

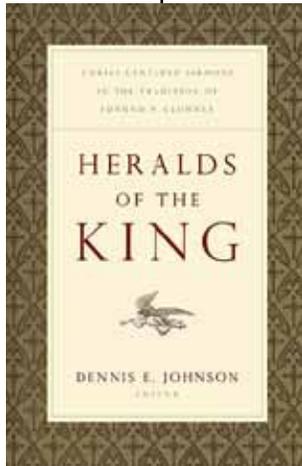


NEW LIFE NEWS

The official newsletter for New Life Presbyterian Church • February 2010

HERALDS OF THE KING: CHRIST-CENTERED SERMONS IN THE TRADITION OF EDMUND P. CLOWNEY *Edited by Dennis Johnson, Reviewed by Bill Wood*

Every year I compile a list of my 'pleasure' book reading for the past twelve months. (I don't count anything that I read for a class or my own research.) In looking over the list this year, the real surprise gem was this collection of sermons edited by our friend up at Westminster Seminary in Escondido, Dennis Johnson. The book is a true labor of love from former students of Ed Clowney, who died March, 2005, at the age of 87. Clowney (who has numerous ties to New Life—just ask around) was a great preacher and teacher of preachers who challenged his students to preach Christ from ALL of scripture, and in this volume the reader will find a collection of eleven sermons that seek to employ his lessons. Most of the authors are preachers: Julius Kim, Iain Duguid, and Dennis Johnson himself.



Other contributors include Tim Keller, Joseph 'Skip' Ryan, Joseph Novenson, Brian Vos, Charles Drew, William Edgar, Arturo Azurdia, and the late Harvie Conn. The sermons are grouped into four sections, representing texts from the Law, the Prophets, the Psalms, and the New Testament. I read one a day as devotional reading and found all of

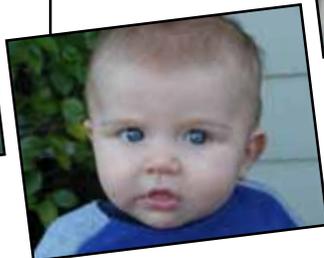
them to be a "gift" (as Johnson writes in his Preface) "to all God's children who gather, Sunday by Sunday, hungry and thirsty to hear afresh their Father's declaration of love for them and triumph over their enemies through Jesus, his beloved son." To single out only one by way of example: the sermon by Tim Keller from Genesis 29 concerning the story of Leah, "The Girl Nobody Wanted." This is an excellent example of Clowney's approach (readers

of Keller will recognize it in another format in his recent book Counterfeit Gods). The sermon shows how Leah can be understood as "not only someone pointing us to Christ (as the rejected one through whom salvation came into the world), but also as someone looking to the Lord as her true spouse," all the while exposing the limitations of marital happiness. The fact that this message was first preached at a wedding makes it all the more striking! Finally, don't overlook the best part of this collection: each author's individual sermon preface where they reflect on Clowney's impact on their preaching. Again and again these former students recount times in the classroom when they stopped taking notes and just sat and listened as their hearts were drawn to Jesus once again through Clowney's lectures. While this professor knows that he will never see anything similar from his own students, I am convinced that this book will help you better appreciate and understand the sermons preached week after week from the pulpit of New Life, and, in so doing, see Christ in all of scripture. ✝

NEW LIFE AT NEW LIFE



• Emma Yen



• Roman Smith



• Erin Creedon



• Ronin Toole



• Lili Davis

WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT...

Submitted by Keith Fredrickson

This excerpt, from a sermon on Romans 4:5 entitled “Justification by Faith Alone,” was given by Jonathan Edwards in November, 1734. The following year Edwards’ preaching on this subject was used to ignite the “Great Awakening.” He wrote, “while I was greatly reproached for defending this doctrine in the pulpit, and just upon my suffering a very open abuse for it, God’s work wonderfully brake forth amongst us, and souls began to flock to Christ, as the Savior in whose righteousness alone they hoped to be justified.” www.apuritansmind.com/Justification/EdwardsJonathonJustification.htm

“Two things come to pass, relating to the saints’ reward for their inherent righteousness, by virtue of their relation to Christ. (1.) The guilt of their persons is all done away, and the pollution and hatefulness that attends and is in their good works, is hid. (2.) Their relation to Christ adds a positive value and dignity to their good works in God’s sight. That little holiness, and those faint and feeble acts of love, and other grace, receive an exceeding value in the sight of God, by virtue of God’s beholding them as in Christ, and as it were members of one so infinitely worthy in his eyes, and that because God looks upon the persons as of greater dignity on this account. Isa. 43:4, ‘Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honorable...,’ God, for Christ’s sake, and because they are members of his own righteous and dear Son, sets an exceeding value upon their persons. Hence it follows, that he also sets a great value upon their good acts and offerings. The same love and obedience in a person of greater dignity and value in God’s sight, is more valuable in his eyes than in one of less dignity. Love is valuable in proportion to the dignity of the person whose love it is, because so far as anyone gives his love to another, he gives himself, in that

he gives his heart. But this is a more excellent offering, in proportion as the person whose self is offered is more worthy. Believers are become immensely more honorable in God’s esteem by virtue of their relation to Christ, than man would have been considered as by himself, though he has been free from sin: as a mean person becomes more honorable when married to a king. Hence God will probably reward the little weak love, and poor and exceeding imperfect obedience of believers in Christ, with more glorious reward than he would have done Adam’s perfect obedience. According to the tenor of the first covenant, the person was to be accepted and rewarded, only for the work’s sake. But by the covenant of grace, the work is accepted and rewarded, only for the person’s sake: the person being beheld antecedently as a member of Christ, and clothed with his righteousness. So that though the saints’ inherent holiness is

rewarded, yet this very reward is indeed not the less founded on the worthiness and righteousness of Christ. None of the value that their works have in his sight, nor any of the acceptance they have with him, is out of Christ, and out of his righteousness. But his worthiness as mediator is the prime and only foundation on which all is built, and the universal source whence all arises. God indeed does great things out of regard to the saints’ loveliness, but it is only as a secondary and derivative loveliness. When I speak of a derivative loveliness, I do not mean only, that the qualifications themselves accepted as lovely, are derived from Christ, from his power and purchase, but that the acceptance of them as a loveliness, and all the value that is set upon them, and all their connection with the reward, is founded in, and derived from, Christ’s righteousness and worthiness.” ❧

“COME AND STAND AMAZED, YOU PEOPLE”

Dutch Medieval Hymn, Translator: Klaas Hart, Sung by choir January 3, 2010

*Come and stand amazed, you people, see how God is reconciled!
See his plans of love accomplished, see his gift, this new-born child.
See the Mighty, weak and tender, see the Word who now is mute.
See the Sovereign without splendor, see the Fullness destitute;
the Beloved, whom we covet, in a state of low repute.*

*See how humankind received him; see him wrapped in swaddling bands,
who as Lord of all creation rules the wind by his commands.
See him lying in a manger without sign of reasoning;
Word of God to flesh surrendered, he is wisdom’s crown, our King.
See how tender our Defender at whose birth the angels sing.*

*O Lord Jesus, God incarnate, who assumed this humble form,
counsel me and let my wishes to your perfect will conform.
Light of life, dispel my darkness, let your frailty strengthen me;
let your meekness give me boldness, let your burden set me free;
let your sadness give me gladness, let your death be life for me. ❧*

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

By Allison Dossett and Sherrene David

In Psalm 144:12, David pleaded with God, "May our sons in their youth be like plants full grown, our daughters like corner pillars cut for the structure of a palace" (ESV).

Pillars are an interesting thing to be compared to, and especially corner pillars. Corner pillars must be fortified, built on a solid foundation, and able to support the main structure of the building. While corner pillars are not as prominent as the main columns in the middle of the structure, they are consistently beautiful, well-crafted in an exquisite blend of strength and beauty. Solid corner pillars are absolutely necessary for the structure and adorning of the palace. David prayed that the daughters of his covenant community would be these beautiful, yet sturdy supports. I believe the covenant community today should echo his prayer for the daughters of the church.

In an effort to encourage such "strengthening," I hope that this quarter's Sunday School class will provide some helpful insight and direction in discovering a woman's place in the church. Men and women of New Life, please pray that God would grant us hearts that desire that which honors Him most, and that He would cause us to be strong pillars for the community where He has placed us. May He instill in us first a desire to learn more about how He has instructed Christian women, and then the will to humbly submit and eagerly obey all that He has commanded.

May the women at New Life be beautiful in our unwavering faith, charming in our understanding of theology, strong in our dedication to the church, and grounded in our knowledge of Christ as the center of redemptive history. May we indeed be adorned and fortified corner pillars, built on Christ the foundation, that the church may echo David's conclusion: "Blessed are

the people to whom such blessings fall! Blessed are the people whose God is the Lord!" (Psalm 144:15).

The women's current Sunday School class, "Strengthening the Pillars" is using the book *Women's Ministry in*

the Local Church by Ligon Duncan and Susan Hunt as a guide. Sherrene David is the teacher and writer of the class blog www.strongpillars.wordpress.com where you may find an overview and notes covering the first three weeks. ❀

SOUTH COAST PRES. DEACON'S CONFERENCE

By Peter Chapman

A couple of months ago I received an e-mail from Russ Pierce announcing a proposed meeting of the Deacons of the South Coast Presbytery, a first-of-its-kind conference.

About three weeks before the meeting Russ called and asked if I could help with one of the "breakout modules" to which I agreed. We decided it would be on Mercy Ministries and based on the book of the same title by Tim Keller as the New Life diaconate had read and worked through this over the past year. Imagine my surprise when I received the schedule a week before the conference and noticed that my breakout session was one and one-half hours!

Approximately 30 deacons attended, representing various PCA churches in the south coast sector. After Friday night's dinner and worship service we returned Saturday morning for breakfast and "Call to Diaconal Service" by Dr. Ron Gleason, in which he discussed the history of deacons in the church and other topics. I gave my breakout session on Mercy Ministries which starts with the individual believer, moving to the diaconate and then to specific ministries. Art Berquist from New Life PC, Escondido moderated the next session on "Practical Ministries," specifically "Ministry Growth and Resource Sharing." Reuben Bons from New Life PC Escondido, moderated a session on "Security, Communication & Financial Stewardship." Russ Pierce ended the day with comments, questions and a wrap-up session.

The great value of this conference was to see creative solutions to many of the issues with which deacons deal. I was struck by how much the guys love being a deacon and how seriously they take their calling, which, speaking for our board, we do as well. ❀

SIXTH YEAR AND COUNTING

By Diane Henderson

This issue is the sixth year anniversary when the three of us (Allison Dossett, Court Patton and me), began our work together on *New Life News*. We want to thank you, the congregation, for your willingness to contribute (I am continually surprised), for the suggestions of articles, your feedback, and overall co-operative support. Am looking forward to a special ten year anniversary issue, Lord willing. Because it is your newsletter written for and by the members of our church family, His Hand is also in it. As documentation of His Love for us, our love for one another, and our journey together, we thank you. Here are five reasons to read *New Life News*.

1. You never know what breaking news will be revealed.
2. You like to exercise your proofing skills.
3. You like the April Fool's issue.
4. You like that no politics is allowed.
5. Because if you don't read it, who else will? ❀

GLOBAL BIBLE STUDY TOUCHES DOWN AT NEW LIFE

By Trudy Verdick

Every week men, women and children are gathering around the globe to study the Gospel of John and New Life Presbyterian Church, La Mesa enjoys being part of the action. Monday nights from September to May approximately 240 women from nearly 100 different churches and diverse backgrounds arrive at New Life to discuss a previous week's personal study of a passage in John. Beginning at 6:55 sharp, they sing two hymns, ask God to work His Word into their hearts and then go to 20 separate discussion groups where for 40 minutes they share what they have learned from their individual study. The groups then disband and all the women come into the sanctuary for another hymn and to hear a 40 minute lecture about the passage. As they leave, they are given notes on the same passage to read with study questions for the next week. This is Bible Study Fellowship (BSF.)

BSF follows a yearly rotation of studies of Genesis, Romans, Matthew, Life of Moses (Exodus-Deuteronomy), John, Isaiah, Acts, the Minor Prophets, and Acts. The same study format of going over a portion of scripture four times is followed all over the world. A woman from Kenya joined my discussion group mid-year. She sat down with her worksheet from her BSF class in Nairobi ready to join our discussion in San Diego!

San Diego has a BSF men's class meeting every Monday night in North Park, and there are morning classes for women at other churches around the county. Steve Phillips is one of the men from New Life who attend the men's

class. Steve says:

"I consider the discussion group setting with the other men from various denominations stimulating and at times surprisingly insightful. Since we are encouraged to study independent of commentaries, some fresh views



often enter the discussion. I have to say, additionally, that the weekly lectures by our teaching leader are outstanding with a special emphasis on seeing the gospel in every section of Scripture. The worksheet questions (absent commentary reference) require real thought about the passage we are studying and by definition, meditation on the Word."

The children's programs run concurrently with the adult classes and study the same Bible passage with worksheets and exercises designed for each age level. Brian and Kristine Barnes along with their daughters attend BSF classes. Kristine appreciates BSF because...

"...it keeps me in God's Word everyday and dependent on Him. The structure and organization of the program keep me focused on God's Word, and allows me in-depth historical and theological knowledge of the verses we cover each week. The

study questions are challenging, thought provoking, and inspire my walk with the Lord. Even though we are only studying the Gospel of John, we compare and contrast John with other verses from other books. The Old and New Testaments are tied together in our study, and I cannot help but be filled with joy, peace, and gratitude for the One who was, is and evermore shall be."

Kaeley, Shayla and Bethany Barnes enjoy their BSF class-time, especially when their teachers teach the books of the New Testament with a song and how to discover for themselves what a Bible passage actually means.

The women who attend the Monday night class appreciate meeting at New Life and are conscientious guests. Years ago when

members of New Life planned to own property, and prayed that it would be a blessing to Christ's church at large, they didn't have BSF in mind. But for the past four and a half years through God's providence, New Life has been a blessing to BSF and BSF has been a blessing to New Life, helping us fulfill our mission by encouraging the saints and making the Gospel known to many.

On the first Monday of each month there is an introductory class open to those who would like to join BSF. Anyone interested in learning more about BSF should speak to Steve and Sharon Phillips, Brian and Kristine Barnes or me.

For more information about Bible Study Fellowship and its history: *Created for Commitment*, an autobiography of the founder of BSF, A. Wetherel Johnson (church library), and the BSF website: www.bsfindernational.org. 🌟