

# Words of Faith

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## Rayburn-Wyckoff wedding service merges musicians

The service was in English. The choral music was in Latin. And the reception was in Greek at the marriage of Evangeline Sarah Rayburn to John Samuel Wyckoff on June 18 at First Presbyterian Church in downtown Tacoma.

The prelude to the service began at 7 p.m. with the summer sun streaming in the western stained-glass windows of the sanctuary. At 25 minutes in length the prelude was as long as some entire weddings, and consisted of selections that included Felix Mendelssohn and Johannes Brahms, and concluded with a vocal number by the groom, who was not quite up to completing two major performances in a single day, and who opted for one complete marriage and one unfinished solo.

Pastor Rayburn, functioning as both father of the bride and officiating minister (he was assisted in the ceremony by the Rev. Kevin Skogan), commented on the “one flesh”

concept from the book of Genesis, applying it first to the very first married couple in history and then skipping over many centuries to recount his conversation with an old Dutch Christian scholar whose love for his wife was transparent and deep eight years after she had been taken from him.

After the service the wedding party and guests decamped to Wells Hall, two blocks away, where they dined on stuffed grape leaves, baklava, grapes, hummus and pita bread, quaffed punch in quantities sufficient to have filled a small lake, and were entertained by a five-piece band, “Just Us,” whose music rolled down from the stage and around the guests, patiently trying to coax some dancing out of the generally sedate company of Presbyterians, and occasionally succeeding.

Following a honeymoon in Greece, the couple, both graduates of Covenant ▶ 5

## PCA General Assembly meets in Philadelphia

Pastor Rick DeMass and Elder John Pribyl were among the 1355 commissioners from 708 churches who attended the 32<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly in Pittsburgh, PA, from June 15-18.

Dr. J. Ligon Duncan III, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Jackson, MS, was elected moderator, at age 43 the youngest minister to serve in that capacity.

The General Assembly approved the creation of two new presbyteries in Florida, which has been one of the most productive areas for PCA church planting. When the PCA began in 1973 there were few churches in the state, and now one-sixth of the denomination’s membership is there. The two new presbyteries bring the total number in the denomination to 68.

In the last statistical year (2003) the PCA grew by 2.68%, one of the fastest rates for any denomination in North America, and closed

out the year with 1,565 church and 320,400 members.

Among other developments reported at General Assembly:

- The online news site “PCANews.com” has been merged into “byfaithonline.com.” A print version of byFaith is also being developed.

- Covenant College reported an enrollment for 2002-2003 of approximately 1300 students, more than doubling the student body since 1990. The long-term plan is to accommodate 2,000 students in residence.

- Mission To the World (MTW) reported 560 long-term missionaries, 176 two-year missionaries, 293 missionary interns, 6,801 two-week mission trip participants, and 352 national church-planting partners. Nearly two-thirds of MTW missionaries are involved in church planting. ♦

—from byfaithonline.com news reports

## Biblical Worship: A Continuing Series

## Perspectives on Worship

By Josh Moon

I have been given the opportunity, as the summer intern here at Faith, to offer my own “critical reminiscences” of worship in the churches I have attended over the last number of years.

Since leaving for college I have developed ties to and participated at some length in the ministry of four PCA churches throughout the country. These four churches in many ways offer a microcosm of worship in the PCA, evidencing the three leading ways in which worship is offered in our denomination.

The first church, and the first category, exemplifies what has been given the label of a “contemporary” service, which in this case is marked by a freer liturgy and a focus on using what is thought to be more accessible styles of singing and instrumentation.

The second church and the second category has been labeled “traditional,” in the strong Presbyterian sense, holding to the tradition of Presbyterians in liturgy and music from the last hundred years or so—doing what seems to have “always” been done.

The third category falls under the unfortunate title of “liturgical”—unfortunate because every church is liturgical, which is simply the name for the structure and activities of any worship service. The marking characteristic of these churches, however, is a focus upon the whole liturgical act of worship.

Dr. Martyn Lloyd Jones once said about preaching: “What is the chief end of preaching? I like to think it is this. It is to give men and women a sense of God and His presence. . . . I can forgive the preacher almost anything *if he gives me a sense of God*, if he gives me something for my soul, if he gives me something which is very great and very glorious, if he gives me some dim glimpse of the majesty of the glory of God, the love of Christ my Saviour, and the magnificence of the Gospel. If he does that I am his debtor, and I am profoundly grateful to him.” [Italics mine]

In many ways the above sentiment has long marked my own perspective on worship as a whole, including but not at all limited to the preaching—I wanted a sense of God in worship. This was the case long before I would have been

able to phrase it in such a way. But how does one define a “sense of God” in worship?

When I first answered this question, the “sense” was what I now would call a subjective emotional feeling that *I loved God*. In this light, the “contemporary” service fit my own desires in many ways. The focus of the liturgy was to involve the mind and heart of the worshipper in such a way that he felt and was encouraged in his love for God.

But it was not too long before I began to see the need for more in worship than simply having my own love for God nurtured. I moved from a “contemporary” church to a “traditional” church when I left for college, and without a doubt the focus of this new church was on the preaching of the Word. Like traditional Presbyterians, the liturgy was structured entirely around the preaching and the effort of the service was geared entirely toward this end. The preacher was a tremendously gifted man and it proved to be a wonderful time for me as I grew sitting under the Word. If the focus of my first church was on my love for God, at this church it was learning God’s love for me through the preached Word. I sensed God powerfully through the preached Word.

To this point in my Christian life I had given little thought to worship, and the term “liturgy” still had the connotations of an Anglican or Roman Catholic service. During my years in St. Louis I had the opportunity to sit under what is considered by some to be a “high church” service. In this service it is impossible to state without great qualification that one part of the service is in itself more important than another part. The service was built around a flow, each part contributing to the whole, and all picturing the weekly renewal of the relationship between Christ and His church. There was a constant dialogue between God and His people, the forgiveness of sins became an essential function every week, and our giving ourselves in the tithe finally began to make sense. In every aspect I began to see that the whole service as a unit could be (and, I would argue, should be) viewed as a sacramental activity—in the *whole*, there is found a

“I am convinced from Scripture and from history that the best form of worship is focused around a structured liturgy that sees the whole as a single unit.”

## CHS group studies European history in two-week tour

**44** students. 9 adults. 16 days. 3 countries.

These were some of the numbers that came out of the 5<sup>th</sup> Great Britain trip by Covenant High School students and chaperones as they flew, drove, and sailed their way through centuries of European and church history from April 12-27, 2004.

Led by CHS principal Dick Hannula and English teacher Doug Bond, the intrepid travelers visited more than three dozen different historical sites in England, Scotland and France as a group, and additional sites on their own, bringing to life some of the lessons that the students had studied in books and lectures.

CHS choir assistant and chaperone Tam Gronewold was moved to tears twice when she and a few others visited Canterbury Cathedral—once with joy at the majesty of the architecture and liturgy at a high church service, and again with sorrow when she heard the quality of the preaching in the famed edifice.

In addition to the Covenanter sites in Scotland, and historical sites in England, that have been a fixture in past tours, the group also spent time in Normandy, France, where 60 years ago the future of the western world hung in the balance as vast armies clashed during the D-Day invasion in June 1944. They visited the graves near the Utah and Omaha beach landings on the coast and such places as Pont du Hoc and Ste. Mere Eglise, where ideologies were contested in a fierce struggle and where history was written in blood.

Sleep was a commodity that was often in short supply, and the schedule was intense, but as on past trips both students and adults returned with a new appreciation for the lessons of history and the faithfulness of Christian believers whose witness to the gospel was paid often with their lives, but whose testimony helped advance the kingdom of God in the affairs of men. ♦



CHS Great Britain Tour 2004: Covenant High School students and chaperones at the Thames River, with the 100-year-old Tower Bridge in the background.

2 ◀ sense of God Himself acting with and for His people.

This is something of what I have learned in my experience in the different churches. I have been greatly blessed in “sensing” God in each of the churches and would not hesitate to recommend the churches to friends. But it has been in the latter churches, those whose focus has been on the whole of the service as sacramental—as a sign and seal of God with his people—that I have

“sensed” God in the whole of worship. I am convinced from Scripture and from history that the best form of worship is focused around a structured liturgy that sees the whole as a single unit.

But the reason that I love this form of worship is not simply because the Bible recommends it; I love it because it is here more than anywhere else that I gain “some dim glimpse of the majesty of the glory of God, the love of Christ my Savior, and the magnificence of the Gospel.” ♦

# Church Spends Summer of 2004 Preparing to Build

As the dry and sunny summer days of 2004 passed by, the first tangible signs of the new building project began to be visible in and around the church.

When parishioners arrived for Sunday services on June 27, they found one of the houses just west of the church off of its foundation, on wheels, and occupying its former back yard, while the house next door was minus its chimney and other brickwork, which was now piled in its front yard.

By the following week the first house had vanished into thin air, but the second one had not yet made its escape, although it too had managed to wriggle off its foundation and onto beams and wheels.

By July 11, the second house had made its getaway and the high school portable was now giving some thought to following its former

neighbors to new pastures, and had managed to detach itself from its foundation and was attempting to climb off of it, looking footings-loose and fancy-free.

Also on July 11 the congregation assembled after the 11 o'clock service and clustered around a small former planter that had been recruited to serve as the site for the official groundbreaking for the new building. A green line had been painted on the parking lot showing the outline of the planned 30,000 square foot addition, and building committee chairman Don Mellott remarked that the first two shovelfuls of earth to be turned over were to be followed by approximately 500 dump truck loads of dirt that would be removed from church property as part of the excavation work. Wielding the shovels, and sporting hard hats, were Bonnie Payne, a still-active charter member of the congregation, ▶ 5

One small picture for the camera, one giant step for the church: Pastor Rayburn addresses the congregation at the groundbreaking ceremony for the new addition on July 11, 2004. Bonnie Payne and John Schrupp turned over the first shovelfuls of earth at the ceremony.



Photo by Jack Bowdle

## Building progress

4 ◀ and John Schrupp, a third-generation FPC member whose father and grandfather were both elders.

Pastor Rayburn spoke of the desire for the congregation to “being witness of life forever in Jesus Christ, and that this building would enhance that ministry,” and prayed for God’s blessing on the project and the uses to which it would be put in the years to come.

By July 18 the portable had managed to turn itself 90 degrees from its former position, but that was as far as it would get for a time. It would be levelled and used in that position while the new building was constructed, and only then would it be able to entertain further thoughts of trundling off to some

distant horizon.

During the month of July the pastors and administrative staff had dispersed to various locations, with Pastor Rayburn and Pastor DeMass having moved their offices to their homes, and Mike Simpson and Debby Bowdle gone to the far corners of the church to temporary offices.

By July 25 the former church offices, library shelves, and nursery were empty, with only a small sign on the nursery door announcing that “Nursery is now located downstairs.” Not a book or piece of furniture was to be seen; rooms which had for decades been bustling with activity on Sundays and at other times during the week were now vacant of everything

except carpet, dust, and memories.

The office and nursery wing was demolished on Wednesday, August 11, to the cheers of a number of Faith folk who came out to watch the momentous event. Young Jonathan Pfefferle, perhaps voicing the sentiment of some of the others, said afterward, “That was really cool!” Mike Simpson captured the event on videotape for the benefit of anyone interested in viewing the deconstruction.

And by the end of August the new parking lot was open for business and there was a giant hole where the administrative wing had been. It was now a part of history, and a new building was getting ready to rise in its place. ♦



Watch the building grow! Live photos of the construction are online at <http://www.faithtacoma.org/cam.htm>.

## Rayburn-Wykoff wedding

1 ◀ College, spent the summer in Tacoma, and were scheduled to move to New York in the fall, where John will do graduate work in musical composition.

The poet John Donne (1573-1631), who had much to say about many things during his lifetime, was quoted in the program for his thoughts on marriage, and provided a fine perspective on the entire occasion:

*May these love-lamps we here enshrine  
In warmth, light, lasting, equal the divine...  
This is joy's bonfire, then where love's strong arts  
Make of so noble individual parts  
One fire of four enflaming eyes, and of two  
loving hearts. ♦*

## New Members

GEORGE PRIBYL ( John Pribyl's brother), joined by reaffirmation of faith.

DAVID YOUNG, transferred from Trinity Reformed Church, Moscow, ID.

### Baptisms

JACKSON & MIRANDA MILTON, son and daughter of Andrew & Sandy Milton  
♦ MICHAEL SUGIMOTO, infant son of Michael & Carolyn Sugimoto ♦  
BOOKER STALLWORTH.

### Child Professions of Faith

JONAS KVALE, son of Ken & Wendy Kvale ♦ JACKSON & MIRANDA MILTON, son and daughter of Andrew & Sandy Milton ♦ WATCHMAN TAMMINGA, son of Micah & Wendy Tamminga.

### To Adult Status from Child Communicant

Taylor Cheney ♦ Diane Feucht ♦ Heather German ♦ Alexandra Gronewold ♦ Michael Gronewold ♦ Kelly Hannula ♦ Nick Heermann ♦ Hilary Jack ♦ Matthew Loynes ♦ Darcee Pribyl ♦ David Simpson ♦ Meagan Triller.

### Other

Jennifer Gordon restored to roll. ♦ Lonnie Arnold, Jr. transferred back to Faith from Trinity Presbyterian Church, Valparaiso, FL.

### Into Life Eternal

Sharon Allen (August 27). ♦

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## ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

### Church Calendar

**September 1:** Covenant High School begins ♦ **September 5:** CHS Convocation Service (evening service of FPC) ♦ **September 10-11:** Presbytery Men's Retreat in Walla Walla

# Spring concert fills sanctuary with music

Johann Sebastian Bach was there. Gabriel Faure was there. So were Cesar Franck and Maurice Ravel.

Even Leonard Bernstein showed up for a spring concert had at the church on Friday, April 30, 2004.

The musical event, held for the benefit of congregational members as well as anyone else who cared to attend, featured the handiwork of Ron Bechtel, Evangeline Rayburn, Stephen Lewin, and the voice work of Nicole Lewin, playing and singing the works of some of the great masters of classical and contemporary music.

Mr. Bechtel, in his introductory remarks, mentioned that the musicians would have put the concert on for themselves, but happily there were upwards of 100 people who turned out for the performance. Mr. Bechtel admonished young musicians in the audience to practice with diligence, as the only way to make progress in mastering their instruments.

The opening number was a rousing improvisation on "Now Thank We All Our God" by Siegfried Karg-Elert, by Mr. Bechtel on the organ. It was followed by an unaccompanied violin chaconne from Bach, played by Steve Lewin, French and German art songs sung by Nicole Pribyl, and Bach's Sonata #1 by Evangeline Rayburn.

An intermission was followed by two Broadway selections by Bernstein, sung by Nicole Lewin, and a piano and violin sonata by Ravel, played by Steve Lewin and Vangie Rayburn. Nicole Lewin then took the stage again with operatic selections by Erich Korngold and Giacomo Puccini.

The concert ended as it had begun, with the sounds of the organ filling all the available space in the church, this time with Franck's Choral #3 in A Minor, played by Vangie Rayburn. The music extended from the high ceiling all the way down to the pews; from chancel to foyer, and from aisle to aisle; the

church become concert hall, practice become polished expression, and music become praise to the most high God. ♦

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*One of the effects of modern liberal Protestantism has been gradually to turn religion into poetry and therapy, to make truth vaguer and more and more relative, to banish intellectual distinctions, to depend on feeling instead of thought, and gradually to come to believe that God has no power, that he cannot communicate with us, cannot reveal himself to us, indeed has not done so, and that religion is our own sweet invention.*

—Catholic novelist Flannery O'Connor, writing to a student at Emory University, in response to a letter that he wrote her about his struggles with faith