

The West End Herald

Second Presbyterian Church, Greenville, SC



MERE PRESBYTERIANISM

A Positive Way Forward for the PCA

by Jon Payne

Part 2



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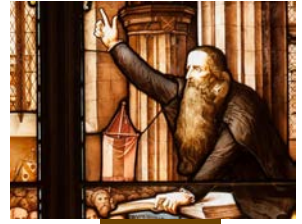
Sincere Piety

The pursuit of godliness is a key distinctive of Confessional Presbyterianism. One cannot read the writings of our Reformed and Puritan forbearers and miss the intense focus placed upon personal, family, and corporate piety. Our Confession teaches that Christ has not only saved us from hell but to a life of spiritual growth and sanctification (c.f. WCF XIII; Titus 2:11–14). Holiness is the way of discipleship (c.f. I Tim. 4:8). Peter writes, “As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy’” (I Pet. 1:14–16).

Personal piety is expressed, in part, through Bible reading and closet prayer (Ps. 119:105; Mt. 6:6). Indeed, those who walk with God make it a priority to carve out consistent personal time with the Lord (c.f. Mk 1:35; Ps. 63). Family piety is exercised through regular times of worship in the home. The head of the household leads the family in a frequent, if not daily, time of singing, Bible reading, catechesis, and prayer. This invaluable time of family worship fosters gratitude, growth, and godliness in the home (c.f. Deut. 6:7–9; Eph. 6:1–4). Corporate worship occurs primarily on the Lord’s Day. Sabbath observance is critical to godly piety and growth in Christ. On the Sabbath we assemble in the presence of God to receive his grace and respond with joyful praise and grateful obedience. The Westminster Confession stresses the central importance of these three main forms of piety when it states:

God is to be worshipped everywhere, in spirit and truth; as, in private families daily, and in secret, each one by himself; so more solemnly in the public assemblies, which are not carelessly or willfully to be neglected, or forsaken, when God, by His Word or providence, calls thereunto (WCF XXI.6).

We have always learned that heterodoxy (unorthodox doctrine) leads to heteropraxy



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NORTHERN IRELAND

Missionary of the Week

Ethan & Laura McCarter

Ethan McCarter graduated from Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary in the spring of 2022 and moved his family to Northern Ireland in September of that same year. Ethan served as Ministerial Assistant with the Crumlin Evangelical Presbyterian Church on the west side of Belfast for the past two years.



The McCarters recently moved into northern Belfast. They are waiting on approval for their visas and hope to have an ordination/installation soon at Crosscollyer Street Church.

The church at Crosscollyer Street is small and has mainly elderly members. They have been without a minister for a long time. The area surrounding the church has a high rate of alcoholism and suicide. There are also a lot of immigrants. Please pray for the light of the Gospel to reach into the darkness.

The McCarters have two sons, Jean Luc and Pyran. ♦

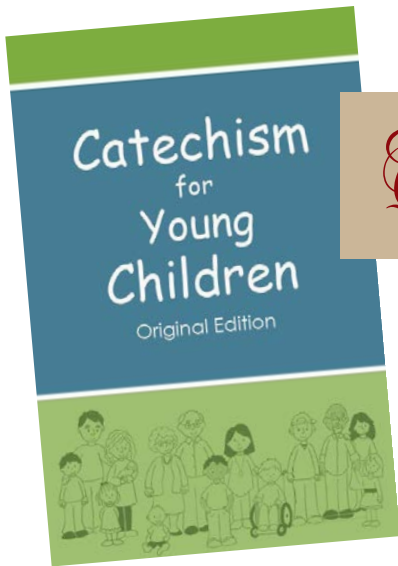


Fun **Facts**

The Titanic was built in Belfast.

Last names often begin with “O” which means “grandson of” in Gaelic.

No snakes ever lived on the island of Ireland.



Question 85:

What does the third commandment teach me?

Answer:

To reverence God's name, word, and works.

***I will extol you, my God and King,
and bless your name forever and ever.*** Psalm 145:1



God has revealed His names, titles, and qualities to us so that we would know Him. He wants us to study these things in Scripture and to think often of them. We should let the things God has revealed to us cause us to grow in love for Him. As we think of God's names, titles, and qualities, we should learn to fear Him and to delight in Him. ♦

from *Training Hearts, Teaching Minds*, Starr Meade



at the corner of

*River &
Rhett*

Vacation Bible School

Hear Ye, Hear Ye, it's time to embark on a Medieval Adventure and discover who we are as Kingdom Kids. Join us July 8–12 from 9:00 A.M.–noon in the Royal Castle as we learn about our Identity in Christ. All princes and princesses who have completed K4 through Grade 6 are invited on this Royal Adventure. Please register at spcgreenville.org/signup. If you have any questions or want to volunteer, please contact Caroline Mobley at (864) 775-0487. Please register by June 30 at spcgreenville.org/signup. ♦



23 Dennis Zimmerman

24 Gladys Fullerton, Andie McDaniel,
Darby Preston, Liam Szrama

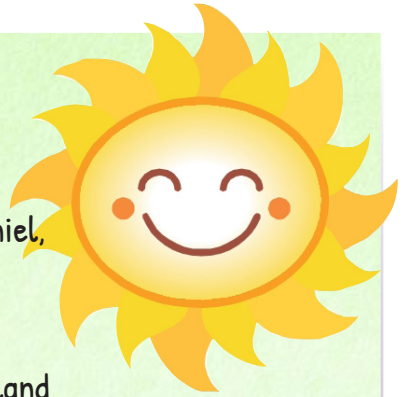
25 Philip Raper, Meredith Strickland

26 Brendon Branigin

27 Brandon Early, Paul Hastings, Chuck Miller,
Diana Sauer

28 Marty Safford, Pat Tyner

29 Joy Boudreau, Lee Early



June Birthdays



This Week

MORNING SERMON

Dr. Richard D. Phillips

CLEANSING THE TEMPLE

Mark 11:12–25

EVENING SERMON

Rev. Brendon J. Branigin

HUMBLED BEFORE THE LORD

1 Kings 21:21–29

Sunday, June 23

- 8:30 A.M. MORNING WORSHIP
- 9:55 A.M. Children's Chapel (*Sanctuary*)
- 10:00 A.M. Sunday School (*Adults in Gym*)
- 11:00 A.M. MORNING WORSHIP
- 5:30 P.M. Season of Prayer (*Chapel*)
- 6:00 P.M. EVENING WORSHIP

Monday, June 24

- 6:30 A.M. Men's Bible Study (*Fellowship Hall*)
Sr. High leaves for Pawleys Island

Wednesday, June 26

- 5:30 P.M. FAMILY NIGHT FELLOWSHIP SUPPER (*Gym*)
- 6:30 P.M. Covenant Choir (Grades 1–6)
- 6:30 P.M. Missions Moment (*Gym*)
- 6:45 P.M. Hope Choir (Ages 4–6)
- 6:45 P.M. Women's Bible Study (*Gym*)
- 6:45 P.M. Jr. & Sr. High Bible Studies
- 6:45 P.M. Adult Prayer Meeting & Bible Study (*Sanctuary*)
- 7:30 P.M. Chancel Choir

Thursday, June 27

- 6:30 P.M. Mission to Main

Friday, June 28

- 12:00 P.M. Men's Luncheon/Bible Study (*Gym*)

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(unorthodox living). But we must also recognize that heteropraxy (unorthodox living) also can, and often does, produce heterodoxy (unorthodox doctrine). For example, some will embrace a version of antinomianism to accommodate their carnal and duplicitous lifestyle.

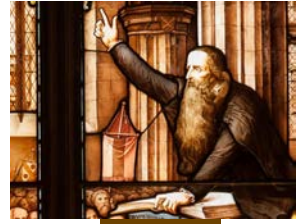
Paul underscores this point when he writes to his disciple Timothy, “The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. Certain persons, by swerving from these, have wandered away (I Tim. 1:5–6; c.f. 4:16). Again he exhorts Timothy to “wage the good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience. By rejecting this, some have made shipwreck of their faith” (I Tim. 1:18b–19). We must renew our commitment to Christ-centered piety and the disciplines of grace. Our doctrine and confessional commitments depend on it.

One of the first questions we should ask men who are coming for ordination is, “Are you abiding in Christ through the means of grace—personally, with your family, and in Lord’s Day worship?” We should ask, “How are you cultivating and pursuing biblical piety in your life?” Seasoned ministers should be asking each other the same thing. Godly piety is essential to a long and faithful ministry. Sincere piety is indispensable to sustain Mere Presbyterianism. Piety is vital not only for the spiritual health of our ministers and congregations, but for the future of our beloved denomination.

Biblical Missions

The PCA has always been serious about missions. We’ve established a strong reputation for evangelism, discipleship, and church planting. In recent years, however, there has been a growing confusion in our churches about the true nature of our mission. Many are wondering—“What is the mission of the Church?”

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Is our mission to go into all the world and eradicate poverty or extinguish injustice or put an end to sex trafficking or eliminate racism? I've heard popular leaders refer to these various endeavors as the mission of the twenty-first century church. However, with all of these and other symptoms of our broken and sin-cursed world plaguing humanity in Jesus's day as well, he nevertheless exhorted the church to make disciples through the faithful proclamation of the Gospel. The church's mission was (and is) a spiritual one.

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you, And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age (Mt. 28:18–20).

Notice that sandwiched between two comforting promises (i.e. Christ's sovereign authority and abiding presence) is an unambiguous command to go into all the world and to make disciples. The divinely ordained tools for missions are clearly revealed as the means of preaching, sacraments, and prayer. And isn't this precisely what we see the Apostles doing all throughout the book of Acts? They stayed on mission. They did that which our Lord commanded them (and us) to do until his glorious return. In the PCA we need to "recover clarity in our message, focus in our mission, and commitment to the specific strategies laid out by our Lord."^[3]

A straightforward reading of the New Testament shows that the apostles (and subsequent pastors like Timothy and Titus) weren't laboring to rid their first-century culture of injustice or poverty. They weren't working to transform the contours of their extremely complex society. Their goal was never to solve complicated political issues or to bring "shalom" to their communities (whatever that means!?). The apostles weren't even focused on personally carrying out mercy ministry tasks within the church. Why? So that they could fulfill their primary calling to



Announcements

All-Adult Summer Sunday School

All adults will meet in the Gym at 10:00 A.M. this summer for a book study of *The Heart of Christ* by Thomas Goodwin. Several men from the pastoral staff will be teaching the lessons throughout the summer. Books are available for purchase (\$5) at the church bookstore.

Baptism Sunday

The next Baptism Sunday will be July 28. If you would like to schedule your child's baptism, please contact the church office.

Open Gym

The gym will be open every Monday and Tuesday for indoor activities. The Sports and Fellowship Committee purchased equipment (paddles, pickleballs, and nets) for four indoor pickleball courts which will be setup each week for anyone to use. No reservations are required.

A Time to Build Update

The membership has been asked to prayerfully consider pledging and giving to *A Time To Build* Campaign this summer. A summary of the information about our new building plans are available at spcgreenville.org/A Time To Build. The officers of this church are asking you to give an offering beyond your regular tithe. The asking that has been suggested is that for some of you to double your giving for each of the next three years. Some are able to give beyond that. One-time gifts may be made at any time. Pledges are due by the end of the summer. Both can be done in-person or online.



SECOND
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

To Date: June 18, 2024

Number of Pledges	Amount Pledged	Amount Given
52	\$944,390	\$156,077
Total Amount for Phase I:		\$14,000,000

proclaim Christ and Him crucified from all of Scripture (c.f. Acts 6:1–7; I Cor. 1:18–2:5). The Apostles, in obedience to the Great Commission, preached the Word, planted churches, and appointed qualified elders to shepherd them (e.g. Acts 14:19–23). It they didn't carry out this mission, who would? The PCA must never lose sight of our Lord's strategy and aim for missions.^[4]

Does this mean that the church is unconcerned with the plight of unbelieving neighbors or the brokenness of our culture? Of course not! But here is where an important distinction (without division) must be made between the Great Commission and the Great Commandment. The Great Commission is the church's clear mandate to proclaim the Gospel, baptize, make disciples, and to establish (and strengthen) biblical churches. The Great Commandment mandates that every individual Christian loves and serves God and neighbor. Therefore, believers obey the Great Commandment when they faithfully fulfill their vocation, love their spouse and family, and be a good church member, citizen, and neighbor. Therefore, when the Church gathered carries out her mission to make mature disciples through the means of grace, the church scattered will then be more faithful to love God and neighbor through their individual callings. However, if the church gathered loses sight of her mission to make disciples through the faithful administration of the means of grace, then we, as the church scattered, will eventually lose our biblical distinctiveness in the world.^[5]

Conclusion

The five points delineated above—Gospel Proclamation, Reformed Worship, Confessional Integrity, Sincere Piety, and Biblical Mission—do not constitute an overly narrow version of the Reformed and Confessional Faith. In other words, these points are no TR manifesto. Instead, they form some of the main building blocks of Mere Presbyterianism, and are designed to foster Christ-centered unity, not division. Therefore, it is absolutely imperative that we renew these emphases in our congregations, session rooms, and presbyteries.^[6]

The future of the PCA depends on it. ♦

[3]Mike Horton, *The Gospel Commission: Recovering God's Strategy for Making Disciples*(Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2011), 16.

[4]Again, clearly the apostles were not laboring to rid their first century Greco-Roman culture of injustice and sin. That was not, and is not, the mission of the gathered church. No, they were busy making and maturing followers of Jesus who would be faithful witnesses in the world through their various callings. A church that loses her Great Commission focus will eventually lose her bold gospel witness. For further reading see Kevin DeYoung and Greg Gilbert, *What is the Mission of the Church: Making Sense of Social Justice, Shalom, and the Great Commission*(Grand Rapids: Crossway, 2011).

[5]This does not mean that the church, as an institution, should never speak to (and condemn) social ills such as abortion, racism, and other forms of injustice. We must do this, especially as these issues emerge in the texts that we are preaching.

[6]The Gospel Reformation Network's seven pairs of distinctives give further definition to the concept of Mere Presbyterianism.