

Alliance Re:port

Fall 2014



ALLIANCE[®]
OF CONFESSING EVANGELICALS

Christian Unity

David Murray

Contributor to *Christward Collective*

The idea of Christian unity has been so perverted over the years by liberal Christianity that there is considerable confusion about what it means, both inside and outside the church.

Another sad consequence is that those who are orthodox have overreacted to these abuses by rarely speaking about it, except to criticize it, and we even more rarely work for it. However, we must not let the precious vocabulary and principles of Christian unity fall into neglect or be stolen from us by those who have deliberately twisted and misused them.

A bright light in the midst of this confusion is the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals' *Christward Collective* website that strives to build wider Christian unity on a biblical basis.

I want to encourage more of this biblical ecumenicity; but to do so, we must first of all distinguish six different types of Christian unity.

1. Spiritual unity is the unity that all Christians have in Christ. We may differ in a multitude of ways, yet all those who are truly born again are united to Christ by His Holy Spirit and through Him to one another. This explains the strange but wonderful bonds we can experience when we meet Christians we've never known before and yet almost immediately we sense a delicious and delightful closeness and love that exceeds even that of some natural family bonds.

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2014: One of Our Busiest Years Yet

This year, the Alliance is marking one of its busiest event seasons, partnering with churches to provide regional events that proclaim biblical truth and advance our mission to foster a Reformed awakening in today's Church. At year's end, the Alliance will have conducted fourteen events in eight different states.

A few noteworthy occurrences this year include the Alliance's first bilingual event with live translation provided for our Spanish-speaking attendees at the North Texas Conference on Reformed Theology. With the addition of AllianceLIVE internet streaming, this year's PCRT conference in Philadelphia reached families and individuals in over 120 countries around the world.

Events are scheduled this fall in Oklahoma City, OK; Quakertown (near Philadelphia), PA; Princeton, NJ; Charleston, WV; Powder Springs (near Atlanta), GA; Charleston, WV and two events in Indianapolis, IN. For details on each of these events, as well as the Alliance's 2015 Events Schedule, visit AllianceNet.org/Events. ☺

"Go for Health — theological health — spiritual health. That's what the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals is about.... It's spiritual health, the health that is found only in the truth of God's Word; the health that is found only in the doctrinal substance of the faith; the health that is found only in that which points to the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ and affirms the glory of God."

— Dr. Albert Mohler, president
Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY

PHILADELPHIA CONFERENCE
ON REFORMED THEOLOGY 2015

HOLINESS AND HONOR:
A Reformed View of Sex and Marriage

Grand Rapids · March 20–22
Nashville · April 10-12
Philadelphia · April 24–26

Thank You, Friends & Churches

Friends of the Alliance and Subscribing and Supporting churches, continue to be the cornerstone of all that the Alliance accomplishes. They provide the faithful prayer and financial support that makes everything possible, broadcasting the Word of God, publishing biblical truth, and challenging the church to a deeper faith at every Alliance event.

Thank you! If you have not yet joined the Alliance as a Friend or Subscribing or Supporting Church, please consider doing so. The need is great, but so are the opportunities! Visit AllianceNet.org/Support. ☺

Alliance Events

Fall 2014



Fall 2014 Speaker Profile: Daniel Akin



In addition to David Garner, Richard Phillips, and Liam Goligher, attendees of the 2014 Quakertown Regional Conference on Reformed Theology will be challenged in God's Word by Daniel Akin, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary and College in Wake Forest, North Carolina. Dr. Akin is especially known for his commitment to international missions and expository preaching. He has served the Church in a number of capacities, including interim and full-time pastorates,

before becoming assistant professor of theology at Southeastern and, in 2004, its president. He has also edited and authored numerous articles and books. The Alliance is pleased to have Dr. Akin as one of our fall 2014 speakers. Join him, and us, at Quakertown Regional Conference on Reformed Theology, November 14-15, 2014. Register at AllianceNet.org/Events. ☀

Does God Care How We Worship? Answering with a Strategic Partnership

David Hall

Contributor to *Place for Truth*

Does God care about how we worship? Some Christians give little thought to how they worship, and as a result end up copying some form of the world or other. Or else, subjectivism, aestheticism, or emotionalism become the standards for acceptable worship. In nearly every other area of human life—ranging from child rearing, to ethics, to money management and education—we ask "What does God say on this subject?" Yet, many Christians forget to ask His opinion on the subject of acceptable worship.

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PCRT Adds Nashville to Its 2015 Schedule

And Returns to Grand Rapids & Philadelphia

The Alliance is very pleased to bring the Philadelphia Conference on Reformed Theology (PCRT) to Nashville in 2015. Since its inauguration in 1974, PCRT has attracted overflow audiences to its biblical-expository approach to Christian doctrine. It remains the most potent of all such conferences, lacking the air of a convention but instead cultivating an intense combination of worship and Word. The Alliance purposefully holds its conference in churches like Covenant Presbyterian Church in Nashville to encourage a worshipful and intimate setting where attendees can fellowship with one another and the speakers.

As crucial as broadcast and publishing are to the fulfillment of the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals' mission, they can never substitute for the kind of person-to-person contact that events provide. Events encourage Alliance members, assuring them that they are not alone and enabling them to make contact with other conference goers and speakers. These contacts often bear unexpected fruit.

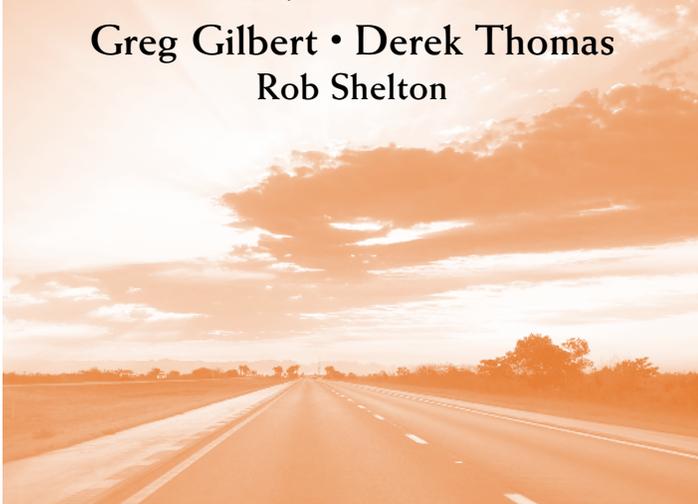
Join us April 10-12, 2015 at Covenant Presbyterian Church in Nashville, TN for *Holiness and Honor: A Reformed View of Sex and Marriage*. Our speakers Joel Beeke, Iain Duguid, and David Garner will reclaim the high ground of sex, love, and marriage, addressing how they relate to Christ as well as the practical side. The 2015 PCRT will be returning to Grand Rapids (March 20-22) and Philadelphia (April 24-26) as well. We hope you'll reserve these dates and plan to be in one of these cities. Visit AllianceNet.org/Events for additional details. ☀

TEXAS HILL COUNTRY BIBLE CONFERENCE 2015

SANCTIFICATION: THE LONG JOURNEY HOME

February 27-28, 2015

Greg Gilbert • Derek Thomas
Rob Shelton



Creative Ways to Support the Alliance

#GivingTuesday

First came "Black Friday," then "Cyber Monday," and now "#GivingTuesday," an international movement started two years ago in response to the heavy consumerism of the other days. Promoters write, "We have a day for giving thanks and two days for getting deals. Now, we have a global day dedicated to giving back. On Tuesday, December 2, 2014, charities, families, businesses, community centers, and students around the world will come together for one common purpose: to celebrate generosity and to give." As you hear more of this "Day of Giving" in coming weeks, please remember the Alliance with your gifts. You can give online anytime at AllianceNet.org/Donate.



A No-Cost Way to Support the Alliance

Amazon, the notable internet shopping website, has initiated a program whereby shoppers can have a percentage of the purchase price for whatever one buys donated to the Alliance, at no extra cost to the shopper.

The program is called "AmazonSmile." When shopping online, simply go to the website, smile.amazon.com. You'll find the same prices and selection as the regular Amazon website but, after designating the Alliance as your "own charitable organization," Amazon will donate 0.5% of the purchase price from eligible purchases to the Alliance. Bookmark the AmazonSmile website and begin supporting the Alliance each time you shop online. ☺

Use Your Retirement Tax Bill to Support the Alliance

Many of us have taken advantage of generous tax incentives provided by Congress to encourage savings for retirement years. These qualified plans (IRA, 401k, Keogh, and others) provide us with a tax benefit at the time contributions are made and build tax-free for the future.

Money in these retirement funds is subject to income tax at the time of withdrawal by the owner. Because they are included as part of the taxable estate at death, assets in qualified retirement plans may also be subject to federal estate taxes. This means these assets can be taxed twice at your death resulting in up to a 70% tax liability.

Your charitable bequest can eliminate the hidden double tax. By properly funding a charitable gift with tax-deferred assets, you eliminate both taxes.

The Alliance is committed to the principles of Christian stewardship. Every discussion of the use of "our resources" is based upon our recognition that God owns everything and we are His stewards or managers. It is our responsibility then, to share information about managing the assets He has entrusted to us. The Alliance partners with the Barnabas Foundation so that we can offer you their confidential, free-of-charge assistance in

planning your estate. Contact Robert Brady at 215-546-3696 x33 to set up your meeting with a Barnabas Foundation Christian attorney today. They will help you decide what is best for your particular situation. Your conversations with them are confidential and offered at no cost to you. ☺

Individuals and Churches

Subscribing and Supporting Churches

Churches across the country are partnering together within the Alliance. Is your church standing with us? Churches have two opportunities to do so: (1) Become a Subscribing Church by declaring your commitment to the evangelical affirmations of the Protestant Reformation. In return, your church will receive monthly updates from the Alliance and will be added to our website; (2) Become a Supporting Church. In return, your church will receive free or discounted resources, special invitations to events and more. Details are available at AllianceNet.org/Support.

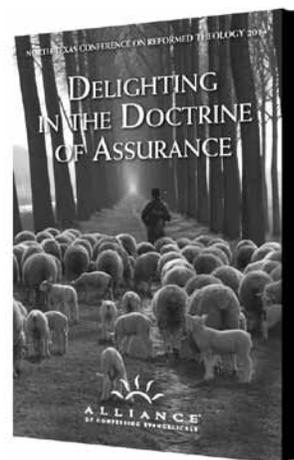
Never Enough Friends

In addition to churches, individuals support the Alliance by becoming Alliance Friends. In return, our Friends also receive free and discounted resources, monthly updates, event registration discounts and more. The need is great, but so are the opportunities. Details are available at: AllianceNet.org/Support. ☺

"Time Is Money!"

With just a few hours a week, nearly anyone could make a significant contribution to the ministries of the Alliance in the form of time - helping with administrative tasks in our Lancaster, PA office or making phone calls, proofreading books, writing marketing blurbs, listening to audio, etc., from home. For more information, contact Alicia in our office at 215-546-3696. ☺

A New Audio Series: Delighting in the Doctrine of Assurance



Order Now at ReformedResources.org

Alliance Publishing

Fall 2014



ALLIANCE[®]
OF CONFESSING EVANGELICALS

New Contributors and New Functionality at Alliance Websites

Broader, richer content is to be found on the Alliance websites with the addition of a host of new contributors.

reformation21 is excited to welcome:

- Frank Turk, one of the “teampyro” regular bloggers at *Pyromaniacs*, among other sites;
- Scott Swain, associate professor of systematic theology at Reformed Theological Seminary, Orlando, FL;
- Aaron Denlinger, professor of church history and historical theology at Reformation Bible College, Sanford, FL;
- Bruce Baugus, associate professor of philosophy and theology at Reformed Theological Seminary, Jackson, MS;
- Mike Reeves, author and senior lecturer at Wales Evangelical School of Theology

Joining *Christward Collective* is Scott Redd, president and associate professor of Old Testament at Reformed Theological Seminary’s Washington, D.C. campus.

And new to *Place For Truth* is Mark Johnston, minister of Bethel Presbyterian Church in Wales and former senior pastor of Proclamation Presbyterian Church, Bryn Mawr, PA.

In addition to the writings of contributors, new and old, readers at *reformation21.org* will now notice a number of functional improvements to the site. These include printable pages, the ability to share articles and blog posts via social media, improved contributor access, cleaner sidebars and easier navigation. Enjoy! 🌸

New Alliance Resources

In recent weeks, the Alliance has released a new book, a new video series, several new audio sets and brought a treasure house of PCRT gems into the digital age for renewed accessibility. These, and other resources are available at ReformedResources.org.

The Signs of True Conversion

In this 70-page paperback, Mark Talbot addresses the questions, “Can we be sure that we are truly saved?” and “How do we know that we have genuinely repented and believed?” He answers these questions by examining the scriptural signs of true conversion or saving faith.

Paperback: \$5; Available from ReformedResources.org

The Gospel of John: A Video Series

James Boice called John’s Gospel, “a powerful source of instruction and comfort to many millions of God’s people through the ages of church history.” In this set, the Alliance has compiled all 26 of these 30-minute video messages on 4 DVDs and added a 2-part study guide for group or individual study.

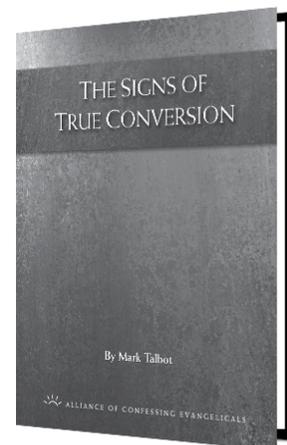
DVD set with study guide: \$60; Available from ReformedResources.org

All PCRT Plenary Sessions Now Available Digitally

R.C. Sproul and Eric Alexander on the greatness of God (PCRT 1987), Sinclair Ferguson on Christ, our Sin-Bearer in *Whatever Happened to Sin* (PCRT 1989), along with James Boice, J.I. Packer, John Gerstner, Michael Horton and a host of others, with series that include: *How Great Thou Art*, *Walking in the Old Paths*, *The Doctrine of Last Things*, *Redeemed: Redemption Accomplished*, and *Redeemed: Redemption Applied*. All of these, and more, are treasures that, until now, were only available on tape. Today, they are again encouraging and challenging the church anew in CD and MP3 players. All are available from ReformedResources.org.

“I have never before read such a profoundly fine composition that communicates so very insightfully the words, thoughts, reasoning, and knowledge so urgently needed today. By this appeal to Evangelicals, you have done exceedingly well. You have my gratitude.” — G.C., Attleboro, MA

The Signs of True Conversion by Mark Talbot



Order Now at ReformedResources.org

Alliance Media

Fall 2014



The Bible Study Hour Receives Two Enhancements

The teaching ministry of James Boice continues to benefit many through *The Bible Study Hour* broadcast on local Christian radio stations and online at TheBibleStudyHour.org. Recently, the Alliance has taken two steps to enhance this ministry and make it more accessible to a younger generation.



First the content of Dr. Boice's preaching ministry on *The Bible Study Hour* has been coordinated with the content of his written devotionals, *Think and Act Biblically*. As a result, you can hear Dr. Boice preach on a passage of Scripture on *The Bible Study Hour*, then go deeper in that same passage during the week by subscribing to the digital devotionals from *Think and Act Biblically*.

Secondly, to make such ministries more accessible, especially to a younger audience, *The Bible Study Hour*, is now available as a podcast subscription through iTunes or OnePlace.com. Three other podcasts are also available from OnePlace.com — *Every Last Word* with Philip Ryken, *Dr. Barnhouse & the Bible* with Donald Barnhouse and a variety of messages at the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals site on OnePlace.com. We hope this will encourage a new audience to reap the benefits of these ministries. For more information, visit AllianceNet.org.

"I have been blessed by Dr. James Boice's preaching for years now. Please accept this gift to help support *The Bible Study Hour* broadcast." — F. D., Potomac, MD

"Your radio ministries are spiritually uplifting, fulfilling, challenging, enriching, interesting and informative. Thank you! Keep it up!" — A.M., Newark, NJ

The Alliance Broadcast Family Continues to Grow

With the addition of three new radio stations, listeners on the east coast, from Virginia Beach, VA to Myrtle Beach, SC can now join hundreds of others who are enjoying the clear, biblical preaching from James Boice on *The Bible Study Hour*. The Alliance is pleased to welcome WTIB 103.7 FM, Williamston, NC; WNBW 94.1 FM, Oriental, NC and WRNN 99.5 FM, Myrtle Beach, SC. For a list of radio stations that broadcast Alliance media, visit the media pages at AllianceNet.org.

Mortification of Spin Unveils Website

The Alliance recently launched a new *Mortification of Spin* website that expands this ministry's "casual conversations about things that count." The new website maintains the same URL address and still houses the weekly podcast. Now, however, you will also find regular articles from each of the program's hosts, Carl Trueman, Todd Pruitt, and Aimee Byrd, thereby expanding the conversations. Visit the new site often at MortificationofSpin.org.

New to the podcast this fall will be its first program that will be recorded in front of, and include participation from a live audience. The three hosts will welcome Kent Hughes to the program to discuss a wide range of relevant issues related to the joys and challenges of preaching. As might be expected, some surprises occur that will remain secret until the program goes live mid-season. Keep listening, and now reading, at MortificationOfSpin.org.

"*Mortification of Spin* is one of my favorite programs to listen to on the computer radio. Great discussion. Thanks so much!" — James (Facebook comment)

Place for Truth Launches Podcast

Place for Truth, the Alliance's website known for articles that present biblical theology with a large dose of exegesis, has expanded to include its own podcast. The program's host is *Place for Truth* editor, Jonathan Master; Dr. Master is professor of theology, dean of the School of Divinity, and director of the Center for University Studies at Cairn University. On each podcast, Dr. Master will interview prominent pastors and theologians on both basic and complex issues of theology. Complimenting each podcast will be articles that elaborate upon each theme. This will be in addition to the continuing articles by current *Place for Truth* contributors. To see more, visit PlaceforTruth.org.



***Applying a higher standard.
Serving a higher purpose.***

This seal is our pledge that your gifts are used as you planned.

Thank you for your support of the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals

To learn more about ECFA visit ecfa.org

Inside the Alliance

The Alliance is pleased to announce the promotion of Karen Ciavolella to executive assistant effective June, 2014. In her new position Karen works with executive director Robert Brady; her primary responsibilities are assisting Bob with program and resource development as well as Reformation Society support. She originally joined the Alliance in January, 2011 as the Alliance event coordinator. You may reach Karen via email KCivolella@AllianceNet.org.

The Alliance also welcomed Jeff Mindler as events assistant to coordinate the many details that make each Alliance event a success. Jeff is a recent graduate of Lancaster Bible College where he earned a B.A. in Biblical Studies and an M.A. in Counseling. He looks forward to continuing his education by enrolling in seminary at a future date. 🌿



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facebook.com/AllianceofConfessingEvangelicals

Does God Care How We Worship?, continued from page 2

The default propensity is for worshippers to assume that their own tastes, ideas, preferences, or desires for catharsis are what should guide worship. Yet the book of Hebrews encourages believers to "offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe," indicating that there must be ways to please God in worship and ways to fail to do so. One need only consult the Golden Calf incident in Exodus to see the manifold dangers of seeking to worship like every other group does. In fact, that passage illustrates the great enemy of true worship: slouching into self-centered idolatry.

Into that modern vacuum, the annual Reformation Worship Conference joined with the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals this year to revisit the great resources that are often untapped by hosting the Reformation Worship Conference, October 23-26, 2014. The Reformers not only sought to return the doctrine of justification back to Scripture; they also sought to reform worship back to the Scriptures. Their goal—and the goal of this collaborative effort—is to return to the Scriptures to rediscover apostolic worship. If that target is hit, then believers will gather for true worship and be united across all generations, cultures, and ages. Worship that is pleasing to God works in any culture. It needs neither elaborate personnel; it doesn't even need electricity. Our great grandparents at the Reformation rediscovered this biblical simplicity and Word-centeredness, which rocked the world.

This year's Reformation Worship Conference, co-sponsored with the Alliance October 23-26, presents Steven Lawson teaching from his Institute for Expository Preaching, in addition to many excellent seminars. And its stirring preaching on the Psalms will be enjoyed in the context that models how local churches may worship acceptably with awe and reverence. Might your church be helped if you attended this conference? The great calling of our day will be answered, in part, by the reformation of worship away from man-centeredness toward God-centeredness.

David Hall is senior pastor at Midway Presbyterian Church, Powder Springs GA, and writes regularly for PlaceforTruth.org. 🌿

Christian Unity, continued from page 1

2. Doctrinal unity means being united on what we believe the Bible to teach, usually defined by one of the historic confessions of faith like the Belgic Confession or the Westminster Standards.

Some don't like this and say, "We believe the Bible not confessions or catechisms." But as soon as you ask them, "Well what do you believe the Bible to teach?" the answerer begins, unwittingly, framing a confession of faith. The only question is whether the "confession" is our own one or one that thousands of Christians over hundreds of years have agreed upon.

The closest and best unity is obviously when Christians and churches are totally agreed. We can each point to one of the confessions of faith and say, that's what we believe the Bible to teach.

3. Practical unity means that we are united in what we understand to be the implications and practical applications of the doctrines we agree on. For example, there may be Christians and churches who hold to the Westminster Confession of Faith and yet who differ in their view of how to evangelize, or conduct missions, or educate children. The unity we aspire to is when Christians and churches agree on what the Christian life should look like and what Church life should look like. Another word for this might be ethical or moral unity.

4. Experiential unity is a unity in our experience of salvation and the Lord's communion with us. We all know Christians we can confide in about spiritual things because they also have experienced the Holy Spirit's work in convicting of sin, drawing to Christ, regenerating, applying salvation to our consciences, supplying grace for daily life, overcoming temptation, developing spiritual graces and gifts, and so on.

But there are other Christians we can talk to about these things and their eyes glaze over; they look at us as if we are totally weird. They seem to have little, if any, Christian experience in the past or the present — at least none resembling our own.

It is such a blessing on the other hand to meet Christians who are of the same kindred spirit in spiritual things and we enjoy a precious experiential unity, that is so encouraging and edifying.

5. Liturgical unity means that we are united in how we understand worship to be conducted both in spirit and content. We agree on the regulative principle of worship and what that means in practice.
6. Ecclesiastical unity might also be called institutional unity. It's the unity that different churches formally and officially enjoy at a denominational level or more locally and informally on a congregational level.

Why not use these six types of Christian unity to examine yourself and your church locally and denominationally to see if there are any areas where you can pursue Christian unity more zealously and wisely.

David Murray is professor of Old Testament and Practical Theology at Puritan Reformed Seminary, and a regular contributor to *Christward Collective*. Read "Christian Unity — Part 2" at ChristwardCollective.org. 🌿