertaining--history of the Reformation. He also shows its relevance for the church today. Also recommended, Stephen Nichols, *The Reformation: How a Monk and a Mallet Changed the World*

In the Splendor of Holiness Rediscovering the Beauty of Reformed Worship for the 21st Century



Jon Payne is Senior Minister of Christ Church Presbyterian, Charleston, SC. I just read this book for the first time this Fall and loved it. In fact, we are now giving this short (115 page) book to all of our new members. It succinctly sums up what Reformed worship looks like and why those of us who are committed to Historic Reformed Worship do what we do. It contains some helpful critique of the innovations that have taken over many evangelical churches today. But it mainly focuses on biblical worship and briefly describes each of its elements. A wonderful read, written by an articulate, faithful PCA pastor.



WIC UPDATE



Laura Cooper

Women's Ministry has been exciting of late! Our Sovereign Grace family has enjoyed one festivity after another, and many kind women have joined in joyful service to help make our fellowship rich. We have held a send-off for the Diebolds, a congratulatory reception for our wonderful Dykes family, and a 10-year anniversary thank-you for our beloved Barcleys. We've helped host baby showers and a Fall Frolic, and even lent a hand with a Fall Festival and Scottish Ceilidh. Add three active Bible Studies and other ministries--and it is clear that our loving God has moved His daughters to step up and serve. Praise Him! It has been a blessing to witness willing hearts graciously loving God's saints. Thank you to those God has moved to serve!

While enjoying tradition, we have been adding new things. To our ministry to new mothers, we have added a gift - a devotional book, "Praying the Bible for Your Kids." We hope the daily material will encourage each mother and also strengthen our growing community of young mothers by reading along together. We are so grateful for our covenant children and WIC hopes to better support mothers through the sometimes lonely and difficult seasons of motherhood. Any ideas are appreciated!

Also new is our Poinsettia Ministry - a special way to honor or remember loved ones by

placing a poinsettia in the sanctuary. Order forms are in the Great Hall, plants are \$10 and available to take home after the Christmas Eve service.

WIC has also tried to better connect members using Sign-Up Genius. This functionality lets everyone view upcoming events and rsvp or contribute and should help us all stay more informed of church activities.

While we are so pleased with all God has done, we have a strong calling for more. We especially want to add a mentoring ministry that would bring together members who desire to be mentored with those that would mentor. What a need we have-- so what an opportunity we have! Please join us in forming this ministry of love in our church! We have some plans and are asking God to make hearts willing to take part. Please contact anyone on WIC with questions or ideas.

So, Women's Ministry is exciting because we have a marvelous and caring God at work in His people. What an honor and joy to serve Him! We praise Him for who He is, what He has done and for what He will do in our midst. He is faithful. As we pray He moves more women to join in service, would it be you He is moving? We would welcome your help in any way.



MISSIONS UPDATE



Vanessa King

Whether you go on one of our week-long mission trips over the summer, or focus on our local ministries here in Charlotte, Sovereign Grace has a smattering of opportunities for you to help serve and share the Gospel. You can get involved and share your gifts with the various local ministries that Sovereign Grace supports.

HOPE CANCER MINISTRIES

Hope Cancer Ministries 'connects community and churches to newly diagnosed families through believers who serve, minister to, witness and share the love of Christ'. You can volunteer with Hope Cancer by being a one-on-one partner with a cancer patient, caregiver or someone grieving a loss. You can also be an encouraging phone buddy, grocery deliverer, cook, or a writer of cards of encouragement. For more information visit hopecancer.org/volunteer

BROOKSTONE SCHOOL

Sovereign Grace has many congregants that are involved with Brookstone schools. Brookstone is a non-profit, Christ-centered school that provides urban, low-income children with quality education and moral teaching. You can volunteer at Brookstone School by being a lunch buddy or classroom helper. For more information visit brookstoneschools.org/volunteering

PREGNANCY RESOURCE CENTER

The Pregnancy Resource Center is a ministry that seeks to 'engage the Church to end abortion within our city'. You can volunteer with the PRC by being a receptionist, devotions leader, class assistant, event assistant, prayer team, data entry assistant, office assistant, and many other ways. For more information visit friendsofprc.org/volunteer

CHARLOTTE RESCUE MISSION

Charlotte Rescue Mission is a ministry that 'is transforming lives in the name of Christ by serving people struggling with addiction, poverty, or hopelessness, with the goal of returning them to society as self-sufficient citizens.' You can volunteer by visiting charlotterescuemission.org

METANOIA

This is a new ministry (to Sovereign Grace) that our own Sally Huhn has spearheaded. Metanoia is a ministry that enables churches to minister to prisoners. Volunteers provide encouragement and grade prisoners' Bible Study correspondence courses. For more information or to get involved visit pcamna.org/metanoia-ministries/getinvolved or contact Sally Huhn.

UPDATE FROM THE WESTS

One Sunday morning the mission committee chairman half-jokingly asked us if we spoke Czech. This conversation led to a commitment from us to go to Prague on a short-term mission trip. Prague proved to be a visionary trip. We learned much about the culture and the darkness of atheism that grips the Czech Republic.



During our time there, we were asked to come to Prague to be part of a new church plant. After much prayer and talking with our pastors, we began the process with Serge, the mission organization the assisted the team from Uptown PCA to establish Faith Community in Prague. We completed assessment and orientation in December 2016 and then began raising support.

Presently, we have raised half of our support. As soon as we reach 100%, we will be leaving for Prague where we will develop a children's ministry, work in human trafficking, engage in evangelism and discipleship, and wear whatever hats necessary to do the work of the ministry. Thank you for your prayers on our behalf.

PRAY FOR OUR MISSIONARIES

MEMBERS

- 🇺🇸 Nate & Naomi Bower (OH)
- 🇫🇷 Chris & Donnette Brock
- 🇺🇸 Jonathan & Erica Hood (NY)
- 🇳🇬 Josh & Sarah Kitchen
- 🇺🇸 Will & Judi Traub
- 🇺🇸 Brian & Nancy West

CHURCH PLANTERS

- 🇺🇸 Sebastian & Isabel Heck
- 🇺🇸 Jake & Melissa Hunt
- 🇬🇧 Bill & Pam Schweitzer
- 🇺🇸 Frank & Sheree
- 🇪🇸 James & Rachel Grant
- 🇺🇸 Andrew & Julie Halbert
- 🇺🇸 Jonathan & Maggie
- 🇺🇸 Chris & Catherine Zobrosky
- 🇺🇸 Eric & Miranda Marlowe
- 🇺🇸 Josh & Kristi
- 🇮🇹 Joel & Jessica Rinn
- 🇺🇸 Argyris & Dina Petrou

TRAINERS / TRANSLATORS

- 🇺🇸 F. & I. P.
- 🇳🇮 Joseph & Becky M'Fonyam
- 🇺🇸 African Bible University
- 🇯🇵 Covenant School Japan
- 🇺🇸 Lars & Kathy Huttar

LOCAL MERCY

- 🇺🇸 Brookstone School
- 🇺🇸 Charlotte Rescue Mission
- 🇺🇸 Hope Cancer Center
- 🇺🇸 Pregnancy Resource Center
- 🇺🇸 RUF - Queens University
- 🇺🇸 RUF - UNCC / JWU



MEET A MEMBER

THE JOCK FAMILY

Tell us a little about your family

Our family was established on October 8th, 2008 when we were married in Wilmington, NC. Haley grew up in the Mint Hill area of Charlotte in a strong Christian family and came to know the Lord at an early age, but did not truly begin walking with Christ until after becoming involved in a college ministry through the church we were both attending. I (Lee) lived in various cities throughout the country during my childhood and eventually ended up in Newnan, GA (a suburb of Atlanta). I grew up in a non-Christian home but had a “salvation experience” at a church service I attended as a teenager. However, I chose to walk in rebellion and eventually moved to Wilmington, NC in 2004 to attend UNCW. Through a series of God-ordained events that turned my life upside down, I eventually surrendered my life to Christ and began walking with Him.

How did things change after your conversion?

After my conversion, I felt a call to ministry and joined an Evangelical church in Wilmington where Haley and I met. In 2010, I started attending Seminary in Charlotte at Gordon-Conwell. The goal was to move eventually to Charlotte, yet God kept opening doors for us to serve Him in Wilmington (and we really loved living at the beach). During our time in Wilmington and

my time in seminary, the Lord started opening our eyes to the beauty of reformed theology and doctrine. We attended a reformed Baptist church for about 5 years and are grateful for what we learned in being a part of that fellowship.

We were not certain about the next step after Seminary, but we wanted to start a family. In September 2014, we celebrated our first pregnancy, but lost the baby a few days later due to an ectopic pregnancy. It was one of the hardest things we have experienced in our marriage to this day, but the Lord truly sustained us and carried us through that difficult time. Four months later, the Lord blessed us with another pregnancy and on September 24th 2015, Josiah William Jock was born (he is the wild child you see running around after church services). We are so grateful for him and all the joy he has brought to our lives. Haley always felt called to be a stay-at-home mom, and after working full-time at a dental office for 8 years, was given the privilege to do so after Josiah was born.

How were you called to the ministry?

Our experience with the ectopic pregnancy peaked my interest in hospital chaplaincy as we experienced intense grief that lasted several months. Thankfully, our families and our church supported and guided us through that dark time,

but I often wondered: How do people who are not members of a church respond to grief? I felt a calling to support those without support and believed that hospital chaplaincy was the right fit. After prayer and counsel, I decided to pursue a hospital chaplaincy internship at WakeMed and finished it during my last semester in seminary. I then began a residency at New Hanover Regional Medical Center in Wilmington, NC in August 2015. I felt like I had found my calling in Pastoral Care. My job allowed me to offer the ministry of mercy to those who were suffering and develop relationships with staff. Each day, I planted seeds rooted in the Gospel and saw several people grow in their knowledge of Jesus and come to faith in our Lord.

I wanted to continue in this good work when my residency ended in August 2016, so I decided to pursue a second-year residency. The Lord opened a door for me to interview at CMC Main in Charlotte. Haley and I had been praying for years about moving to Charlotte and it seemed that the door was finally opening. While I was in Charlotte for my interview, I met with my former seminary professor, Dr. Bill Barclay at Sovereign Grace. He encouraged me that the Gospel was being preached in Charlotte and prayed for me. When I left Charlotte, I felt a great sense of peace. Thankfully, I was offered the job a few days later and accepted. I completed the second-year residency in August 2017 and was hired at CHS-University as a Staff-Chaplain.

How did you end up at Sovereign Grace?

Moving to Charlotte was a joyous occasion, but also difficult as we were leaving our home of 12 years. We had less than two months to sell our house in Wilmington and find a place to live in Charlotte, but The Lord sovereignly worked out all the details. We sold our house in a week and found a house to rent that was within 5 minutes of the hospital. There were many bumps along the way, but we arrived in August 2016 and were glad to finally call Charlotte home.

As we tried to find a new church home, we felt like the PCA was the right fit for our family. Knowing Dr. Barclay from my time at Gordon Conwell, we decided to visit Sovereign Grace. We loved the teaching and everyone was so welcoming, but we thought it was wise to visit a few other

churches before making the decision to become members. During this time, we stayed in contact with the Barcleys and they offered us wisdom.

After several months of prayer and discussion, we felt like the Lord was leading us to join Sovereign Grace, and we're so glad we did.



How do you like to spend your time?

As a family, we love to be active by going on walks, runs and bike rides. We enjoy going to the park or pretty much anywhere that allows Josiah and our dog, Ellie Mae, to get their energy out. We both love a good cup of coffee and are proud Georgia Bulldogs fans – Go Dawgs! We are also excited to add a new baby girl to our family very soon! Hopefully by the time you are reading this, Evealyn “Evie” Morgan Jock will be born! We are anxious to meet her and introduce her to our wonderful church family.

What are your plans for the future?

On November 14th, I officially came under care of the Presbytery and will begin my internship with Sovereign Grace soon. I am hoping to be ordained in the PCA in late 2018. I have had the privilege of serving under Ron Barnwell at Brighton Gardens and look forward to serving our church where I am needed.

Our message to the members of Sovereign Grace is this: THANK YOU! You have welcomed us more than we deserve and we are so humbled by your love and support of our family. It is an honor to worship with you each Lord's Day. God Bless!



MEET A MEMBER

THE BROWN FAMILY

Where are you from originally?

Annette and I (Brian) were both born in the Parish of St Ann, Jamaica, not far from Ocho Rios. We did not meet until we were in our early twenties. By God's providence Annette's grandmother was the delivery nurse at the time of my birth - a fact I determined after we married.



Why did you come to the United States?

Shortly after we got married in 1995 we started a business that involved importing automotive accessories and chemicals into Jamaica. Annette was employed with the national airline, Air Jamaica, which allowed us to travel at discounted rates. The economic climate was very difficult in Jamaica with high interest rates, custom duties, and clients who would not pay for products during the prescribed period. This created financial

hardship for us, so with the encouragement of my mother and siblings already living in the USA, we decided to migrate.

How were you converted to Christ?

I came to faith in Jesus Christ at Duhaney Park Gospel Assembly in Kingston, Jamaica, as a 12 year old boy. The struggles have been real through the years, and there were periods in my life that for long stretches I merely attended church and spent my time away from the fellowship, living as I pleased in my sin.

How long have you been at Sovereign Grace and what first drew you here?

We have been members at Sovereign Grace since 2009. While attending a large Baptist Church in Charlotte we felt disconnected and craved the intimacy we had enjoyed in smaller churches. So, armed with a list of what we needed in a church, I combed the internet for churches that would meet my criteria. I came across an article that slapped me in the face and made me realize that God's church was not designed for me and my personal comfort. It was through this article that I started to discover the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints. Far from being Reformed, and having never entered the door of a Presbyterian Church before, my search lead me

to local churches that contended for this faith. One such church was Sovereign Grace which was within five miles of where we lived. Because of my inadequacy as a father, having grown up without my father, I was drawn by the fact that the pastor of this church has six children.

What do you appreciate about Sovereign Grace?

Above all else I appreciate the power of the preaching of God's Word and seeing how, over the years, my life has been changed by it. I would not trade that for anything. I can testify that there really is nothing ordinary about the 'ordinary means of grace'.

In addition to which, we have enjoyed the fellowship of the saints in difficult times. I can recall one late night when we thought our oldest son was suicidal, and we called Dr. Barclay who came to our house late that night and supported us pastorally. This was followed by him making himself available for several counseling sessions. I have also been the beneficiary of business wisdom imparted from other members of the congregation.

How would you like to see Sovereign Grace develop?

I would like to see stronger bonds formed with our local mission partners that go beyond our prayer and financial support, to actually exploring boots on the ground opportunities.

I am encouraged by our growth in racial diversity and look forward to a congregation that will represent the demographics of Charlotte more consistently.

Are there moments or seasons when your family has especially seen The Lord's hand at work?

We constantly marvel at the work of Christ in our lives. To see our youngest son, Henry, stand before the congregation recently and profess his faith is surely a highlight of the mercies of God in our lives.

"We constantly marvel at the work of Christ in our lives"

How do you serve God through your vocation?

Over the years we have had the joy of being able to pray with many of our customers and

testify of God's work in our lives and work. Sometimes I struggle with my work as I ponder whether I am contributing to idolatry when a client brings in a car that is worth several hundred thousand dollars for us to protect. But this past week I was able to express my faith in Jesus Christ to one individual who owns several such cars! Please pray for us, that we may work in such a way as to show Christ to be glorious.

Tell us more about your family

Annette and I are parents to three children: Stefan (21), Hillary (13) and Henry (11). We no longer have contact with Stefan who left home unannounced on November 8, 2015. I have only seen him once since then, while Annette has seen him three times.



It is our hope and prayer that Stefan will, by God's grace, see the need for Christ in his life, and serve Him as Lord and Savior. In that same vein, it is my hope that, as the Apostle John wrote " I would have no greater joy than to know that my children are walking in the truth".

What are your hobbies and interests?

As adults and the owners of a small - often very demanding - business, we do not make much time for hobbies. Hillary enjoys playing her flute and comes alive when she is around plants and the outdoors in general. Henry wants to be in the NBA and enjoys basketball, football, and chess, along with Mindcraft.

Is there a message you would like to share with your brothers and sisters at Sovereign Grace?

I would like to encourage the younger parents in particular to lay hold of Christ in your daily walk, and model him in your home each day. This will make Christ more attractive to your children. Do not neglect the fellowship of the brethren for in so doing we are strengthened.

SOVEREIGN GRACE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

