



Thoughts from the Bible and Books

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Web Gems

I don't think it's a stretch to imagine that nearly every single person in this church is on the internet every single day. Certainly, most of us (myself included) are on the web most days. The internet is full of trivial information, full of pornography, and full of temptations to waste money and waste time. But it's also full of the gospel. There are countless websites devoted to churches, Christian groups, Christian resources, and Christian thinking. Some of these are probably junk too, but the Lord uses many of them to do his work in the world. Let me recommend several. Since I've got Revelation on the brain, I'll give you seven.

integrityrca.org

For well over a year I have been talking with other RCA pastors about starting a renewal/reformation movement in the Reformed Church in America. We see positive signs of mission and prayer and reaching out in the RCA. But we also see reasons for concern, some of which are mentioned here in this excerpt from the website.

We are concerned by the creeping moral relativism, theological compromise, and doctrinal ambiguity we find in many churches in North America and even in parts of our own denomination. We see, at times, a discounted truth which affirms only the most nebulous and undefined doctrinal parameters. And we see a counterfeit grace which offers inclusion in place of redemption and acceptance instead of transformation. Because of these concerns, we are compelled to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints.



In light of these concerns we have started RCA Integrity. Who is the "we," you ask? The "we" is a group of 15 pastors and elders (which includes your pastor and URC alum Scott Manetsch among others) who formed the steering committee of RCA Integrity. We worked hard in writing an eight article covenant which, we hope, will bring together like minded pastors, members, and churches who are committed to the authority of the Bible, the uniqueness of Jesus Christ, and biblical sexuality.

Please visit the website. There you will find our introductory letter and covenant. You will also be kept abreast of news, conferences, and newsletters. You may want to consider joining RCA integrity yourself. Membership is open to anyone who is a member of an RCA church. Churches can also join. The URC consistory is in the process of reviewing the materials. As you are led, pray for our denomination, that it will be more firmly grounded in Scripture and anchored in the doctrines of the Reformation, as well as bold in prayer, witness, and mission.

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desiringgod.org

Do you like John Piper or bump into lots of people at URC who do? Then check out this website. Here you will find over 25 years of sermons, tons of audio and a hundreds of articles—all free. It is a virtual library of resources from John Piper—not to mention updates on new book and conferences. If you've never listened to Piper, download one of his sermons. Piper's preaching is a God-given blend of passion and precision.

9marks.org

Nine Marks is a ministry started by Mark Dever, pastor at Capitol Hill Baptist in Washington D.C. Dever has written an influential book and pamphlet called *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*; hence, the name of his ministry. The website has good articles updated monthly—all on very practical subjects related to church ministry, training, and governance. My favorite part of the site is the audio section. Dever has dozens of interviews with church leaders (e.g., John MacArthur, R.C. Sproul, Iain Murray, Mark Noll, David Wells, Joshua Harris, C.J. Mahaney). Dever asks good questions (both personal and theological) and the interviews can be downloaded for free.

biblicaltraining.org

When I was at Gordon-Conwell, Bill Mounce was one of the New Testament professors. He has since left the academy to pastor a church in Spokane, Washington. Mounce is best known for his introductory Greek Grammar (*Basics of Biblical Greek*) which is the most widely used Greek textbook in the country. Biblicaltraining.org is a ministry spearheaded by Mounce. The goal is to provide a world class seminary education available online. Almost an entire seminary curriculum worth of lectures can be listened to for free at the site. The professors are some of the best in the country, many of them from Trinity and Gordon-Conwell. I encourage you to browse the site and see if any of the course offerings interest you.

monergism.com

Monergism is the teaching that the Holy Spirit alone (mono) works regeneration in the human heart. While we certainly must believe and repent, we do not contribute to the actual converting of our hearts. This work is done by God independent

of our cooperation. Monergism is one of the classic doctrines to come out of the Reformation. Monergism.com is a treasure trove of articles, links, and audio explaining the major doctrines (and some minor ones!) of Scripture. You can find great articles (old and new) and lectures on biblical theology, systematic theology, covenant theology, Reformed theology, the Trinity, the attributes of God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

reformingchurches.org

For the past several years, John Piper has made it a point to have an African-American included as one of the speakers at his pastor's conference. A few years ago, I heard Anthony Carter, and have since read his book *On Being Black and Reformed*. This year, I heard Thabiti Anyabwile, and am currently reading his wonderful book *The Faithful Preacher: Recapturing the Vision of Three Pioneering African-American Pastors*. Carter and Anyabwile and other African-American pastors have started the Council of Reforming Churches (CRC).

The Council of Reforming Churches is an association of churches subscribing to the historic five solas of the reformation, the core doctrines of grace commonly known as the five points of Calvinism and the system of theology summed up in such catechism/confessions as the historic Baptist Confession of Faith 1689, The Westminster Confession of Faith and Heidelberg Catechism. Our purpose is to see biblically reformed theology sown, take root in, flourish among and eventually become the dominant theology within the black church and African-American community.

Check out the website and read more about the who, why, and what of this exciting new movement.

theologica.blogspot.com

I'm not a big fan of blogs—most of them are logorrhea if you ask me, a kind of diarrhea of the mouth (or keyboard). But the one blog I check regularly is this one written by Justin Taylor. Taylor was the research assistant to John Piper (that's a pretty good gig in both directions) and is currently doing Ph.D. work at Wheaton. His blog is not so much a blog as a link to a number of other sites, blogs, articles, and interesting goings-on. His site has frequently pointed me toward a helpful article or website. One caution: you can waste a lot of time galloping down all the interesting rabbit trails he links you to. But at least they are always interesting.