



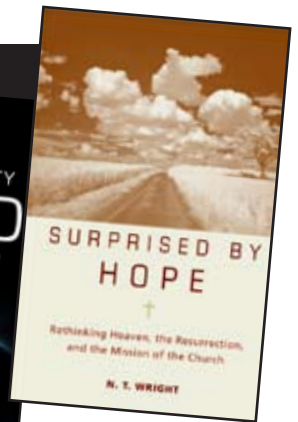
# NEW LIFE NEWS

The official newsletter for New Life Presbyterian Church • December 2008 & January 2009

## PASTOR TALLMAN'S CHRISTMAS BOOKLIST

by Brian Tallman

These are books that I have found helpful and would recommend you read and/or pass along to your friends and loved ones as gifts for Christmas.



### The Usual Suspects:

If you don't have these yet, you need to get them or ask your family to buy them for you for Christmas.

*The Trinity Hymnal*. Philadelphia: Great Commission Publications, 1990.

*The Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms*.

Calvin, John. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*.

Berkhof, Louis. *Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

### History:

E. Brooks Holifield. *Theology in America: Christian Thought from the Age of the Puritans to the Civil War*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005.

Marsden, George. *A Short Life of Jonathan Edwards*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008.

### Biblical Studies:

*The ESV Study Bible*.

Moo, Douglas. *The Letters to the Colossians and Philemon*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008.

### Worldview:

Crouch, Andy. *Culture Making: Recovering our Creative Calling*. Wheaton, Crossway Books, 2008.

Hitchens, Christopher and Wilson, Douglas. *Is Christianity Good for the World? A Debate*. Moscow: Cannon Press, 2008.

Keller, Timothy. *The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism* (New York, Dutton, 2008.

Myers, Ken. *All God's Children Wear Blue Suede Shoes*. Wheaton: Crossway Books.

Nichols, Stephen. *Getting the Blues: What Blues Music Teaches Us about Suffering and Salvation*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2008.

### Theology:

Clark, Scott. *Recovering Our Reformed Confession: Theology, Piety, Practice*. Phillipsburg: P&R, 2008.

Horton, Michael. *Christless Christianity: The Alternative Gospel of the American Church*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2008.

Wright, N.T. *Surprised By Hope:*

*Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection and the Mission of the Church*. San Francisco: Harper, 2007.

### Christian Life:

Capon, Robert Farrar. *The Supper of the Lamb: A Culinary Reflection*. New York: Modern Library, 2002.

Chester, Tim and Timmis, Steve. *Total Church: A Radical Reshaping Around Gospel and Community*. Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2008.

O'Donovan, Oliver. *Resurrection and Moral Order: An Outline for Evangelical Ethics*.

Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001. ☪

## TEN "TULIPIAN" SONGS FROM TRINITY HYMNAL

According to John Watt



T - Total Depravity

"We Have Not Known Thee As We Ought" (p. 493)  
"Not Worthy Lord!" (p. 428).

U - Unconditional Election

"'Tis Not That I Did Choose Thee" (p. 471)  
"Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me" (p. 499)

L - Limited Atonement

"How Sweet and Awesome Is the Place" (p. 469)  
"Shout, for the Blessed Jesus Reigns" (p. 369)

I - Irresistible Grace

"I Sought the Lord, and Afterward I Knew" (p. 466)  
"I Was a Wandering Sheep" (p. 464)

P - Perseverance of the Saints

"Blessed Assurance" (p. 693)  
"O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go" (p. 708)

# CHRIST AND CULTURE: POP CULTURE, CHRISTIAN FAITHFULNESS, AND RESOURCES FROM THE REFORMATION

*A Review of Ken Myers' Conference by Bill Wood*

For many years (thanks to our fantastic church library!) members of New Life have had the great privilege of listening, on tape and now CD, to the "Mars Hill Audio Journal" produced by Ken Myers. These bi-monthly author interviews are an excellent resource for staying on top of intellectual currents in our world and helping us, as Christians, to more thoughtfully engage the culture we live in, and I cannot recommend them highly enough. Thus, given the theme of this year's Reformation conference, Ken Myers served as an obvious and exciting selection to serve as our keynote speaker.

Myers delivered lectures on Friday evening and Saturday morning, as well as a concluding sermon on Sunday evening (New Life's traditional Reformation Sunday service). Friday's lecture, entitled "Divine Sovereignty and Human Culture," used Romans 12:1 as a starting point to make the case that separating the "spiritual" from the "rational" is not Christian, but rather a very worldly view that runs counter to scripture. Myers emphasized, as he would on several occasions throughout the weekend, that we must "take sovereignty seriously," including the idea that Jesus reigns. He further pointed out the danger of a particular kind of dualism to which Americans are vulnerable, that is, the belief in a private piety with a public deism or universalism. He concluded by arguing that this dualism has in fact infected both the culture and the church.

Saturday's lecture on "Common Grace" reminded us of the key role this doctrine plays in explaining the "unsaved acting as if they are," and as a balance to the doctrine of total depravity. After surveying evangelicalism's engagement with culture from Francis Schaeffer to the present, Myers warned that the church is often too uncritical of culture. He called us to "remember that culture cultivates us" and serves as a kind of "ecosystem" that shapes and sustains our deepest assumptions about reality (often without us

realizing it). He further pointed out the unusual era in which we live where "popular culture," distributed by mass media and driven by commercial interests, has replaced the "community absorbed" culture of the past. He concluded by again making the case that the church must recover its sense of itself as the church, i.e. a covenantal community, emphasizing that there is a "we" about our faith rather than merely an "I," and thus reaffirming the idea of the church itself as a culture.

Sunday's sermon, "King of Creation," from Colossians 1:13-20, returned again to the topic of Christ as King. Myers argued that dominion was not just a reward for His obedience unto death, but linked to Christ's role in creation

where Jesus (against Gnosticism) is the maker and redeemer of matter as well as spirit. As the doctrine of the "session" of Christ reminds us, Jesus is "seated" on the throne to rule. Yet, as Myers reminded us in his conclusion from the doxology in Romans 11, Jesus is not a king we can understand fully, but one to whom all glory is due.

Throughout the weekend those attending the conference were challenged to critically and seriously engage the culture in which they live, with the goal, as Abraham Kuyper so famously said almost 100 years ago, of affirming that "there is not an inch of any sphere of life over which Jesus Christ does not say 'Mine!'" 🙌

## THE BELL

### I KNOW WHO I AM

I am God's child (John 1:12)  
 I am Christ's friend (John 15:15 )  
 I am united with the Lord (1 Cor. 6:17)  
 I am bought with a price(1 Cor. 6:19-20)  
 I am a saint (set apart for God). (Eph. 1:1)  
 I am a personal witness of Christ. (Acts 1:8)  
 I am the salt & light of the earth ( Matt.5:13-14)  
 I am a member of the body of Christ(1 Cor 12:27)  
 I am free forever from condemnation ( Rom. 8: 1-2)  
 I am a citizen of Heaven. I am significant ( Phil.3:20)  
 I am free from any charge against me (Rom. 8:31 -34)  
 I am a minister of reconciliation for God(2 Cor.5:17-21)  
 I have access to God through the Holy Spirit (Eph. 2:18)  
 I am seated with Christ in the heavenly realms (Eph. 2:6)  
 I cannot be separated from the love of God( Rom.8:35-39)  
 I am established , anointed, sealed by God (2 Cor.1:21-22)  
 I am assured all things work together for good (Rom. 8: 28)  
 I have been chosen and appointed to bear fruit (John 15:16 )  
 I may approach God with freedom and confidence (Eph. 3: 12 )  
 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me (Phil. 4:13)  
 I am the branch of the true vine, a channel of His life (John 15: 1-5)  
 I am God's temple (1 Cor. 3: 1 6 ). I am complete in Christ (Col. 2: 10)  
 I am hidden with Christ in God (Col. 3:3). I have been justified (Romans 5:1)  
 I am God's co-worker (1 Cor.. 3:9; 2 Cor 6:1). I am God's workmanship(Eph. 2:10 )  
 I am confident that the good works God has begun in me will be perfected. (Phil 1: 5)  
 I have been redeemed and forgiven(Col.1:14).I have been adopted as God's child(Eph 1:5)  
 I belong to God  
 Do you know  
 who you are!?

*Keep this bell ringing...pass it on 'The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you;the LORD turn His face toward you and give you peace.'*

—Numbers 6:24-26

*submitted by Jan Sharp*

## HUGH WESSEL *Part 2*

*Interviewed by Dean Abbott • Transcribed by Diane Henderson*

### **Q: What are the biggest struggles in the small local churches in France?**

Let's say you were a church in San Diego of 30-40 people, and you were the only evangelical church there. You want the church to grow, so you try to come up with evangelistic events and try to encourage people to witness. You've got some mono parent families. You've got some where both parents have to work. You've got elders who have to work early and come home late. People are harried because of the need to provide for their families. Then you have one pastor with no staff. The building you meet in is not always adequate. The pastor is paid a minimum wage, and the pastor himself grew up in such a church. Yet the Lord still works. French denominations tell me they are appreciative for all the missionary efforts because missionaries have made an impact in France. I was in one church in Montauban, about a six-hour drive from here, and the pastor asked the congregation before he

started, "How many of you have been influenced by missionaries, either by your conversion or becoming faithful church members?" Eighty percent of the people raised their hand. It wasn't one particular missionary he had in mind, just missionaries over the years. Many missionaries give up and leave the field. We've seen that across denominational lines. They basically write off France, where the Lord has given me a burden, which he has never removed from my heart.

### **Q: Have you seen a difference over the 30 plus years in France in the receptivity of the people?**

Yes, there have been changes. In fact, 30 years ago about 84 percent of the people said they were Roman Catholic. About a year and a half ago there was another survey done by the secular press and only about 53 percent said they were Roman Catholic. So we meet people more and more who have no religious background, don't claim to be Catholic, and don't know anything. We have to



confront issues that are different, not undoing things like people who are relying on righteousness of works or legalism. Now, we are running into ignorance and the belief in things like we're the product of time and chance, evolutionary theory. We're running into philosophic issues in a down to earth place where people don't believe they have a need for God. A missionary wrote to me today. "Hugh, in one of my English classes I teach they asked about this new super-collider experiment under the French/Swiss border. I don't understand this stuff, but this French guy told me that if they find this it proves that God can't possibly exist." In the popular parlance, it's called the "God Particle." So, I need to get back to him about that. Those kinds of issues are coming forward more and more. And that's one of the areas where I try and help people. ☺

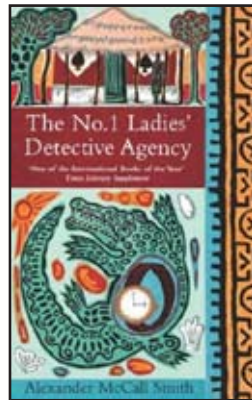
## WOMEN'S BOOK CLUB SELECTION

*Submitted by Tina Settergren*

The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency by Alexander McCall Smith will be scheduled in early March.

*From Publishers Weekly*

The African-born author of more than 50 books, from children's stories (*The Perfect Hamburger*) to scholarly works (*Forensic Aspects of Sleep*), turns his talents to detection in this artful, pleasing novel about Mma (aka Precious) Ramotswa, Botswana's one and only lady private detective. A series of vignettes linked to the establishment and growth of Mma Ramotswa's "No. 1 Ladies Detective Agency" serve not only to entertain but to explore conditions in Botswana in a way that is both penetrating and light thanks to Smith's deft touch. Mma Ramotswa's cases come slowly and hesitantly at first: women who suspect their husbands are cheating on them; a father worried that his daughter is sneaking off to see a boy; a missing child who may have been killed by witchdoctors to



make medicine; a doctor who sometimes seems highly competent and sometimes seems to know almost nothing about medicine. The desultory pace is fine, since she has only a detective manual, the frequently cited example of Agatha Christie and her instincts to guide her. Mma Ramotswa's love of Africa, her wisdom and humor, shine through these pages as she shines her own light on the problems that vex her clients. Images of this large woman driving her tiny white van or sharing a cup of bush tea with a friend or client while working a case linger pleasantly. General audiences will welcome this little gem of a book just as much if not more than mystery readers.

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The next book we pick will be voted on from a selection of books distributed at the meeting in March. If anyone has suggestions for the next book, please send me your pick (title and author), and I'll put it on the list. ☺

*Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests." —Luke 2:13-14 NIV*

## AS THE BRIDE

By Chloe Hammond

There is poignancy in juxtaposition. Like walking barefoot through grass in a business suit, hair up and make-up on. Like a bright blue day with ice on the ground, a biting wind eating at your cheeks. Like the richly clad and the bum walking side by side in search of lunch down C Street. Like loving and killing the person closest to you all at the same time. Like pure beauty and complete ugliness held within one being. In this world, there is no beauty without poignancy.

I am a paradox. Two opposites reside within me that are so diametrically opposed there is a constant internal change of regime. I am utter depravity and the image of divinity held as fullest day and deepest night together in a vase on the

mantel. I hold to Ephesians, that we are daily being transformed into the image of Christ - the image we were originally created in, but I cannot deny the dirt I was born to. Humanity is broken and incapable to put aright. Humanity is glorious and made to give God glory through our own. Christ has conquered, but I am still in process. I am still learning what it means to be His bride.

I wake and go to work five days a week. I am the anything person at Wells Fargo downtown and a "barista" at a coffee shop in North Park. I am attending a finance class to satiate my longing to learn and hopefully give me more useful knowledge to be the everything person at Wells. I am close to my family and spend time with them when I can. I am engaged to a wonderful man who always keeps life exciting. Yet I look back on last week, and the moments I remember with any fondness in all that activity, are the moments when I encountered beauty, whether it was the beauty of love, friendship, laughter or simply being in its presence. I have to thank Christopher for helping me acknowledge the importance of beauty to the enjoyment, even sanity, of life. But it is God that I encounter in those moments, who draws me in and back.

When I encounter beauty, my desire is for my husband, Christ, and He rules over me. In the presence of beauty, I see God. It raises the ideal from my soul and sets the impossible in the realm of possibility.

Who am I? I am my Beloved's. ☺

*I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen, not only because I see it but because by it, I see everything else. —C.S. Lewis*



## WHO?

By Sherrene David

I admit that when I first heard her name, I was rather oblivious, but then I was informed that she is the daughter of the prolific author and one of my personal heroes, Elisabeth Elliot. The Elisabeth Elliot? The same one who wrote *Passion and Purity*, *A Chance to Die*, *The Journals of Jim Elliott*, and *Through Gates of Splendor*, among so many others? My mind wandered to the possibilities. Could I ask her about her mother's research on Amy Carmichael and India? Could I ask her about her mother's views on marriage and godly womanhood? Could I ask her about her mother's relationship with the same tribesmen who killed her father? Oh, to have a weekend with the daughter of Elisabeth Elliot! My excitement increased as I pondered the possibilities.

As innocent as my joy was, my heart was quickly humbled. Mrs. Shepard began to share with us, and I started to realize that this woman is not simply the daughter of Elisabeth Elliott. She is Valerie Shepard, an individual, godly woman who has struggles and dreams just like any of us. She may have an inspiring heritage, but she is first and foremost a Christian with an amazing testimony of what God has done in her life, her life, not just her mother's life.

I'm sure my fellow "retreaters" will agree that the time spent in Pine Valley was nothing short of encouraging. Everything from hot chocolate (and the weather was cold enough to enjoy the hot chocolate), to Mrs. Shepard's encouraging messages, to the animated game of "Pictionary (try drawing "cannibal" without eliciting laughter), to the harmonious singing and breathtaking scenery was encouraging in helping us relax, refocus our gaze on our sovereign God, and bond with our sisters.

As a seminary student, it was refreshing to step down from lofty theological concepts and be reminded of the simplicity yet profundity of the gospel. Simple truths such as God listens to us when we pray, the benefit of taking time each day to read His Word, the importance of living in contentment rather than complaining, and remembering how God always provides were delivered with the authority of a godly pastor's wife and missionary, yet with the candidness of a humble sister. It was a blessing to be reminded of these concepts in the midst of our generally bustling and overfilled lives. The time was wonderful.

Despite my anticipation of meeting "the daughter of Elisabeth Elliot, I was humbly and gratefully surprised by meeting with Valerie Shepard instead. It was a pleasure to hear her speak of her husband and eight children, her adventures in the Congo, her struggles being back in the States, and just the unrelenting battle we so fondly call "life." Her gracious and honest nature was admirable, and I am sure she made an impact on each of us. For those of you who did not attend, you must make it a point to come next year. It was definitely worth it. ☺