

HEARTBEAT

Hope in Christ Church Monthly Newsletter

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Issue 2

Science ≠ General Revelation

By Pastor Scott

There is a confusion abroad in the mind of many Christians that the proclamations of science are the same as, and identical with, general revelation. You may be wondering why it even matters to combat this line of thinking. Certainly, this is a minor thing, to confuse the study of the world with general revelation. But it is not a minor thing. It is in fact, quite a large error that leads to a host of other fallacies that ultimately undermine the reformed belief in *sola Scriptura*.

Sola Scriptura is the belief that scripture alone is sufficient for providing all things necessary to know, believe and live for faith and godliness to thrive in our individual and corporate lives. The Belgic Confession goes on to say, concerning the sufficiency of Scripture: “Therefore, we must not consider human writings – no matter how holy their authors may have been – equal to divine writings; nor may we put custom, nor the majority, nor age, nor the passage of time or persons, nor councils, decrees, or official decisions above the trust of God, for truth is above everything else (Article 7).” This includes science. For when science is equated with general revelation, it is deified

If science is equated with general revelation, then the conclusions of science have the right to overturn the statements of Scripture. After all, if God gave both general and special revelation, and if general revelation and science are identical, then when science makes a pronouncement contrary to the Word of God, it becomes imperative for the Church to negate the Word. Such seems to be the reasoning that many in the progressive circles of

church or society are espousing and pushing in relation to many things, of which sexuality is a current favorite.

In order to understand why this is a faulty equation, one must understand and define both science and general revelation, and special revelation. Science is an empirical method that studies the natural world and what can be known by the observation of the senses of touch, taste, smell, sight and hearing. Science begins in man seeking to understand the physical world and it excludes all supernatural events. It looks for natural causes to effects that one experiences. Because of this, science is prone to error because humans are not capable of fully understanding, articulating or even comprehending all that happens. Science is anthropocentric, or human-oriented and centered. None of this is to denigrate science or call into question its usefulness for living in the world. It is merely to point out what it is and what its limitations are.

General revelation is God’s ‘creation, preservation, and government of the universe’ (Belgic Confession Article 2). Revelation 1:19-20 tells us that the creation displays God’s invisible qualities. General Revelation is therefore God centered, not man centered. It takes as its point of departure the existence of the supernatural and divine and it sees in the natural world the qualities that a divine being must have – power, creativity, knowledge unfathomable, etc. Simply comparing general revelation to science ought to show the vast divide that exists between the two. So, what is it that unites the two? Special Revelation unites

general revelation and science.

Special revelation is God's 'holy and divine Word' (Belgic Confession Article 2). Special Revelation is what exists when the prophets prophesy or receive a vision in the Old Testament. But the fullness of special revelation is the Word of God given to us in the Bible and made incarnate in Jesus Christ. When Jesus came as the fullness of God's word (John 1, Hebrews 1) he came speaking, reciting and testifying to the Old Testament Canon and sending his Spirit upon the apostles to write the New Testament. Therefore, the fullest, picture anyone can have of the world and of God is to read, study and believe the words contained in Scripture. These words show us where our sense experience of the world and the conclusions we draw from it are erroneous. These words tell us more than the kind of qualities that a divine being must have, they actually reveal to us the God who desires relationship. Therefore, it is not the Scriptures that need to be interpreted according to our science, but our science, particularly its conclusions and pronouncements, that must be interpreted according to the Scripture.

The 1972 Synod of the CRC made the following statement:

The church may not, however, allow its message to be made dependent upon the scientific enterprise, nor allow scientific findings to dictate its interpretation of the Bible, nor allow the claims of science to call into question its confession of biblical authority, nor allow any science, including theology, to determine what is believable and what is not believable in the Bible. For such concessions to science would mean reversing the right order of Christian thinking. Scripture itself is the lamp to our feet and the light upon our path as we walk through the various fields of academic inquiry. (Acts of Synod 1972, p540)

Understanding the difference between science, and these two forms of revelation is imperative for the believer as we engage a modern world increasingly appealing to science as the basis for revising all sorts of traditional or religious thinking.

(I am indebted to the CRC's 2020 Report on Human Sexuality for bringing these distinctions to my mind so that I might have the opportunity to formulate this short article.)

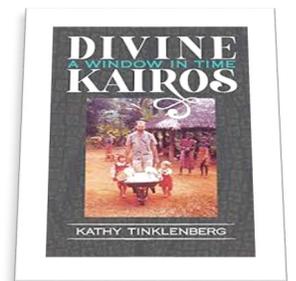


Divine Kairos Book Review

By Don R

I highly recommend Kathy Tinklenberg's "Divine Kairos." It's suitable for teen and adult readers.

It's among the finest first-person accounts I've read of daily life as a missionary in a third world country. Perry and Kathy served for the decade in Liberia's (west Africa) bush country prior to the violent overthrow of the Liberian government.



Their escape is a heart-pounding account.

Kathy doesn't glamorize, sentimentalize, or in any way "spin" her narrative of missionary life in the spiritually dark area of Liberia known as "Devil Country." She lays out her every emotion - panic, fear, joy, loneliness - and faith in encounters with assorted physical threats, including those of armed soldiers. She is not immune from grief, personal depression, deadly disease, snakes, and invasive driver ants in and near her house, but she points the reader to the hand of God both in perilous situations and daily events.

"Divine Kairos" was a real page-turner for me. It provides a slice of history of which most of us in the Western world are unaware. I'm sure this "read" will hold your interest ... and enhance your faith commitment.

FAMILY PROMISE UPDATE

By Lorraine B



Our next opportunity to bless the families served by Family Promise will be the week of March 14. There are currently only 2 families in the program, but more families may be added soon. Because of Covid 19 protocols, the families are currently being served in individual homes in Bellingham and Ferndale. We work with Congregation Beth Israel and First Christian Church to provide meals for a week. Our responsibility will be to provide 1 hot meal and 2 meal kits (ingredients only) per family and deliver the meals and kits on Thursday afternoon. (Family Promise now has a cookbook and the families may choose meals from the cookbook.)

If you are able to help with providing meals and ingredient kits the week of March 14, please let Terry Vander Woude or Lorraine Brouwer know. (We will also be serving families the weeks of May 23, July 11 and October 24.)



Family Promise weeks:

March 14

May 23

July 11

October 24

Ali , and her husband assistant, Herm, are stepping down from leading Family Promise at Hope in Christ since this organization began 3 years ago. Ali and Herm were instrumental in getting our church involved in this ministry. Thank you, Ali and Herm, for your years of service to Family Promise and for showing Christ's love to the families experiencing homelessness. You attended many meetings, brought meals, ate with the families and spent many nights sleeping at First Christian Church. Your interactions with the guests were always kind and compassionate. We all have much to learn from your example.

*Thank
You*

A decorative flourish consisting of several overlapping, flowing lines in shades of purple, blue, and red, positioned below the "Thank You" text.

Why Kings Sing: A Biblical Theology of Monarchs and Music

Submitted by: Brian K

From beginning to end, the Bible links music with kingship. Kings create music and make music. Kings sing.

Musical instruments are first mentioned in Genesis 4. It's after the fall, after Cain has killed Abel, while the writer is tracing the line of Cain. Cain builds the first city, and his descendants take dominion over creation. Jabal keeps livestock. Tubal-Cain makes tools of bronze and iron. Lamech is the first polygamist.

They're an innovative family: animal husbandry, metallurgy, civic order, experimental marriages. Cain's tribe is a clan of kings ruling creation, and in the midst of this royal genealogy is Jabal's bother, Jubal, is the "father of those who play the lyre and the pipe" (Gen. 4:21). Along with shepherding and herding, making tools, founding cities, music is a form of dominion.

Singing and Coronations

Early in Israel's history, women are singled out as singers. When Moses and the sons of Israel sing the Song of Moses after the Exodus, Miriam is singled out (Acts 15:20–21). After Israel defeats Jabin king of Canaan and his commander Sisera, Deborah composes a victory song, which she and Barak sing to taunt the Canaanites (Judg. 5). After the birth of Samuel, Hannah prays a poetic prayer that resembles the psalms and anticipates the song of Mary (1 Sam. 2).

From beginning to end, the Bible links music with kingship. These songs are like the songs of the

women who greet David and Saul as they return from battle. Yahweh is a warrior who defeats his enemies. After his victory, he ascends to his throne, surrounded by songs of praise.

Songs accompany coronations all through the Bible. When David sets up Yahweh's ark-throne in Jerusalem, there's music (1 Chron. 16). When Yahweh's glory fills the throne room of the temple, there's music (2 Chron. 5:11–14). When the Lamb ascends to take the book from the Enthroned One, there's music (Rev. 5). Yahweh always ascends in song.

When Israel gets a king, there's an explosion of music in Israel. Saul meets a company of prophets prophesying and playing instruments (1 Sam. 10:3, 5). Saul is caught up in the prophetic Spirit and begins to prophecy—that is, he sings along. The Spirit makes him a new man, a singing man, a singing king. David is Israel's greatest royal singer and musician, Israel's "sweet psalmist" (2 Sam. 23:1). He organizes an orchestra and choir to offer a sacrifice of praise before the ark shrine and at the temple. David is a new Jubal who invents musical instruments, the "instruments which David had made" (1 Chron. 23:5; 2 Chron. 7:6; 29:26–27; Neh. 12:36).

Music as a Form of Dominion

The link between music and kingship isn't accidental. Good singers train their whole bodies, not just their mouths and vocal cords. To enhance our singing with instruments, we cut and trim trees, pull guts into strings, and train our fingers to pluck. We mine metals, shape them into flutes and pipes and horns, and learn to blow melodically.

Like bread-making or wine-making, music-making is a paradigm of dominion. Whenever you see or hear a violin, you get a taste of the destiny of the world: creation, beautified by human labor, tuned to praise the Creator.

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Music also inspires and prepares us for dominion. Music makes us kings and queens. Soldiers march and sing to prepare for battle, to train them to act as a unit. The pounding beat of the warmup music fills athletes with the spirit of the game. Martyrs prepare for their final combat, and for their ascent to heaven, by learning to sing the song of heaven (Rev. 14:1–5; 20:4–6).

Music as a Weapon of Warfare

Music doesn't just prepare us for battle. Song is itself a form of warfare. Music is armor. Song is a weapon. When Samuel anoints the young David, the Spirit comes on him and, like one of the judges, he is immediately driven into battle (1 Sam. 16). It's not normal war, but spiritual war. Before David fights Goliath with a sling and a stone, before he defeats Philistines, he fights off the evil spirit that plagues Saul. And he does it with his harp. He can fight the Philistine with a stone; he can put armies to flight with a sword. For a demon, he brings out the heavy artillery—a lyre of 10 strings—and fights with his fingers and voice.

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Like David, we fight principalities and powers, spiritual forces of wickedness in heavenly places. And we fight as David did, with spiritual weapons, including the spiritual weapon of song. The Spirit is the Spirit of war, the Spirit of Yahweh the Warrior. The Spirit clothes Othniel, Gideon, Jephthah, and they fight. Four times, the Spirit comes on Samson, and he kills lions, defeats Philistines, rips through cords that bind him. The Spirit is Saul's armor when he delivers the city of Jabesh-gilead from the Ammonites. When the Spirit falls, people get ready for battle. And, when the Spirit fills, he inspires song (Eph. 5:18–20). The church marches into her

spiritual war singing; we fight our spiritual war by singing.

Our warfare is always a warfare of witness (Greek, *marturia*). Singing emboldens us to testify to Jesus in the face of threats and dangers, but singing is itself an act of witness. In the murmuring, raging hubbub of the world, we raise our voices and so testify to another King, Jesus, enthroned above all rule and authority, power and dominion. Every song is a song of martyrdom.

By Peter Liethart, President of the Theopolis Institute in Birmingham, Alabama



LENTEN TIME

From the Worship Planning Team

This year Lent begins on Wednesday (Feb. 17) and concludes six weeks later on Easter weekend (April 2-4). You may recall that last year we had wonderful plans to observe *The Triduum (Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter)* with a special remembrance/celebration each day. Then the pandemic hit, and we had to pull back on things. It may seem like we observed Lent all year in 2020 as we gave up many plans, get-togethers, etc.

So this year, we will still have our in-person Good Friday and Easter services (including livestream), but we would also like to observe the Lenten season together as a church family. Beginning the week of Ash Wednesday, we will have a daily Lenten devotional available for you and your family to use. We are still working on the content and format, but it will most likely be connected to Pastor Scott's messages during Lent from the book of John.

Human Sexuality, The Scriptures and the CRC

By Pastor Scott

What do the three things in this article's title have in common? At first glance, you might not think there is much in common. We are used to isolating sexuality from religion and especially from the scriptures but this is unfortunate in so many ways. God's Word was given to us in order to enlighten our minds and lead us on the paths of righteousness (Ps 119). And since we are by nature sexual beings, the Word of God speaks even to this part of our life. But what does all this have to do with the CRC?

Quite a lot. The CRC Synodical Study Committee whose task was to formulate a biblical and theologically faithful report on Human Sexuality has completed its task. The report is available on the denominational website and in many ways, it is quite encouraging and faithful in understanding what the Biblical Ethic of sexuality is and how that ethic relates to current cultural practices related to pornography, prostitution, same sex marriage, polyamory, singleness, divorce, etc. I encourage each person at HICC to read the report and reflect upon its instruction. Many of the things that culture is trying to promote and normalize are in fact not normal, nor scriptural and we all need to be informed about the Word so that we can compassionately but firmly hold to the Scriptural witness and point people to the Savior Jesus, who hates sin and calls all people to repentance, even in areas of sexuality.

One of the great gifts I received from reading through the full report was the call to self-control. This call is overarchingly made in the report – urging people engaging with every form of sexual unfaithfulness to depend upon the Spirit and exercise the gift/fruit of self-control in their lives. This fruit is needed whether we are single or married, whether we are same sex attracted or opposite sex attracted. Self-control seems to be one of the major counter-cultural fruit that the Spirit is leading the Church and her members to display. The Christian is called to self-control before entering into a marriage between a man and a woman and when that marriage is ended through death or divorce, self-control again is needed to control the body and the sexual desires it has. Likewise, those with same-sex attraction are called to self-control like any other single who is opposite attracted but not married to a member of the opposite sex. I am grateful for this strong and biblically faithful and articulate way of framing sexual ethics.

The report has a very strong biblical foundation at the beginning that traces sexuality as it was created, the results that happened as part of the fall, how Christ redeems broken sexuality and ultimately what the consummation in glory will entail for human sexuality. This framework is wonderful and points out a number of errors that the church has fallen into by not remembering and learning how to care for and nurture those in the body of Christ who are single.

A word of caution is in order when approaching the report. First, it is quite graphic in some of the language that it employs. Be forewarned that the interviews that are related also are quite revealing about how decadent some in our denomination have become. That they were willing to share so openly about their sexual sin without any hint of remorse is also quite sobering. Second, at times the report seems to have a flavor that the majority opposite sex attracted culture needs to learn from those with same-sex attraction, as if they are the only ones who understand true sexual struggle and what it means to seek after Christ faithfully. I think this is overstating the case and not true.

Finally, realize that there is a battle brewing in the CRC. For those following the Banner articles the past few years but especially in October-December 2020, there is a movement in the CRC that is seeking to reject this report and make human sexuality a negotiable issue – like women's ordination was made in the past. It is imperative that we all read our Word and compare it to this report. It is imperative that we pray for God to preserve Biblical faithfulness and not sacrifice the teaching of Scripture to the cultural accommodation that

those with more liberal leanings are proposing. This battle will determine the future of the CRC and will likely result in people and churches leaving the CRC no matter which way the decision is made. If biblical orthodoxy is upheld, likely many progressive churches and members will withdraw as they will not be able to sign the confessional status that this report declares. If orthodoxy falls, then likely the historically authentic and biblically faithful churches will withdraw.

In conclusion, if you would like to be part of a group to read and reflect upon this report in smaller chunks, I would love to facilitate a time where we can come together and discuss the teaching the report presents and its applications to specific issues of human sexuality. There is much to learn and grow in. Please call the church office and let Lisa know if you are interested.



Northwest Hispanic Ministry Report for January 2021

by Joe Strong

NWHM, 701 W. Blackburn Rd., Mt. Vernon, WA 98273)

Our churches are doing well even though our attendance has dropped. For many months, our Amor Viviente Church in Lynden met outside during the summer months and then we moved to the basement of 3rd CRC in Lynden when the weather got bad. We were able to enjoy our Christmas program together even with a meal. It was not the same as other years. Then we started to have members come down with COVID 19 and we closed the in-person church service and went back to Zoom. Thankfully, we still meet in-person in Mt. Vernon.

Because of COVID, our young people participate in church more. Thankfully, they all know how to use the internet better than the rest of us. Miguel, who is close to graduating from Western Washington University, in Bellingham does the worship music via Zoom. We have 4 younger people teaching the Discipleship Course via Zoom. Even though we don't sing, we have a boom box that we crank up and we listen to praise music in Mt. Vernon. I also still enjoy leading the young people's group from both churches, that meets via Zoom.

I received a call from Wendell, the head chaplain of the Whatcom County Jail and he told me that soon we will be able to work in the jail again. Of course, it will be a little different. I look forward to that.

God is still honored and praised in the middle of trying circumstances. Thank you for your cards, prayers and support for Northwest Hispanic Ministry.

Deacons Digest

By Elaine S

The deacons met via Zoom on Jan. 6, 2021, which was for our January meeting.

One of our first discussions was about the video license that our church uses to host movie nights. We discussed whether it should be renewed for 2021. Because of the Covid restrictions, we decided not to renew the license since large gatherings are on hold, and no events are planned.

Another topic was the new software that our church is now using. Jenn Boer is tracking offerings under the new method and retiring the old reporting method.

The deacons approved the sending of a check to Matthew Smith at Project 92 in support of Susma Gajmar, a missionary in Nepal.

Positive feedback was received from the group that went Christmas caroling. Time was spent sharing praises and concerns for people in our church who are having medical issues.



Giving in December 2020

	<u>Dec</u>	<u>Year-to-Date</u>
Designated Fund Offerings:	\$ 3,725	\$ 3,725
General Fund Offerings	\$ 25,753	\$ 25,753
Rent / Utilities Income	2,609	2,609
Interest Income - Undesignated	<u>22</u>	<u>22</u>
Total Undesignated Income	28,384	28,384
General Fund Expenses	<u>(14,399)</u>	<u>(14,399)</u>
Income Over (Under) Expenses	<u>\$ 13,985</u>	<u>\$ 13,985</u>

Total 2021 budget, including ministry quotas	\$281,796
Year-to-Date Budget for 12 months	\$ 23,483
Total Undesignated Income	<u>28,384</u>
Income Over (Under) Budget	<u>\$ 4,901</u>

Loan Balances'

Classis: \$ 10,000

Payroll Protection Program: \$-0-, 100% forgiven effective December 8, 2020



Happy Birthday



8 Brian K

8 Joanne S

11 Phil S

13 Aleya C

17 Faye H

17 Ida R

19 Tanya O

20 Josiah C

26 Jen R

27 Doug K



February 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 	3 11:30 am Elders Mtg 1pm Women's Bible Study 7pm Deacons Mtg	4	5	6
7 9:30 am Worship Service/Communion	8	9	10 1pm Women's Bible Study 7pm Council Mtg	11	12	13
14 9:30 am Worship Service 	15	16	17 Lent Begins 1pm Women's Bible Study	18	19	20
21 9:30 am Worship Service 7pm Church Prayer Mtg on Zoom	22	23	24 1pm Women's Bible Study	25	26	27
28 9:30 am Worship Service						