
Pro Rege

Volume 17 | Number 1

Article 8

September 1988

Pressing Toward the Mark: Essays Commemorating Fifty Years of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (Book Review)

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Recommended Citation

Hodgson, Richard G. (1988) "Pressing Toward the Mark: Essays Commemorating Fifty Years of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (Book Review)," *Pro Rege*: Vol. 17: No. 1, 26 - 27.
Available at: https://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/pro_rege/vol17/iss1/8

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modern in the 1980s is to computerize. "Progress is one of the most deeply-held beliefs of the Western world (and one which has successfully been exported everywhere). Whether through potent symbols such as clocks or calculators, electric or nuclear power, or through steadily rising graph-curves of performance improvement, progress is seen as a 'visible fact' of modernity" (108).

Two responses to this technology are evident: those who unquestioningly accept this technology and all of its uses or those who want to hold back the technological tide. The better way is a way of wisdom. "Technology is two-faced. A noble human activity on the one hand, but derailed and distorted by human waywardness, on the other. If we see only one face or the other, we are in danger of demonizing or deifying technology" (115).

Having said all this, the author concludes: "I also believe that our ultimate hope lies outside technology, outside society, in the divine project Jesus called 'the renewal of all things'" (117).

At the time the lectures which form the basis of this book were given, the questions raised by the author were very relevant. At present, because of the rapid developments in this field of technology and the speed with which this technology is implemented in all areas of society, many of the questions which are asked are beginning to be answered. The author attempted to be prophetic, but un-

fortunately the result was descriptive. The ever-present hope of the author was that this new technology could be used to correct some of society's pernicious ills. Unfortunately this technology has enabled humans to perpetuate at even greater speed the wrongs which are integral to a world society in which power determines right.

IT enables developed societies to implement in a much more significant way those theories and economies which enhance the already developed countries. IT is used most extensively by those societies which have the least concern for survival and can afford to exercise competitiveness. Caring is not inherent in such societies; as a result technology is not exercised in a caring way.

The book does little to aid the reader who is interested in ways that this technology can be implemented to serve the basic needs of humanity. Long on examples of how IT could be used to right wrongs, it only identifies the need to redirect the minds and hearts of those who use this technology. At bottom, IT has great potential for good, but since "it results from human choices, economic pressures, and political ideologies," human will affects the eventual direction of its development.

This very readable book, with a bibliography at the end of each chapter and small glossary of IT technology terms, offers an understandable introduction to the IT milieu.

The Orthodox Presbyterian Church, 1936-1986. Charles G. Dennison, ed. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Orthodox Presbyterian Church, 1986, 357 pp. *Lest We Forget, A Personal Reflection on the Formation of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.* Robert K. Churchill. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Orthodox Presbyterian Church, 1986, 135 pp. *Pressing Toward the Mark, Essays Commemorating Fifty Years of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.* Charles G. Dennison and Richard C. Gamble, ed. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Orthodox Presbyterian Church, 1986, 489 pp. Reviewed by Richard G. Hodgson, Associate Professor of Astronomy.

Of these three books relating to the fiftieth anniversary of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the first presents an excellent pictorial history of the O.P.C. It recounts with illustrations and commentary the activities of the denomination in foreign and home missions, and provides short sketches of the history of the various congregations through the years.

It is a book that will have a strong appeal to those who are familiar with the denomination and its people, and will doubtless prove very helpful to historians now and in the future who are interested in understanding the struggles of a small but growing group who, above all else, have been concerned to witness faithfully to the teaching of Scripture. It should also find use in explaining the history of the church to those who have joined only recently. Bringing all this information together is no small achievement.

In *Lest We Forget*, the Rev. Robert K. Churchill, one of the leading ministers in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church until his death in 1980, calls us to remember and be faithful to the Biblical foundations of the Calvinist, Reformed faith. When Churchill, then in semi-retirement, died suddenly, he left behind unfinished two writing projects. One was an

autobiography, the other was a history of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Fortunately he had spoken to others of these efforts. After his death these manuscripts were salvaged, edited, and unified into a single narrative by the Rev. George Haney. Haney is to be commended for his efforts.

In the pages of *Lest We Forget* this reviewer can still hear Bob Churchill speaking out to us. He was a strong and consistent opponent of modernist theology; he also opposed the oversimplification of the biblical message as we often encounter it in fundamentalist circles. His life had been profoundly influenced by J. Gresham Machen, under whom he had studied at Westminster Theological Seminary.

The issues which led to the formation of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in 1936, and the sudden and untimely death of Machen a few months later, profoundly influenced Churchill's ministry throughout the balance of his life. Without Machen the O.P.C. was, humanly speaking, without a strong leader. Since no one person inherited his mantle, the denomination was thrown upon Christ. In the months and years that followed the early turmoil, Machen's disciples, in humble dependence upon the Lord, fed His

sheep, and the new denomination grew, slowly but solidly.

Many of the issues which led to the formation of the O.P.C. are still with us. All true Calvinists can benefit from the insights and message of this book. As we approach the twenty-first century and the third millennium we cannot afford to forget! This would also be an excellent book to give or recommend to those adults who are joining the church, and want to understand more of our reformed background.

Pressing Toward the Mark consists of thirty essays written by leaders of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church for the fiftieth anniversary of that denomination in 1986. At the end of the volume there is also a bibliography of the works of J. Gresham Machen, including also a record of reprints and translations up to 1984.

Of the three books here reviewed, this one is the heavyweight. It shows that biblically-directed learning is still strong in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. It reflects upon a variety of topics which should be of interest to all Calvinist pastors and elders, whether they belong to that denomination or not.

The essay portion of the book is divided into four parts. In the first part there are seven essays reflecting upon the foundations for historic presbyterianism, including valuable contributions by Richard C. Gamble on "Presbyterianism and the Ancient Church" and "Distinctive

Emphases in Presbyterian Church Polity" by Edmund P. Clowney.

The second part deals with the American Presbyterian experience. It covers well the experience and controversies which arose prior to the 1930's.

The third part give perspectives on the issues which led to the formation of the O.P.C., and the turmoils of its early years. Mark Noll writes on "The Spirit of Old Princeton and the Spirit of the O.P.C." D. Clair Davis discusses "Machen and Liberalism." George Marsden supplies "Perspective on the Division of 1937." But it is not all a matter of doctrine unrelated to people. David W. Kiester has written an excellent piece on "The Life and Death of a Dakota Church" which helps the reader sense what the struggle was like when it was translated into the life of a particular congregation.

In the fourth part there are several essays discussing the mission and current issues now facing the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. The problems and opportunities of the mission fields are explored well.

This is an excellent volume, and deserves a wide reading. *Pressing Toward the Mark* summons all of us to consider anew our calling in the Lord Jesus Christ, and to understand more fully what the Apostolic faith means, and the suffering it sometimes involves.

C.S. Lewis and His World. David Barratt. London, England/Grand Rapids, Michigan: Marshall Pickering/William B. Eerdmans, 1987, 46 pp. Reviewed by Lorna Van Gilst, Instructor in English.

David Barratt provides the perfect resource for the person who wants a quick overview of the personal and literary life of C.S. Lewis. A forty-six page volume obviously limits the scope of the C.S. Lewis world, but attractive full-color or sepia photographs, which appear on nearly every page, greatly expand the setting.

Barratt draws from a wide variety of primary and secondary sources to recreate the world of the still-popular Oxbridge scholar, but he tells us little that is new to the Lewis devotee. However, he skillfully weaves biography through overviews and criticisms of Lewis' fifty volumes of fiction, allegory, literary criticism, and apologetics.

"Lewis is best at commending literature, less certain in criticizing it," says Barratt (140), who in turn commends Lewis with more certainty than he criticizes. Barratt presents Lewis as a "supremely confident writer" (41) whose perception of myth and metaphor, whose invention of pro-

foundly powerful images filled lecture halls with students and inspired their love for literature.

By contrast, Barratt exposes the writer Lewis' tendency to argue dialectically, reducing the logic to black-and-white-solutions and even failing to sufficiently ground his arguments in the Bible. In addition, Barratt acknowledges Lewis's male-dominated focus and his questionable views on limbo and purgatory. But he criticizes with the respect of a Lewis admirer who recognizes the scholar's ability to write profound concepts in layman's language, again largely through the use of images and analogies.

C.S. Lewis and His World offers the reader a credible view of an incredible writer who shares with his readers his capacity to doubt, to struggle, to long, to mourn, and through it all, to realize the joy of embracing the Christian faith.

Pat Robertson: A Personal, Political and Religious Portrait. David Edwin Harrell, Jr. San Francisco, California: Harper and Row Publishers, 1988, 246 pp., \$15.95. Reviewed by Nick R. Van Til, Emeritus Professor of Philosophy.

Following an extended discussion of the TV ministries and ministers, the March 18, 1988, issue of *Christianity To-*

day furnishes "a selective, annotated bibliography" by Quentin J. Schultze of the Calvin College Communications