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*Heaven Is a World of Love,
Congregations Can Be Full of Strife:
The Life of Jonathan Edwards and Handling Conflict*



Stephen J. Nichols

To some, Jonathan Edwards represents the consummate Puritan image of one preaching hellfire and brimstone, self-righteously cajoling his fellow human beings as mere spiders dangling precariously over the pit of hell. This Edwards is typically known by those whose exposure to him consists solely of having read "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," most likely in a high school American literature anthology. To others, Edwards represents far more than the content of a single sermon. Here the view of the late Edwards scholar Paul Ramsey comes to mind. Ramsey contended that those most familiar with Jonathan Edwards know that his lexicon overflowed with words such as "beauty," "sweetness," and "harmony." For Ramsey, the sermon most paradigmatic of Edwards' thought and preaching was not "Sinners," but rather "Heaven Is a World of Love," the final installment in Edwards' sermon series on *Charity and Its Fruits* from 1 Corinthians 13.¹ To a certain extent, Ramsey succeeded in drawing attention to the full-orbed and more accurate depiction of Jonathan Edwards.² In fact, portrayals of the Puritans in general as well as of Edwards in particular have progressed far beyond the sentiment best expressed humorously in the quip that a Puritan is anyone who thinks that somewhere someone might just be having a good time.

Yet, while this fuller understanding of Edwards' thought might be in place, it presents a conundrum for those studying his life. The recent work of Amy Plantinga Pauw has raised awareness of the tension between Edwards' preaching and ruminations on harmony and unity, sweetness and beauty, and the conflict that seemed to plague his public ministry. She expresses the dilemma this way: "Glorious Christian communion modeled after the harmonious society of the Trinity seemed to come to easier expression in Edwards' private notebooks than in his actual intercourse with Northampton parishioners."³ Intrigued by Pauw's observation, this article offers a biographical synopsis of America's most celebrated pastor, focusing on the conflicts he encountered. The intention is to learn from the conflicts endured by Edwards, uncovering the principles and ideas that undergirded him through these struggles.

One of the most perplexing questions for historians of American Christianity is how it came about that one of the most popular preachers in colonial New England was dismissed from his Northampton congregation. Edwards was, along with George Whitefield, at the center of the Great Awakening. His published sermons, beginning with "God Glorified in the Work of Redemption" in 1731, and his books, beginning with the publication of *A Faithful Narrative* in 1737, had brought him wide acclaim both in New England and in Old England—a true rarity among colonials. As many later accounts attest, Edwards clearly ranks among the finest of pastors, theologians, and, as some even add to the list, philosophers born on American soil. And yet, he was dismissed from his church.

This conflict with his Northampton congregation, however, is only one of the many struggles that Edwards contended with throughout his ministry. When Edwards left Northampton to minister primarily to the Mohawks and Mohicans settled along the Housatonic River in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, once again he met strife and struggle. When he began his pastoral career, still in the throes of his graduate studies, he answered a pastoral call for a newly formed church in New

York City, newly formed because it was the result of a church split. While it is not fair to say that Edwards sought out conflict, it is fair to say that conflict appeared to seek out him. Edwards was not ideally suited, however, for such a match, either by temperament or by inclination. What enabled him to survive the waves of conflict that came his way were the ideas and beliefs that, even at times futilely, he tirelessly preached. Below we will look at a few incidents of conflict in the life of Edwards, actually beginning with Edwards as an observer of the struggles his father Timothy Edwards faced during his tenure at East Windsor, Connecticut. Next we'll explore the Northampton controversy, concluding with a look at the strife Edwards encountered at Stockbridge.

EDWARDS' SCHOOL OF PREACHING

Wilson Kimnach has referred to Edwards' ministerial training as coming primarily from the standard Puritan preaching manuals, such as William Perkins' *The Art Of Preaching*, and from the Connecticut River Valley "School of Preaching," the latter referring to the examples of Timothy Edwards and Jonathan's maternal grandfather and predecessor at Northampton, Solomon Stoddard.⁴ From Stoddard, Edwards learned of the role of revival in a church's life. Prior to Edwards' ascendancy to the pulpit at Northampton, the church under Stoddard's lead enjoyed four "seasons of harvest." Edwards viewed the revivals under his watch in 1734–36 and 1740–42 as merely continuing installments in the stream.⁵ Stoddard's legacy, however, was not all that positive, as we will see below.

His father's impact left no less an impression in forming and shaping Edwards in his pastoral role. Timothy Edwards first came to East Windsor, Connecticut, in 1693, remaining until 1758.⁶ As a graduate of Harvard, the parish at Windsor would be his first and only pastoral call. Truly deep bonds formed between pastor and parishioners. Timothy Edwards and his congregation also enjoyed times of revival. Kenneth Minkema records, "Timothy Edwards established himself as one of the most prominent revivalists of his generation." He

then notes that ironically, "Little could he have known that his remarkable successes would be eclipsed in the flurry of religious activity of the 1740s known as the Great Awakening as well as by the fame of his own son Jonathan, who became the most noted defender of those awakenings."⁷ His son Jonathan's earliest extant letter written to his sister Mary contains news of revival in the very first line: "Through the wonderful mercy and goodness of God there hath in this place been a very remarkable stirring and pouring out of the Spirit of God." He proceeds to record that "thirteen have been joined to the church in an estate of full communion."⁸

But smooth sailing was not always the course for Timothy Edwards. As an example of the type of conflict that Timothy endured and young Jonathan observed, a need arose for a new and enlarged church building. Disputes abounded as to its building and even removal to a nearby but nevertheless different location. Only twenty years were needed to reconcile the situation and to build the new church. Timothy Edwards also experienced quarrels regarding his salary. At times, his congregation simply withheld his salary when he either preached a sermon that touched a nerve or made a decision that was not well received. In 1705 he expressed appreciation for receiving his salary while noting that he was still owed salary for 1703 and 1704.⁹

And he even experienced strife regarding gossip over his family. One of his daughters Hannah Edwards—Jonathan was the only son while there were ten daughters—was betrothed to East Windsor physician Matthew Rockwell. Rockwell not only had built his home in anticipation of their soon union, but also had her initials carved in the fireplace mantle. Hannah was also at the time secretly being courted by and corresponding with John Sergeant, founder of the mission school at Stockbridge and a significant figure factoring into her brother's future. Hannah married neither Rockwell nor Sergeant, fleeing East Windsor for the solace of her sister Esther Edwards Hopkins' and brother-in-law Samuel Hopkins' home in Springfield, Massachusetts. As Kenneth Minckema notes, her breaking of the betrothal left her family

embroiled in gossip. Writing home to another sister, Hannah, directly responding to the fray, intones, "Tell me whether my parents are uneasy about me or no, for if they be not, I don't care what the brawl of the ignorant mob is."¹⁰

As young Jonathan Edwards observed his father and as he continued to learn from him from a distance, he witnessed both triumphs and trials. He learned that the same congregation could bring forth much fruit and also cause bitter disappointment. This was what he learned in the Connecticut River Valley "School of Preaching," and some of these lessons became all too real for him as he embarked on his own pastoral charge. He spent the majority of his ministry north of East Windsor along the Connecticut River in the town of Northampton, Massachusetts.

CONFLICT AT NORTHAMPTON

When Edwards first went to Northampton, it could not have been a more favorable situation. He was serving as an associate for his aging grandfather Solomon Stoddard, the other half of the Connecticut River Valley School of Preaching. Stoddard was revered among New England congregationalists as his unofficial title, the Pope of the Connecticut River Valley, attests. For that matter, the first two decades of Jonathan Edwards' ministry could not have been more favorable, either. Shortly after he replaced Stoddard as minister, upon his elder's death in 1729, the young Jonathan Edwards now assumed the pulpit of the largest church in all of New England outside of Boston. He was called upon to preach the election day sermon in conjunction with Harvard's commencement in 1731. The sermon he delivered that was later published, "God Glorified in Man's Dependence," clearly established Edwards as a theological, intellectual, and pastoral force to be reckoned with. Then in 1734–36 his congregation enjoyed a season of revival that necessitated a new church building to accommodate the bulging church.¹¹

In the aftermath of the revival, Edwards published his first book, *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God*, largely through the efforts of the hymn writer Isaac Watts. So

impressed with his sermons preached during the revivals of those years, the members of his congregation, in addition to funding a building program, generously funded the printing of a number of those sermons. The intent was clear: Edwards' preaching needed to be shared so that those outside of Northampton would be able to experience what they enjoyed regularly on Sabbath days.¹²

The revivals in 1734–36, however, served merely as a precursor to those that would come in the first few years of the next decade. Here, during what historians would later call the Great Awakening, Edwards' sermons, along with those of George Whitefield, enjoyed still larger audiences, and now the revivals spread up and down the Connecticut River Valley, along the coast of New England, across the middle colonies, and extended throughout the colonies in the south.¹³ Edwards' popularity grew, more of his publications rolled off the press, and his congregation again swelled in numbers. Then in 1746 and 1747 he published his classic work, *Treatise on Religious Affections* and, the best selling of his books in his own lifetime, *The Life of David Brainerd*. He now emerged as the single most regarded pastor and theologian in the colonies. And it was at this juncture that trouble with his congregation began to brew.

As mentioned earlier, not all of his grandfather Solomon Stoddard's legacy was positive. In fact, one of the key elements of Stoddard's teaching, what contemporaries referred to as Stoddardeanism, moving beyond the "Half-way Covenant." This had two primary entailments. First, it allowed for the baptism of children of parents who had been baptized but, in Puritan parlance, had not themselves "owned the covenant," or had professed Christ. Secondly, Stoddard viewed the Lord's Supper as a converting ordinance, opening it to both those who had professed Christ and those who did not.¹⁴

For Edwards' part, while he agreed to this practice, he did so grudgingly. When the revivals had subsided after a few years, Edwards' pastoral concerns grew heavy with the lackadaisical spirituality of those who attended church. He also could not help but notice there were fewer in the pews. From

1744 until 1748, not a single person sought membership in the church.¹⁵ Surely, he reasoned, Stoddardeanism certainly was not helping the situation and, in fact, it might certainly, he further reasoned, be to blame. Consequently, after fifty years in 1749, Jonathan Edwards put an end to Stoddardeanism, closing the Lord's Supper to professing believers only. This singular action embroiled Edwards in a deep controversy that consumed him for the next few years and beyond, evenuating in his dismissal on June 22, 1750.

Much has been written on the conflict at Northampton.¹⁶ Most agree that Edwards was in the right. Even those who voted against him later admitted that they were in the wrong. A letter to Edwards from John Owen, a congregational minister in Groton, Connecticut, sums this up well. Having been in conversation with a number of the Northampton congregants, he offers this perspective: "They think it almost sufficient to say Mr. Stoddard sayed [sic] so, & so; they take him for a [biblical] Text, and never examine into ye Holy Scripture to se[e] whether the things he speak[s] in this regard were so or not." Owen encourages Edwards, however, that even though he is in the right he should press his own view cautiously and slowly, as many in Northampton are solely conditioned by Stoddard's view and would be quite slow to accept the truth. Edwards might have been better off had he followed Owen's advice. Owen's letter further offers insight into evaluating Edwards' actions through this controversy. While Edwards was right biblically, he may be faulted for his handling of the situation not so diplomatically.

Nevertheless, Owen acknowledges that even if Edwards took a slow and cautious approach it would not be enough to stem the tide of his opposition. The likely outcome would be that Edwards would not prevail in the end and the congregation would dismiss him. In light of this outcome, he closes by offering Edwards the following encouragement:

But after all should they continue to reject the same, & refuse to examine anything about it & cast you out from among them; yet d[o]ubtless you will have the testimony of a good conscience,

which will yield more true peace and comfort, than any earthly enjoyment whatsoever: And tho' some great divine should appear on ye other side of the question, you will not be surprized; knowing the doc[trine] you've espoused is the doctrine of the N[ew] Testament & will finally be owned by the Great Lord of the Ch[urch], Jesus Christ, since none but true Christians will accept him at last.¹⁷

Twenty days after Owen finished his letter, the church dismissed Edwards. Owen invites us to consider what may have buoyed Edwards through this time: having a good conscience, knowing that he was in the right. He hoped this would bring Edwards a measure of peace and comfort. To be sure, Edwards knew he was in the right, and this served to make a difficult situation better. Yet, a glimpse into Edwards' private notebooks during this time reveals that notions of personal vindication alone were not what enabled him to bear the trial of conflict. Instead, the ideas of harmony and mutual love and the image of a redeemed community bound together by a selfless desire for the other caused Edwards to rise above the fray.

We need to move back a few years, however, to see the full genesis and development of Edwards' ideas of harmony and union. In 1738, in between the waves of revival, Edwards preached a fifteen-sermon-long series on 1 Corinthians 13, *Charity and Its Fruits*.¹⁸ He begins the sermon series by noting that love is the sum of all virtue. He then concludes that "Heaven is a world of love," the statement which has been applied as the title to this final installment in the sermon series. This series, hinged upon these two ideas, offers a glimpse into one of Edwards' principal motifs. In fact, these ideas are simply extensions of Edwards' thinking on the inner workings of the Trinity and the reasons God made the world in the first place. The love for the members of the Trinity was so great that it overflowed, as it were, resulting in the desire to expand the bond of union to include the creation. Edwards began turning these ideas over in his head in his early twenties and remained consumed by them throughout his life.¹⁹

Returning to the sermon "Heaven Is a World of Love," Edwards here finds that heaven affords the most excellent circumstances for the perfect exercise of altruistic, sincere love.²⁰ Consequently, we can "pass through all difficulties in the way to heaven," knowing the destination that awaits. Yet, this is no mere beatific vision for Edwards. He exhorts his congregation not only to long for heaven, but also to live as if they were there now, "by living in love in this world." He continues:

By living a life of love, you will be in the way to heaven. As heaven is a world of love, so the way to heaven is the way of love. This will best prepare you for heaven, and make you meet for an inheritance with the saints in the land of light and love.²¹

Edwards also contemplates the joys of heaven in his private notebooks or "Miscellanies." In Miscellany 934, written around 1742, he observes, "Doubtless the happiness of the saints in heaven shall be so great that the very majesty of God shall be exceedingly shown, in the greatness and magnificence and fullness of their entertainment and delights." As Edwards continued to consider this idea, he began to see a much larger picture of heaven. Writing a few years later, he realized that one's personal happiness was not really the issue. In fact, he notes, "If the whole universe were given to a saint separately, he could not fully possess it, his capacity would be too narrow."²² In other words, Edwards realized that the issue was not the gratification or realization of the self, but the union of the self with the body of Christ and the union of the body with its head, Christ, and with the Trinity. This was Edwards' vision of the heavenly and eternal union that he knew someday he would partake of, and he longed for it to be mirrored in his congregation. When the conflicts and struggles came, however, he did not abandon the idea. Rather, it was these ideas that enabled him to withstand.

Even at the height of the conflict, he endeavored to walk in peace with his congregation. In his "Farewell Sermon," he brought this idea to the fore. One of his concluding exhortations to his congregation was that they would avoid contention.

Instead, he urged them to live in peace, reminding them, "Never think you behave yourselves as becomes Christians, but when you sincerely, sensibly and fervently love all men of whatever party or opinion, and whether friendly and unkind, just or injurious, to you, or your friends, or to the cause and kingdom of Christ."²³ Clearly, Edwards' heavenly vision proved instructive during his own struggles.

While his notions here describe heaven, Edwards, perhaps ideally, longed for their realization on earth. Though idealistic, he was not naïve. He knew that the ideals of heaven were just that. Nevertheless, conflict and strife are, quoting the title of a recent book revealing the spoiling nature of sin, "not the way it's supposed to be."²⁴ One should also not get the picture that Edwards, living in his private world in his study, ignored the realities of the world. This misses the point altogether of Edwards' theological ruminations in his private notebooks. Ava Chamberlain has argued persuasively that Edwards' private notebooks were not so private. He shared them with his understudies, he used them in his sermon preparation, and they constituted the mill from which he would eventually turn out his treatises.²⁵ In other words, he sought to bring these ideas to life, relating them to his own pilgrimage and that of his congregation.

To be sure, Edwards was not without his faults, and he probably could have responded to the conflict better than he did. Even the letter from John Owen suggests that he moved too hard and too fast, not taking sufficient time to educate his congregation concerning the issues of the Half-Way covenant. Many have also pointed to Edwards' tendencies to be more at home with his books than with the members of his congregation as not fitting him for the particular demands of the Northampton pulpit. In other words, while Edwards was certainly in the right on the issue, he may not have been an entirely innocent party. But even in the face of his dismissal, he did not abandon his calling. Instead, he persevered. Numerous opportunities opened up for Edwards. He had offers from Scotland, from points around New England, and even from his supporters to start a new church in Northampton. In the

end, Edwards went forty or so miles west, out on the frontier to the missionary outpost and congregational church at Stockbridge. But there, too, conflict found him.

CONFLICT FOLLOWS EDWARDS

One of the principal families at odds with Edwards at Northampton was the Williams family. They were not isolated to Northampton. In fact, they appear ubiquitously throughout New England. Consequently, when Edwards left Northampton for Stockbridge, he simply exchanged wrangling with one set of Williams for another. The Williams clan at Stockbridge was led by Colonel Ephraim Williams, soldier and land investor. Williams was vehemently opposed to Edwards' appointment to Stockbridge. When it appeared, however, that the tide was against his opposition, he conceded, consoling himself with the notion that Edwards and his fame would at least raise the price of his land holdings.²⁶

The work at Stockbridge was begun by John Sergeant, the former suitor of Jonathan Edwards' sister Hannah Edwards. Sergeant's death in 1749 left vacant both the pulpit of the town's church and the helm of the mission school for Mohawk and Mohican children. Previous interpreters of Edwards have viewed Edwards' filling of that vacancy variously as a banishment, a consolation prize, or simply as a place where Edwards could devote his energies to his writing. All of these bear scrutiny. Edwards expressed intense interest in Native American mission work since the early 1740s. Also, while scholars mostly discuss the Stockbridge years in terms of Edwards' writing of the major treatises, such as *Freedom of the Will and Original Sin*, recently manuscripts regarding Edwards' work for the Stockbridge Indians have garnered attention, showing that Edwards was intensely involved in the ministry at Stockbridge. He advocated regularly on their behalf with the political leadership in Boston, showing an acute sensitivity to Native American affairs. His too understudied Stockbridge sermon corpus also reveals that preaching to the Native Americans was a top priority for Edwards at this time. Finally, his years of wrangling with the Williams

over control of the mission school reveals that he had the education of the young Mohawks and Mohicans at the fore of his concerns.²⁷ It is this latter point that will be developed here.

The clash between Edwards and the Williams included, for a time, church politics. The Williams often simply refused to attend services. Tension reached a crescendo, however, over the boarding school. Funded by churches and patrons in Scotland, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in New England also administered, from a distance, the school for Mohawk boys as merely the beginning of a massive campaign of outreach to the Native Americans. Edwards, as well as the Society, viewed the task of the school as religious instruction. Williams, and the schoolmaster he appointed, William Kellogg, viewed it as a source of labor for the cultivating of his lands. Sergeant's widow Abigail was the daughter of Ephraim Williams. Sarah Cabot Sedgewick and Christina Sedgewick Marquand assert, "The Mission with her, as with her father, was the means to the end of developing the town of Stockbridge, and with it the fortunes of the Williams family."²⁸ These opposing views of the school's purpose are at the heart of the conflict between Edwards and the Williams.

Ephraim Williams, of course, reported matters differently to both the Boston commissioners and the officers of the Society, setting off two years of personal attacks on Jonathan Edwards. Eventually, however, Edwards was vindicated as Kellogg was proven to be embezzling funds and Ephraim Williams' true motives came to light. During the two years of turmoil, however, the patience of the Mohawk sachems and parents grew thin. If farming and labor was the sole purpose of sending the boys to the boarding school, they argued, they're better off at home in the service of their families. When the Society issued the official word that Edwards was now in charge of the school, there were no pupils as the disappointed Mohawks all left. His only action as leader of the school was to close it down.²⁹

As an example of Williams' machinations during the controversy, at one point he frantically went about the town

"offering very high prices with cash in hand" to buy out the other residents in order to gain control of the town and rid himself of Edwards.³⁰ And during this time Edwards persevered. He sent numerous letters on his own behalf, pleading his case. He pleaded with the Mohawks to wait, teaching the children without remuneration and while attending to his other duties. And all the while, he suffered intense personal attacks. Yet, he kept at the cause, perhaps undergirded by the heavenly vision that enabled him to weather his previous season of conflict. But here at Stockbridge, an additional factor comes into play: the desire to persevere for the sake of the gospel and its spread among the Mohawks and Mohicans.

Once this storm passed, Edwards continued his duties, preaching both to the dozen or so English families and to the hundred or so Native Americans who came to hear him preach. He remained at Stockbridge until the beginning of 1758, when he accepted the invitation to be president of Princeton. Edwards' legacy among the Stockbridge Indians, however, is noteworthy. Gideon Hawley, Edwards' apprentice at Stockbridge and his choice to replace Martin Kellogg, eventually did lead a missionary work, not just at Stockbridge, as he ministered for decades to the Oneidas in New York. Jonathan Edwards, Jr., only six years old when the family moved to Stockbridge, grew up among Mohicans, speaking Mohican more than English. Later he would become a vocal and respected advocate for Native Americans.

Edwards himself also impacted the Indians and Stockbridge and their generations to come. During Jonathan Edwards' brief tenure at Stockbridge, many came to Christ. Some fascinating manuscripts from this period are statements of faith written by Edwards for the Stockbridge Indians to recite upon joining the church. They also were likely used for their instruction. While the manuscripts are undated, Edwards scholar Kenneth Minkema dates them to early in Edwards' ministry there, corresponding with the time of the struggles with the Williams. In these texts, we again see Edwards' heavenly vision manifesting itself in his view of church life. So Edwards writes and the Indians affirmed:

I renounce all the enjoyments of this world from being my Happiness, and choose Heaven for my everlasting Inheritance and Home. . . . And as I now desire publicly to join my self to the people of Christ, I profess to be united in heart unto Them as Brethren in Christ, resolving to serve & follow Christ our common Lord, in union & fellowship with him to the end of my life, and to perform all those duties that belong to Them as member of the same Family of God and mystical Body of Christ. And as I desire to be admitted to the Lord's Supper, the Feast of Love, I profess an universal forgiveness, love & goodwill towards mankind.³¹

CONCLUSION

Perhaps all in ministry and all committed Christians, as well, experience doubt and face the temptation to quit, to drop out, to do something else. Given that even in the best of times such sentiments may arise, seasons of conflict and struggle make the temptation all too acute. Few are cut of Edwards' cloth, enabled to withstand a humiliating and disappointing dismissal, only to be thrown into years of conflict and attacks on one's personal character. This legacy of Edwards, however, is not intended to further exasperate those entangled in conflict. Instead, it is intended to encourage those embattled in controversy.

Edwards' handling of conflict does not always rise to the surface when we consider his legacy. We look to his stirring sermons, we are astounded by his logic and argumentation in *Freedom of the Will*, and we continually find challenge in the pages of his *Religious Affections*. We celebrate his role in the Great Awakening, we admire his years as missionary to the Indians at Stockbridge, and we quickly note that he served as president of Princeton. Yet, Edwards' ministry and life was not so charmed as we sometimes portray it. As instructive as this list of achievements and the elements of his life are, so too are his times of conflict and struggle. His legacy, as we celebrate the tercentenary of his birth, is much more than the revered, if not feared, preacher of "Sinners." It is even much more than many of his friends and devotees realize.

Perhaps Paul Ramsey was right in wishing that Edwards be best remembered by the sermon "Heaven Is a World of Love"—an idea that, for Edwards, was far from abstract. Rather, it was quite incarnational as it grew out of his seasons of conflict, strife, and struggle. It is in this sermon that Edwards lays forth the "excellent circumstances" that attend life in heaven. The Triune God, the fountain of love, is at the center. The angelic beings and the redeemed community of humanity are intimately and selflessly united to God, free from all hindrances of sin and reconciled in perfect peace and harmony. This vision of the consummation of God's plan of redemption overflows Edwards' writings and sermons. It fueled his passionate preaching and it buoyed him during turbulent times. But, for Edwards, it served as no mere ideal or ethereal vision. It was the standard by which he gauged his own life on earth and the standard which he held out for his congregations. It remained even when reality fell short of the goal. So, one final exhortation from Rev. Edwards is in order:

*As heaven is a world of love, so the way to heaven is the way of love.*³²

Author

Stephen J. Nichols (Ph.D., Westminster Theological Seminary) is an associate professor at Lancaster Bible College. He is the author of *Jonathan Edwards: A Guided Tour of His Life and Thought* (P&R), *Martin Luther: A Guided Tour of His Life And Thought* (P&R), *An Absolute Sort of Certainty: The Holy Spirit and the Apologetics of Jonathan Edwards* (P&R), and *The Legacy of Jonathan Edwards: American Religion and the Evangelical Tradition* (coeditor, Baker). He lives in Churchtown, Pennsylvania, with his wife Heidi and son Benjamin.

Notes

1. Paul Ramsey, "Editor's Introduction," *The Works of Jonathan Edwards: Volume 8, Ethical Writings*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 95-104.
2. Actually, one need look no further than the "Sinners" sermon to see the full-orbed nature of Edwards' thought. In addition to the imagery of

- dangling spiders and expositions of the wrath of God, Edwards laces the sermon with images of God's grace and mercy, such as his picture of "Christ having flung the door of mercy wide open." See Stephen J. Nichols, *Jonathan Edwards: A Guided Tour of His Life and Thought* (Phillipsburg: P&R, 2001), 191-204, for a full discussion of the famous sermon.
3. Amy Plantinga Pauw, *The Supreme Harmony of All: The Trinitarian Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 6.
 4. Wilson H. Kimnach, "Editor's Introduction," *The Works of Jonathan Edwards: Volume 10, Sermons and Discourses, 1720-1723* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 10-16.
 5. See C. C. Goen, "Editor's Introduction," and Jonathan Edwards, *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God* in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards: Volume 4, The Great Awakening* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), 1-94, 97-211.
 6. At the time the town was simply named Windsor Farms.
 7. Kenneth P. Minkema, "The Edwardses: A Ministerial Family in Eighteenth-Century New England" (Ph.D. dissertation: The University of Connecticut, 1988), 73.
 8. Jonathan Edwards to Mary Edwards, May 10, 1716, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards: Volume 16, Letters and Personal Writings*. Edited by George S. Claghorn. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 29.
 9. See Kenneth P. Minkema, "The Edwardses," 120-26.
 10. Cited in Minkema, "The Edwardses," 118. See also Minkema's article, "Hannah and Her Sisters: Sisterhood, Courtship, and Marriage in the Edwards Family in the Early Eighteenth Century," *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, 146 (January 1992), 35-56.
 11. The large crowds in the church, coupled with weak beams, led to the balcony collapsing during a service, an event that could have proven tragic but did not. The new building was erected in 1737. See Iain H. Murray, *Jonathan Edwards: A New Biography* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1987), 148-49.
 12. Jonathan Edwards, *Discourses on Various Important Subjects, Nearly Concerning the Great Affair of the Soul's Eternal Salvation* (Boston, 1738). Edwards notes in the preface that the work was published "at the expense and the desire of the town."
 13. For a recent, scholarly treatment of the Great Awakening, see Frank Lambert, *Inventing the "Great Awakening"* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).
 14. From the beginnings of the Puritans in New England, ministers agreed to the necessity of regeneration, what the Puritans termed "Visible Sainthood," for church membership. Over the years this became more lax as baptized but unregenerate individuals sought baptism for their own children. In 1662, when Stoddard graduated from Harvard, the "Half-Way Synod" met in Boston, allowing for the practice of baptizing

- infants of nonregenerate members. In the first decade of the 1700s, Stoddard published two widely distributed tracts which argued, following the logic of the Half-Way covenant, for the admission to the Lord's Supper of all people, regenerate and unregenerate alike. See David D. Hall, "Editor's Introduction," *The Works of Jonathan Edwards: Volume 12, Ecclesiastical Writings* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 38-43; and Harry S. Stout, *The New England Soul: Preaching and Religious Culture in Colonial New England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).
15. Amy Plantinga Pauw, "Editor's Introduction," *The Works of Jonathan Edwards (WJE): Volume 20, The "Miscellanies," Entry Nos. 833-1152* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 9.
 16. See Patricia Tracy, *Jonathan Edwards, Pastor: Religion and Society in Eighteenth-Century Northampton* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1980), 171-94, and David D. Hall, "Editor's Introduction," *WJE: Volume 12, Ecclesiastical Writings*, 51-89.
 17. John Owen to Jonathan Edwards, June 2, 1750, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.
 18. See the scholarly edition of the sermon series in *WJE: Volume 8, Ethical Writings*, 129-397.
 19. See Edwards' "Essay on the Trinity," recently made available in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards: Volume 21, Writings on the Trinity, Grace, and Faith*, Sang Hyun Lee, editor. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 113-44. Shortly before his removal from Stockbridge to Princeton, he completed writing the *Two Dissertations*, containing *The End for Which God Created the World* and *The Nature of True Virtue*, published posthumously in 1765. In these texts, we see Edwards continuing to work out his ideas of harmony and union within the Godhead and extending to humanity.
 20. See Stephen J. Nichols, *Jonathan Edwards: A Guided Tour of His Life and Thought*, 219-32, for a full discussion of this sermon.
 21. *WJE: Volume 8, Ethical Writings*, 396-97.
 22. *WJE: Volume 20, "The Miscellanies," Entry Nos. 833-1152*, 189, 455.
 23. Jonathan Edwards, "A Farewell Sermon," (1750), *The Sermons of Jonathan Edwards: A Reader*, Wilson H. Kimnach, Kenneth P. Minkema, and Douglas A. Sweeney, editors. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 238.
 24. Cornelius Plantinga, Jr., *Not the Way It's Supposed To Be: A Breviary of Sin* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995).
 25. Ava Chamberlain, "Editor's Introduction," *The Works of Jonathan Edwards: Volume 18, The "Miscellanies," Entry Nos. 501-832* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 8-10.
 26. In a letter to his son, Ephraim, Jr., the elder states explicitly that Edwards' presence at Stockbridge will "raise the price of my land." Cited in Wyliss E. Wright, *Colonel Ephraim Williams: A Documentary Life* (Pitts-

- field, Massachusetts: Berkshire County Historical Society, 1970), 61.
27. For a full discussion of the Stockbridge years in the life of Edwards, see Stephen J. Nichols, "Last of the Mohican Missionaries: Jonathan Edwards at Stockbridge." In *The Legacy of Jonathan Edwards: American Religion and the Evangelical Tradition*. Edited by D. G. Hart, Sean Michael Lucas, and Stephen J. Nichols. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 47-63.
 28. Sarah Cabot Sedgwick and Christina Sedgwick Marquand, *Stockbridge 1739-1939: A Chronicle* (Great Barrington, Massachusetts: Berkshire Courier, 1939), 31.
 29. For Edwards' own summary of the affair, see his letter to Thomas Prince, May 10, 1754, WJE: Volume 16, *Letters and Personal Writings*, 629-43. See also Lion Miles, "The Red Man Dispossessed: The Williams Family and the Alienation of Indian Land in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, 1736-1818," *The New England Quarterly*, 68 (1994), 46-76.
 30. Wyliss E. Wright, *Colonel Ephraim Williams: A Documentary Life*, 66.
 31. Jonathan Edwards, "Profession of Faith," n.d., Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.
 32. Jonathan Edwards, "Heaven Is a World of Love," WJE: Volume 8, *Ethical Writings*, 396.