

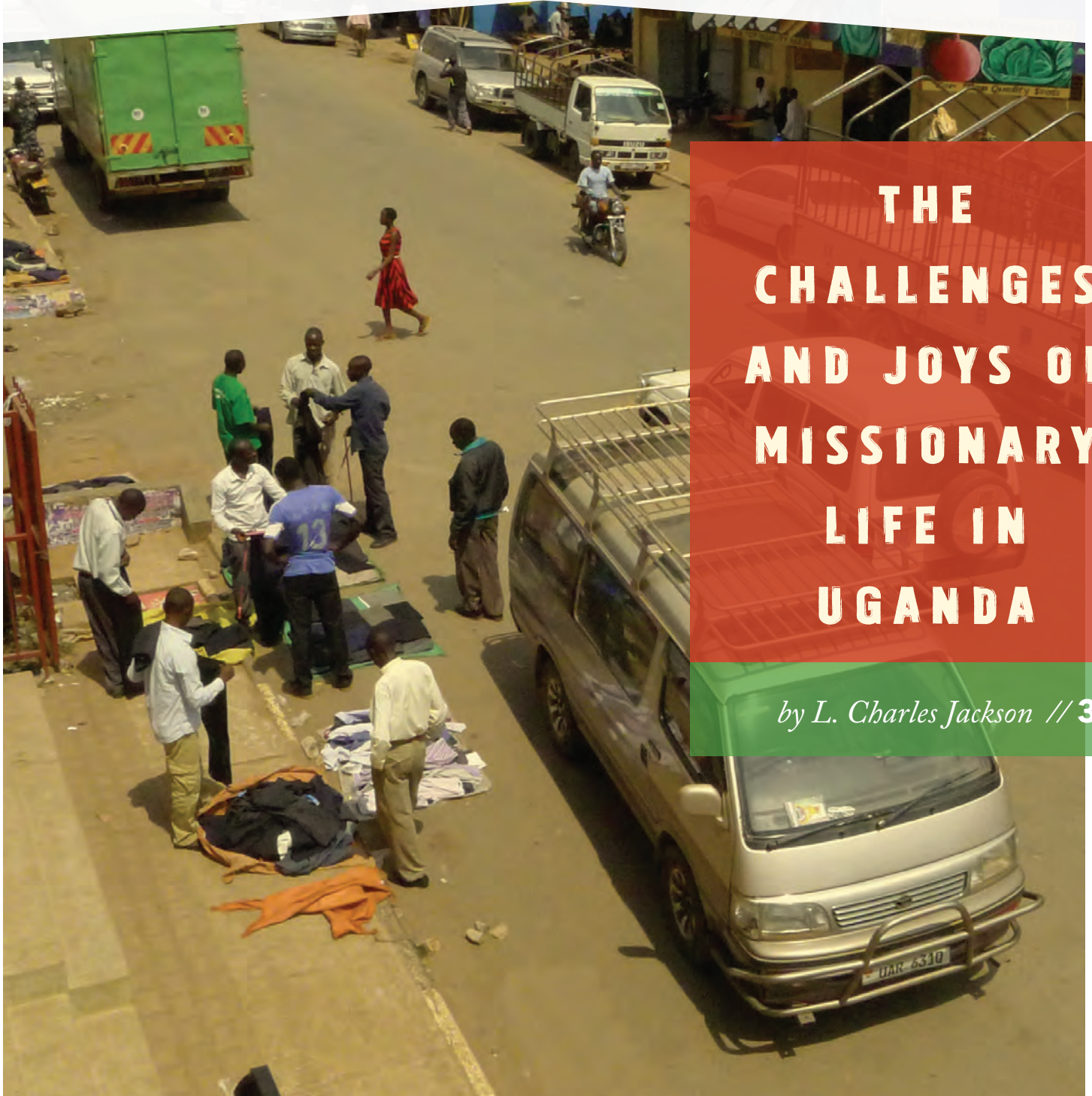
NEW HORIZONS

— in the ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH —

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MAY 2017

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New Horizons

in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church

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Summer will soon be upon us. Be sure to check out our list of summer camps and conferences on pages 12-13. Pictured at the right are junior and senior high campers joining forces at the Ohio Youth Camp to play a rowdy game of "human knot."



THE CHALLENGES AND JOYS OF MISSIONARY LIFE IN UGANDA



L. CHARLES JACKSON // Before we left for Africa, we saw a TV show that said Americans were particularly incensed with “line-cutting.” There is something about a person cutting in front of you in line that strikes most of us as unfair and even rude. Ha! The first time you buy groceries in our “big” store here in Mbale,

Uganda, called Bam, you suddenly realize that there are five brown hands of various sizes filled with milk, bread, candy, or rice pushing their way in front of you. It’s as if the first person who can trick the cashier into taking something becomes the winner.

Your first instinct is to blurt out, “No butting in line!”—but then you remember that you’re a missionary. You remember that you’re here to give the gospel, and yelling at all the “cutters” might not be so great. If you get angry, you’ve blown a good testimony, but if you stand there politely, you may never get to buy your goods. Heading to the “queue,” as they call the line here, always makes me smile a bit, as it is one of the small challenges we face daily. My wife, Connie, still doesn’t love it, but she does a great job, and I find the whole thing rather amusing.

When we first arrived in Mbale, after leaving a wonderful church in Dayton, Ohio, where we lived and worked for almost twenty years, we often felt like we had been transported back in time to the 1870s or to the American

Wild West. It was exciting and unsettling all at once. It was hard to tell where everyone and everything was going in such apparent chaos.

We often heard shouts of *mazungu*, which means “white person.” Little children would run alongside our vehicle yelling *mazungu* and waving their hands. Things are much more comfortable now, that is, familiar. In our area of Mbale, the yelling has slowed down a bit, and I’ve noticed that some of the kids are now running along beside our car and yelling to me, “Pasta Ericki” (a testament to fellow missionary Eric Tuininga’s good work here). I’m finally now known as “Docta Charlsi.” There is less running, but there are still smiles, waves, and happy voices greeting us.

We love it here, and, in some ways, it feels like we’ve been here forever, while in other ways it feels like we just moved and know next to nothing about our new home. The strange and foreign experiences we have had in East Africa have given us stories to last a lifetime.

When you move your family (for us, that just means Noah, the last of

our six kids) to a foreign country, you encounter things that everyone told you about, but nobody could have really told you about. The simplest things from shopping to driving a car (on the left side of the road) can be a challenge. And then you wonder why someone is standing and staring into your living room window, apparently thinking that it’s perfectly normal. I want you to know the joys and challenges we are having here in Africa, so you can learn, laugh, and pray with us as we serve you here. I also hope that what I have to say will enable you to pray more intelligently for all of your missionaries overseas.

Even the smallest daily tasks, like buying food, can provide missionaries with everyday experiences that can be exhausting and challenging. Sometimes we’ve found ourselves quite tired, and then we are amazed that all we did was drive to town and shop. You have to understand that shopping and driving involve getting pushed, shoved, and sometimes hit.

We also go to the market, which has smells that you couldn’t imagine,

and as soon as you adjust to the smells, you start to realize that what you just felt on your feet were a few rats running from the tomato stand to the avocados.

We have noticed that many of our missionary friends here are also experiencing the exhaustion and emotional strain of trying to figure things out, without their internal/cultural compass going crazy—while remembering that we’re here to bring the gospel to people. The market has actually become a nice place for us to shop and to strike up friendships with people like our bean lady and the old Muslim guy who usually has good cauliflower. We now appreciate the drive to the market as part of a weekly routine.

Speaking of driving, I enjoy it most of the time, but this is also one of those strange daily challenges. Driving in Africa is partly chaos, partly skill, and mostly just the good grace of God in helping you to make it through another day without a bad accident. Since I started driving here, I have lightly hit three pedestrians and two cows, killed a chicken, and been hit by two trucks and multiple motorcycles (called *boda-bodas*)—and I’m just the new guy.

Just last week, as we came home from Kampala, we almost got stuck in the middle of the road because of a dangerous mudslide from the torrential rains. The veterans here could tell you many more stories about driving in Uganda.

In fact, as you’re compiling a prayer list for missionaries, you may note that more missionaries are killed in Africa (and other developing nations) in vehicle accidents than by anything else. Yes, even more than snakes, spiders, lions, or any of the other African predators that usually keep people from wanting to visit us. Pray for your missionaries to be safe on the road as they travel each day.

The stress and strain of driving doesn’t come only from potholes or crazy drivers. You also have the constant challenge of corrupt police officers, who pull you over and ask if you have anything for them to drink. The first few times this happened, the policeman was



Charles Jackson preaching at New Life PCU in Mbale

surprised that no one in the car seemed to understand how this whole “bribe” thing worked. He was supposed to ask for lunch, and I was supposed to offer him some money. My wife and I would look all over the car for something that he could eat, while he puzzled at why we didn’t know the game yet.

Ignorance will only work a few times. I have been pulled over countless times, and I’ve been arrested three times for supposed traffic offenses. Once it was in Kenya, where we (Connie, Noah, and I) had to stay overnight in a strange place and go to court the next day. The courtroom story is worth a whole *New Horizons* article. Long story short: the judge let me off, and we drove home a

day later than anticipated, but we were tired, frustrated, and a bit dazed.

Being in a foreign country and being told to give a corrupt policeman (who smells of alcohol) your car keys, and then hearing another one say, “Go to this cell; I’m holding you for forty-eight hours,” is unsettling to say the least. By the way, I didn’t give him the keys, and another time I was also able to avoid being jailed.

Driving is a challenge, and I don’t even have time to describe what a border crossing is like in East Africa. We have been through the crossing in a record thirty minutes, but we have also sat waiting for searches, bribe attempts, etc., for more than three hours. Connie



Charles greeting members of the Mbale congregation after worship



Charles and Connie Jackson with Robinah and Paul Magala, who have agreed to operate the new Mbale bookshop, which will include Ugandan art and souvenirs, a coffee/expresso machine, and tea, and will perhaps become a meeting point for planting another church in Mbale

is great at bringing coolers full of cold water and bananas. Somehow we laugh about these encounters, because if you don't laugh, you'll cry—and so far we're still laughing.

The primary thing I do on a weekly basis—besides getting arrested—is to teach at Knox Theological College (KTC), the Bible school started by the OP Uganda Mission. I also preach at churches in our presbytery (Mbale Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in Uganda), preach at the churches of my students, and provide counsel and advice in multiple ways. I've preached at funerals, and last year I officiated at a wedding. There are always youth conferences, pastors' conferences, teachers' conferences, and other speaking opportunities. Since our son Noah attends Rift Valley Academy in Kenya, we travel there to visit him almost every six weeks. When I go to Kenya, the Lord gives me opportunities to teach classes in Nakuru, Kenya, at the seminary of the Africa Evangelical Presbyterian Church. Teaching at the seminary in Kenya has been a joy.

I have also loved teaching at KTC so much! The "boys" at KTC, as I call them, are not really boys, but young men and some older men who don't

have much formal education. They love the Lord, and some of them are already pastors. In fact, one even claims to be an apostle. As you may have guessed, he, like some of my other students, is Pentecostal. A handful of others are from our own presbytery here in Mbale.

The students come from a variety of backgrounds, but all of them are very poor. They struggle every day to sort out how to go to seminary while supporting their families. In spite of the many challenges that my family and I face in Africa, we don't face anything like the challenges that these young men are facing. It may sound simplistic, but I'm honored to receive all the blessings that I've been given so freely by God and give a little back to these men who struggle so much. One of the biggest needs in Africa today is for pastoral education. Pray for Eric Tuininga and me as we play an important role in meeting this need.

There are many things before us. The teaching, preaching, counseling, and conferencing will soon be supplemented by a Christian reading room/coffee shop. A December edition of *Telenews* described our hope to use a reading room to introduce good books to a population that generally doesn't read. We're trying to create a book

room/coffee shop with local crafts and rooms for outreach such as Bible studies. Please pray for this endeavor.

Connie loves working with the village schools and with schools near our house, teaching phonics and helping teachers to teach. She is also working with many women here on a personal level to help with so many things. She has taken on a semi-fostering role for an orphan, Alice, and our house is now the breakfast spot for Alice and four boys on their way to school. Connie has done such a great job at hospitality that our house is usually filled with good food, laughter, and a growing list of friends. Everyone reading this should know that you are most welcome to visit us here. We have a guest room and good food. In some ways, things have not changed for us since our move from the U.S. However, in other ways, we can't believe the new things that God has allowed us to share.

We have five children and three grandchildren still in the States. We miss our family dearly! We often dream of a future that could somehow allow us to work in East Africa forever and still have access to our growing family of new daughters-in-law and grandchildren. Pray for us as we navigate this all-too-common struggle that missionaries face when they leave their families and friends for a foreign country.

The cultural challenges here are exhausting and strange, and also often beautiful and very fulfilling. We praise God because we feel like we are a genuine part of the blessing of Pentecost, reversing the scattering of Babel by helping to build the church throughout the world. We are so blessed to worship with, sing with, and pray with our brothers and sisters here in Uganda. Although many things here are strange to us, we are able to experience what Paul meant when he said we that we are fellow citizens in Christ. Pray for us, pray for Uganda, and pray for all your missionaries as they face the daily challenges of living in a foreign land. □

The author is an OP missionary to Uganda.

FOLLOWING JESUS IN KARAMOJA



DAVID J. ROBBINS // **The mid-morning sun filters orange light into the waiting room. It's a little slow today at Akisyon a Yesu Clinic in South Karamoja, Uganda, but there are a few people scattered on the benches that line the walls.**

I greet them. We have good news for the sick.

The passage is Mark 2:13–17. Jesus says to Levi, “Follow me.” Not only Levi but many sinners follow him, and he eats with them. What a marvelous meal that must have been! But Jesus’ actions provoke the self-righteous.

Follow me! The words are foreign, strange. How could the holy and righteous One, who will not even look on sin, not only tolerate but actually *invite* the company of sinners? He does not shun the thieves, the drunkards, the murderers. He does not dismiss the guilty, but calls sinners of every stripe to come and follow him.

Follow him to the cross, where he will break the power of sin, cleanse its stain, and pay its deadly debt. Follow him to heaven, where he has now gone before us, leading his people up to perfect and unfading joy. Follow him in worship, where each week he meets with us, speaks with us, transforms us into his likeness, and prepares us for his service. Endless blessings await unworthy sinners who come to him!

The patients listen. Prayer is offered. Tracts are distributed. We hope

some of them will come and worship with us.

As I preach, my wife Rashel, who is sick, is receiving treatment in a back room.

The Call of Jesus to His Missionaries

For the twelve disciples, the call to follow Jesus meant forsaking everything. In the light of his glory and grace, everything else faded into the background.

Following God’s call to Karamoja has required us to leave some things behind. Before arriving on the field, we were told that we might be sick—a lot—during the first year. In God’s mercy, we’ve fared better than we expected, but the clinic walls have become very familiar. They can bear witness to our malaria, tonsillitis, giardiasis, amoebiasis, weird infections, and other complaints. Our immunities are increasing and our health should improve, but feeling well is not necessarily part of the program. Following Jesus is, and he brought us here to announce the

comfort of the gospel to other sinners.

There are other stressors. The doorbell rings constantly. Friends in need—and even people we don’t know—ask us for things. We can view these either as interruptions or as opportunities to cultivate friendships and share the good news—and that is how we follow Jesus, we remind ourselves. Our comfort and cultural expectations bow to his priorities.

The call to follow my Lord here has ultimately damaged my pride. You probably know that the romanticized portrait of the heroic, ultra-spiritual missionary is usually not the whole story. I knew this, or thought I did. And what can I say? I have struggled to be kind to family members, to guard my tongue, not to be angry, to love the people to whom God has called us, and even to pray. Sometimes I have allowed myself the dark indulgence of self-pity. It happens that I need Jesus just as much as the Karimojong do: desperately! Praise God that Jesus calls and redeems sinners, not the righteous and not the heroes.



Elderly ladies up front attending worship at Nakaale Presbyterian Church

We are unworthy of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. And yet he called us! Such marvelous grace! It amazes us, and it motivates us. Our life and our labors are deeply joyful because Jesus speaks these words: *Follow me.*

The Call of Jesus to the Karimojong

The joy of following Jesus is multiplied by the privileges of inviting our neighbors to join us, and of walking together with our Karimojong brothers and sisters who have answered his call. They are very precious to us.

These last months, a flock of little old ladies has descended on Nakaale Presbyterian Church (NPC). They all want to shake hands. One, Maria, rubs my hair with her hand and then with her armpit. She is blessing me. Most ask for prayer; they have waist pain, headache, eye pain, leg problems. Everyone is hungry. The pastoral prayer is lengthy because they suffer a great deal. But they are concerned for us, too. When we are sick, they ask about us, hold us, and tell us not to worry. They pray for us, and give thanks when God answers.

Young men are following Jesus. Louse (low-OO-say) John Bosco came to us asking for school fees. We gave him work and a Bible. His very first! On receiving it, he beamed with joy. He reads it, studies it, and loves it. Now in senior classes (the equivalent of American high school), Louse and his friend Angella (ahng-EL-uh) Paul regularly

“preach” the word to the other students and are eager to evangelize the Muslims on campus. They have joined NPC. On most Sunday afternoons, they are in our home, along with a group of other serious young men. These men are learning the hymns “Amazing Grace” and “I Belong to Jesus” in English. They recently asked, “What does it mean to be a Presbyterian?” and listened to the explanation with rapt attention. They are just learning, but they seem persuaded. They know that Christ is the head of his church.

People are coming to Jesus with their problems. A Karimojong brother recently approached Dave Okken, my wonderful pastoral colleague here, to confess a struggle with drunkenness and to seek help. In another situation, a church member had another brother

in Christ arrested. Dave and I sat with them and read from 1 Corinthians 6. They agreed to resolve the matter together in the church.

In 2016, the OP Uganda Mission was invited to hold worship services in the nearby village of Akuyam. It’s a large place with no churches. Meeting under the tamarind tree in the center of the village is a special joy. Attendance varies, but is increasing; a core group is forming. There are men there whom God may be calling to leadership.

One day, as we were walking back to Nakaale after the service, a woman called out to our translators. She ran and gave each of them a piece of roasted maize—the first “tithe” in this place. Now the people want to erect a building to shield us from rain. They will supply the labor, some of the materials, and possibly even the land. They want to be a local church. This is new territory for us! We don’t know what God will do, but it is very encouraging.

Not perfectly, not painlessly, these people are following Jesus with us. We share together in the struggles, but we also share together in the Savior. He is calling the Karimojong to himself, and they are coming. Many have planted, many have watered, and God is giving the increase. These are answers to our prayers and yours.

Our hearts are very full of joy. □

The author is an OP missionary to Uganda.



Ladies’ prayer fellowship, led by Rashel Robbins

THE REFORMATION OF MARRIAGE



ALAN D. STRANGE // Marriage and family were prominent among the many issues that the Reformers addressed. The Western church before the Reformation made both too much and too little of marriage.

The Roman Catholic Church made too much of marriage

in that it considered it a sacrament. In its sacerdotal view of grace and salvation, taking one from birth (baptism) to death (extreme unction), one's life choice was sacramentally defined, either by marriage or by ordination.

The Reformation discovered, however, that marriage is not a sacrament given only to Christians through the church. Rather, it is a creation ordinance given to all mankind in the state of innocence and continuing thereafter for fallen man—though its purposes, as our wedding form reflects, are properly realized only in Christ.

Rome, on the other hand, also made too little of marriage, because it was regarded as inferior to the other life choice, holy orders, which involved celibacy. Because of the assumption that even married sexuality was less than completely pure, the celibate state was considered superior to marriage. As a result, the practice became established early on (though not officially until the First Lateran Council in 1123) that the clergy, and especially the higher clergy, should not marry. This prohibition extended both to the regular clergy (the

monks and nuns) and the secular clergy (the parish priests).

The Roman Church considered celibacy to embody the ideals of the life that all Christians were called to, but which only the clergy, especially the regular clergy, properly lived out on behalf of the whole church. The average Christian, then, the one who got married and had a family, was considered to be living in a decidedly inferior state in comparison to the clergy.

All of this changed at the Reformation. Besides limiting the sacraments to the two ordinances instituted by our Lord—baptism and the Supper—the Reformation embraced a higher view of marriage and family than had been held in the Western church in the Middle Ages. With the Reformation, the clergy could now marry, and the married life of the laity was not seen as a sort of second-class Christianity.

A More Biblical View of Sexuality

The world into which the apostolic church had emerged was more sexually licentious than even our own. Because sexual sin was so widespread, the early

church focused on sexual purity. That commitment developed into placing a premium on virginity and consequently celibacy. In the Roman Empire, in the time of Christ and the apostles, perhaps forty percent of the people were slaves. Many things could be said about the slavery of that day, but one thing is clear: it involved the sexual abuse of those in bondage. Even apart from slavery, though, a host of sexual perversions abounded among the pagans.

Christianity thus emerged in a world that, outside of the Jewish environs that had imbibed the biblical ethic, was decidedly sexually immoral. Christians (think Tertullian) promoted an ethic that so opposed this errant pagan sexuality that it tended to undervalue sexuality even in marriage, seeing it as purely for purposes of procreation. Augustine, for example, famously counseled married couples to think of the commandments and the creed during sexual intimacy in order to maintain proper purity. The ideal for many, particularly as the Middle Ages developed, became virginity, and it was best fulfilled in the life of the clergy.

The Reformation recovered a more biblical approach to sexuality within marriage, understanding that it was also for the well-being of the couple, a significant expression of their oneness. Part of this recovery included reinterpreting the Song of Songs, recognizing that this spoke not only of Christ and the church, but also of husband and wife in their marital relationship, understanding that marriage itself points to the union of Christ and his church.

An immediate practical outworking of this Reformational recovery manifested itself in clerical marriages. One thinks particularly of Huldrych Zwingli and Martin Luther. The latter, as a forty-one-year-old monk, while matching former nuns with interested mates, found himself a man short for Katharina von Bora, who boldly claimed Luther himself. Marriage provided Luther, John Calvin, and many others in like positions with much help and comfort (though Calvin's wife died after only eight years of marriage).

A Higher View of Women

The Reformation, in its return to the Bible, also emerged with a higher view of women. Earlier, Christianity had advanced over pagan notions, declaring a woman to have been created in the image of God and thus to be fully a person. However, the church's view of women remained improperly developed. Rhetoric of the Middle Ages often portrayed women as temptresses and sources of distraction for men.

The Reformation recovered the implications of the biblical truth that men and women are both made in the image of God (Gen. 1:26–28) and that there is neither male nor female in Christ (Gal. 3:28). This pointed to an ontological equality between male and female, even as there is such equality in the persons of the godhead, whatever functional differences there may be. It took some time for the fuller implications of the full personhood of women to work themselves out in civil society, but this too is part of the legacy of the Reformation.

While the Enlightenment, and the secularization that it engendered, have affected men and women in some deleterious ways, the Reformational heritage of ontological and soteric equality is a good thing. With respect to the latter, all men and women are fallen in Adam and the new humanity is restored in Christ. There are not different ways of salvation for men and women; rather, salvation is through the one mediator between God and humanity—the one who, eternally God, added humanity to his deity. First Timothy 2:5 does not use the Greek word for “male,” but for “human,” when it speaks of “the man [human] Christ Jesus” and when it speaks of him being the one mediator between “God and man [humankind].”

The point here is not to downplay that Jesus is male, but to highlight what is at issue: his humanity. He became a human being so that he might reconcile human beings to God. Indeed he is male, but this is not what's in view, as maleness is in view in many pagan cults, in which salvation is exclusively for males or in which women are saved in a different, decidedly inferior way.

Jesus came to save both males and females and to call men to love their wives (Eph. 5:22–33) and to live with them in an understanding way (1 Peter 3:8), even as he calls women to submit to their own husbands, regarding them with love and respect. Matthew Henry, in his Genesis commentary, famously captured it this way: “The woman was made of a rib out of the side of Adam; not made out of his head to rule over him, nor out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved.”

Biblical Teaching on Divorce

At the same time that the Reformation recovered a more biblical, and thus higher, view of marriage, it also, in rejecting marriage as a sacrament, recovered the biblical teaching on divorce. Since marriage for Rome was a sacrament, the relationship that it estab-

lished could never be altered. So Rome taught that even in the case of adultery, the most that the innocent party could press for was the separation of bed and board. This meant that the spouses could live separately, but the marriage was not actually dissolved. Such dissolution could only come by annulment, the declaration of the church in its courts of canon law that there never was a proper marriage in the first place and thus that the bond was null and void.

The Reformers came to understand that adultery and desertion by the unbelieving party formed grounds sufficient for divorce and that the innocent party was free to sue out such and to remarry as if the offending party were dead. This was clearly expressed in the Westminster Confession of Faith, chapter 24, “Of Marriage and Divorce” (as it was by Puritans before the Assembly, such as William Perkins and William Ames). It was also the position of many of the Continental Reformers (e.g., Martin Bucer and Theodore Beza). The Reformers believed that the Bible provided for genuine divorce because it permitted remarriage after such, understanding that if the divorce was biblical, the remarriage was biblical.

We should not end on this note, however. The Reformers strongly taught against the sins that led to a legitimate divorce and counseled Christians to live in the married state in such a way that divorce would not be necessary. Many of the Puritans, as Leland Ryken points out in his book on them (*Worldly Saints*, chapters 3 and 5, especially), had rich and rewarding marriages and a fulfilling and joyful family life. That the home was to engage in private worship, as was the church in public worship (and the individual in secret worship), is made manifest in the Westminster Assembly's Directory for Family Worship. Christian marriage and family were seen, together with the church, as the bedrock of a stable society that advanced the good of mankind and the glory of God. □

The author, an OP minister, is a professor at Mid-America Reformed Seminary.

SERVING WHERE GOD CALLS

// A MISSIONARY



The author with her culinary students, showing off their pies on Pi Day (March 14—that is, 3.14)

“**Y**ou only teach three students?! I wish you would stay and teach in the classroom, because then you could help more people!” The person who told me this meant it as a compliment, and wanted to express how much they wanted me to stay in their school. However, I could not help but feel that I was being a little foolish for obeying the call that the Father had given to me for this stage of my life. It made me stop and think about what is really important.

The first thing that came to my mind was that I am important if I impact a lot of people. When I looked around, I could see that most people wanted to rate how important they are by measuring the number of people with whom they work, the amount of improvement that takes place in those people, and their rank in society. Naturally, I also have that bent, but I’m thankful that the Lord has been showing me more and more that he looks at importance very differently than we often do!

It is true that I could be teaching in the States, where people who speak my language would surround me and I would be able to have more direct access to spreading the good news to numerous people. There is also the possibility of working in an international school, where I could be in classrooms full of students. I am thankful for the past stages of my life, in which God had me in those situations and reached people through me. Yet I am also joyfully thankful that he has now raised up other people to continue his work in those areas by filling the positions I used to have.

At present I am teaching three excellent children in a place where I cannot directly communicate with a majority of the people with whom I come in contact. Nonetheless, this is exactly where I need to be, and God is still working through me to reach his people with the good news. I’m excited to work with this family, especially knowing that the parents are now more free to help spread the truth of

his Word to a broader number of people. The work here is growing quickly, as more leaders are being trained, Reformed writings are being translated, presbyteries are being formed, and groups are growing in number and knowledge. These are things I am not equipped to be able to do directly, but I am able to teach the children of those who can, in order to make it possible for the work to move forward.

Our wonderful Father has given us specific talents to be used for his glory and to show his fullness. I think of my home church, where many volunteer time to teach Sunday school, while others keep the meeting place clean and make sure fellowship meals are ready to go. If someone is sick, a neighbor brings a meal over or helps with chores. Visits are paid to those who are alone. Prayers are constantly being lifted up for one another. Here on the field, some are training leaders, some are translating materials, some are casting the net to bring in new people, and some are teaching women about the roles for which we were created. Others serve as guides for visitors and



Christmas celebration



Christmas party with some local kids

meet in prayer groups, and still others cook and clean to open their homes to anyone the Lord brings their way. Each one of these roles is needed. Each one is important to show the glory of God and to spread his love to a lost world.

It is easy for us to look at the different roles that God gives us and to think that we are more important than someone else—or to wish we were. I've often had to repent of my envy of those who are an "arm" or an "eye," when I've just been a "pinky." During those times of complaining and jealousy, I have hindered the spread of the good news in a couple of ways: not fulfilling my role with the joy of the Lord, and not being supportive of those whom God has placed in what I considered the "more important" roles. It is truly better to rejoice with those whom God honors than to cause division through jealousy and pride, as we are told in 1 Corinthians 12. In fact, it is only when we are prayerfully and consistently seeking to follow Christ's example of humility and love that we are able to have complete joy and unity of purpose (Col. 3:12–15).

We may never really know the importance of a smile given to a stranger, of a meal brought to a friend, or of a prayer lifted up consistently to our Father. For example, during the first couple of months I lived here, I walked by the same four guards at a hospital every day and would smile and say "Ni hao" (hi) or nod. Most of the time, I did not get a response; once in a while they would nod back. Then I was gone a few days on a trip, and when I returned, one of the guards yelled "Hello" (in perfect English) and waved at me before I had even seen him. Now all four of them at least

smile and nod, if not also say hello as I walk by! I'm not sure what God will continue to do with those interactions, but I'm excited to find out!

Stopping to reflect on this has made me more thankful for all the loving support that he has shown me through numerous people in my life. Thank you to those who have sent cards with notes of encouragement while I've been away from home. Thank you for giving monetarily for the good news to go forth around the world. Thank you to those who have welcomed us into your homes when we have been in the States. And thank you to the many who keep the work here in your daily thoughts and prayers. It is such a blessing and honor to be a part of his family, working together for his purpose and knowing that he has each of us right where we need to be in order to bring him honor and glory!

I know there are always going to be many who look down on those who have a supportive role or who work in the background, but God does not. There are still times when pride raises its ugly head and I wish I were doing something more "important," but I'm very thankful for the grace of God that keeps drawing me back to him and showing me that being obedient to him in *all* things is really the most important way that he wants us to live our lives for him. I pray for all of us that "whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him" (Col. 3:17).

The author is a tentmaker missionary in East Asia.



Missionary children making the periodic table of elements with sugar cookies

OPC SUMMER CAMPS AND CONFERENCES



Senior campers at the Ohio Youth Camp singing together in a morning session

CALIFORNIA—Blue Ridge Bible Conference

(Presbytery of Southern California)
Pinecrest Christian Conference Center, Twin Peaks, CA
Family/all ages, June 19–23
www.blueridgebibleconference.org

CALIFORNIA—Sierra Christian Conference

(OP churches in Northern California)
Sierra Christian Conference Association, Groveland, CA
Memorial Weekend Family Camp, May 26–29
For information, contact Brad DeBoer at 209-577-4341
or bradandjanetdeboer@yahoo.com
(no website)

CALIFORNIA—Summer Bible Camp

(Presbytery of Northern California and Nevada)
Redwood Christian Park, Boulder Creek, CA
Family/all ages, July 31–August 4
www.pncnopc.org/calendar

FLORIDA—Reformed Youth Conference

(Presbytery of the South)
RYC High/Middle School Youth Camp, June 19–24
Youth entering 6th grade (or age 11 by August 31) through
completing 12th grade
Lakewood Retreat Center, Brooksville, FL
www.lsopec.org/ryc

MAINE, NEW HAMPSHIRE—Deerwander Bible Conference

(Presbytery of New York and New England)
Junior High (entering 6th–8th grades), August 13–17
Windsor Hills Camp, Windsor Hills, NH

Senior High (entering 9th–12th grades), August 12–19
Chop Point Camp, Woolwich, ME
www.deerwander.org

MICHIGAN—OPC Family Camp

(Presbytery of Michigan and Ontario)
Lincoln Lake Camp, Gowen, MI
Family/all ages, August 14–18
www.harvestopc.org (select “WALK,” then “Family Camp”)
www.facebook.com/OPCFamilyCamp

OHIO—Youth Camp

(Presbytery of Ohio)
4-H Camp Piedmont, Piedmont, OH
Junior Summer Camp (ages 9–12), July 10–15
Senior Summer Camp (completed grades 7–12), July 10–15
opcOhioyouth.wordpress.com

OREGON—Family Camp

(First OPC, Portland, OR)
Camp Morrow, Wamic, OR
Family/all ages, August 16–19
www.firstopcportland.org/camp.php

PENNSYLVANIA—Conestoga Bible Conference

(OP churches in Pennsylvania and nearby states)
Promised Land Camp, Conestoga, PA
Summer Bible Camps
Grades 6–9 and 10–12, TBA
www.conestogabibleconference.org

PENNSYLVANIA—French Creek Bible Conference

(OPC affiliated)
French Creek State Park, Elverson, PA
Grades 4–6, July 24–29

Grades 7–8, July 29–August 5
Grades 9–10, July 17–24
Grades 11–12, July 10–17
Post-High, July 7–10
Labor Day Family, September 1–4
www.frenchcreek.org

SOUTH DAKOTA—OPC-PCA Bible Camp

(Presbytery of the Dakotas)
Camp Judson, Keystone, SD
Grades 4–6, 7–9, 10–12 (completed), June 24–30
www.opc-pca-biblecamp.com

TEXAS—Summer Camp

(Presbytery of the Southwest)
Alto Frio Baptist Encampment, Leakey, TX
Youth entering grades 4–12, June 19–24
www.opcsouthwest.org/summer-youth-camp

VIRGINIA—Machen Retreat and Conference Center

(Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic)
Machen Retreat and Conference Center, McDowell, VA
History Camp (ages 12–18), June 26–July 1
Science Camp (ages 10–17), July 10–15
Latin Camp (ages 14–18), July 30–August 5
Stronghold Camp (grades 5–12), August 7–12
Family/Labor Day Conference (all ages), September 1–4
machen.org

WISCONSIN—Camp Westminster

(Presbytery of the Midwest)
Green Lake Conference Center, Green Lake, WI
All members, friends, all ages, July 31–August 4
www.pmwopc.org/camp-westminster-2017

WOMEN'S (AND MEN'S) RETREATS

For women's retreats and Bible conferences that are held at various times during the year (not just the summer) in:

- Southern California,
- New England,
- New Jersey,
- Ohio, and
- Virginia

see www.opc.org/cce/camps.html.

A men's retreat in New Jersey is also listed there.

☆ Congratulations

The **Children's Catechism** has been recited by:

- **Hannah Vandersleen**, *Redeemer OPC, Carlisle, PA*

OUR MEMBERSHIP VOWS Is the Bible True?

Glen J. Clary

The first membership vow of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church is about the divine authorship of the Bible. We profess to believe “the Bible, consisting of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God.”

Since the Bible is God's Word, it is true because God cannot lie, and he is incapable of making errors (Num. 23:19; Titus 1:2). When the Bible records historical events, it gives us a true and accurate record of those events. Events recorded in the Bible, such as the Flood, David and Goliath, Daniel and the lion's den, Jesus walking on water, and the resurrection of Jesus, actually happened. They are not fictional or mythological stories, but true accounts of real historical events.

Of course, books of human origin can contain errors or false statements. After all, no human author is perfect. But the Bible cannot contain errors, mistakes, or false statements because it is not merely a human book. It is the Word of God. There can be no errors in the Bible because God is infallible, which means that he cannot err. God cannot make mistakes, and he cannot lie. The Bible is infallible because its primary author is infallible.

The secondary authors of the Bible were mere men who, if acting on their own, were capable of making errors. But when they wrote the Bible, they were not acting on their own, but under the power and influence of the Holy Spirit. The Bible is a divine book written by human authors who were guided by the infallible Spirit of God (2 Peter 1:21).

God is the primary author of Scripture, and the people who participated in writing Scripture are only secondary authors. The words they wrote are the very words of God. This is true of the whole Bible because “all Scripture is God-breathed” (2 Tim. 3:16). The Bible is true. It is the infallible truth of the infallible God.

● Out of the Mouth . . .

One night, our daughter Sophia, age 5, was reciting her catechism. She was asked Q. 63 of the Shorter Catechism: “Which is the fifth commandment?” She answered, “The fifth commandment is, *Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long in the desert.*”

—David C. Noe
Ada, Mich.

Note: If you have an example of the humorous “wisdom” that can come from children, please send it to the editor.

OPC MINISTRY BEHIND BARS

// BRETT MAHLEN



Stateville Correctional Center

Jesus said, “I was in prison and you came to me” (Matt. 25:36).

History

In November 2016, I took up an exciting work in the kingdom! I call it “Mission to Stateville Prison.” My call allows me to be a pastor, a missionary, an evangelist, a counselor, an apologist, and a professor—all rolled into one. This work takes place at Stateville Prison in Joliet, Illinois. My call to this ministry reminds me every day how gracious our God is! His gospel is reaching places many think unlikely!

Stateville Correctional Center opened in 1925, and it shows many signs of its age. It is not pretty, and in places it is dirty. Stateville has also been home to some of the most hardened criminals in Illinois over the years. It is a maximum-security prison, where many men serve life sentences.

Covenant OPC in Orland Park has had a ministry to Stateville for well over ten years. Years ago, two laymen began visiting members in the prison; they handed out literature and led Bible studies on the third and fifth Saturdays of the month. A student at Mid-America Reformed Seminary (now an OP missionary) also participated. Iain Wright, pastor of Covenant OPC, has faithfully preached there every ninety days—which is as often as he is allowed to preach there. The session of Covenant has been faithful in attending worship services and Bible studies every ninety days as well.

Through the years, interns were called in to exhort or preach during Saturday worship services. I was one of those interns when I was Covenant’s yearlong intern in 2009–2010.

Many of the members of Covenant have been faithful in writing and sending cards to men in Stateville. Children have painted and drawn pictures and sent these works of art to the inmates, who have received them joyfully, sometimes with tears of joy.

Over the years, the Lord has brought much fruit out of Covenant’s service to Stateville. Covenant has nine men who are incarcerated by the Illinois Department of Corrections. Four are at Stateville and five are in other prisons, but they were at Stateville when they became members. Many who have never become members have been edified by Covenant’s service to them.

Eventually one of the two laymen who were active at Stateville went home to be with the Lord. The other man retired to Arizona a few months ago. Pastor Iain Wright and the session knew they needed to do something, and they did not think it would be sufficient to see the incarcerated members only once every ninety days without other visits. The session has always sought to treat the Stateville members the same as they would treat the members on the outside, insofar as they are able. One session member often says, “The men in Stateville are not second-class members of Covenant.” The session knew that the only way to sufficiently minister to the members at Stateville would be to call a man to do that work full-time. I am thankful that the Lord has called me to be the man to do this amazing work!

Worship

The most important aspect of any ministry is worship. This is no less the case with ministry at Stateville. At noon on the third and fifth Saturdays of the month, we worship the triune God. Those are the only times we are allowed to have worship services at this point. We would be happy to have more Saturdays (or preferably Sundays), but as of yet the prison has not granted us more. For that to happen, another program would have to give up its time.

Worship is very simple; some might say it looks “old school” or “bare bones.” We sing, pray, read, preach, and receive the Lord’s Supper. The room in which we worship is not decorated—it is quite ugly, actually, but we know that the church is the people, not the place where we worship. Believers are

the sanctuary; the room is not. We sing *a cappella* from *Trinity Hymnal*. The singing usually sounds very good. I preach the gospel like I would at any other worship service, and the men, who know they need it, receive it with joy.

We serve the Lord's Supper from individually sealed packages. This is not something I would recommend in any other context, but the prison has heavy restrictions on what I can bring into the prison. I cannot even bring in a loaf of bread. We take the Lord's Supper by peeling away the first layer and eating the bread, and then we peel away the second seal and drink the fruit of the vine. We receive Jesus, spiritually. I fence the table just like I would at any other worship service. We believe Christ is ministering to us by his Spirit in this way.

Evangelism and Visitation

My work in the prison includes meeting with Covenant's members at their cells. I seek to be at their cells regularly and often. We have a conversation, read God's word, and pray through the bars, often holding hands.

I am free to roam around the prison—called “doing rounds”—and I can engage men about the gospel and the Bible's claims. I carry a clear bag, containing Reformed literature and my Bible, and I seek to leave the literature with the men at their cells. My hope is that they will read it and either come to know Jesus or grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus whom they already know.

Another World

When I enter Stateville, I feel like I am entering another world. I get patted down by a guard. I take off my jacket and shoes to show that there is nothing suspicious in them. I walk through multiple doors, which are then locked behind me by guards with large keys hanging from large rings on their belts. There is a clang as the three doors close behind me one by one. Stateville can seem very eerie, and it could be dangerous. Still, I am motivated by the fact that the gospel needs to go into Stateville.

Home Missions Today

For up-to-date Home Missions news and prayer updates, e-mail HomeMissionsToday@opc.org.
New editions: May 3, 17, 31.



Packaged communion elements for prisoners

Partnership with Divine Hope Seminary

Before I came to Covenant to take up this call, the church began a partnership with Divine Hope Reformed Bible Seminary. Divine Hope is only a few years old. It has ministers and members associated with the United Reformed Churches (URCNA) in its leadership. Divine Hope teaches seminary classes to men and women in prisons in Indiana and Illinois. The seminary follows the model begun by New Orleans Baptist Seminary in a prison in Angola, Louisiana, except that

Divine Hope teaches Reformed theology and ecclesiology. We are not looking to ordain men to ministry, but we are seeking to make them more useful in the kingdom and more informed in their prison contexts. For prisoners who will get out, programs like Divine Hope offer instruction that, by God's grace, keeps many of its students from returning to the life that got them into prison in the first place.

We plan to begin Divine Hope classes at Stateville in April 2017. The plan is for me to teach a course on the Shorter Catechism, Q/A 1–38. In the fall, I hope to teach three more courses, and I hope to teach three courses

most quarters after that.

Challenges

Some people ask me what the challenges are in a ministry like this. As you can imagine, there are many. Two of them are false religions and depression. Believers in prison are struggling with both, and they need our prayers. They are constantly called upon to defend their faith. They need apologetic training. Many struggle with feelings of depression. They need counseling and encouragement.

Please partner with me in your prayers for this important work.



Brett's prison-approved clear bag

SHARING THE GOOD NEWS AND EARTHLY GOOD THINGS

// DAVID A. CRUM

Selfishness is the default setting of the human heart. True, God has overcome our sin-hardened hearts, and yet, even with the new heart given to us by the Holy Spirit, too often we give reluctantly or out of a sense of duty.

C. H. Spurgeon comments on a story in 2 Kings 7:

If the only result of our religion is the comfort of our poor little souls ... why, it is a strange thing indeed that by faith we have been united to the unselfish Jesus. Surely, Jesus did not come to save us that we might live unto ourselves! He came to save us *from* selfishness!

This story relates what took place during a time of severe famine in the land of Israel. Today it would be considered “too good to be true.” We are told today not to believe or trust such news. Now that might be sound advice regarding investment hype, but it is deadly advice for man’s dealings with God.

The events occurred at a time when no one in Israel was trusting the Lord. Yet, in the words of Simon DeGraaf,

The Lord shows His people *unsolicited grace* in order to bring them to repentance. The Lord is ahead of us in His grace, bestowing favor upon us so that we will be shattered by it.

Undeserved grace, humbling grace, sovereign grace, *amazing grace!* And how did the Lord do it? He used four lepers—four desperate souls who reasoned amongst themselves, “Look, if we stay here, we will starve. Let’s go into the camp of our enemies and ask for food. The worst that can happen to us is that they will kill us, but we’re dead men anyway.” Or, in the words of Bob Dylan: “When you

ain’t got nothin’, you got nothin’ to lose.”

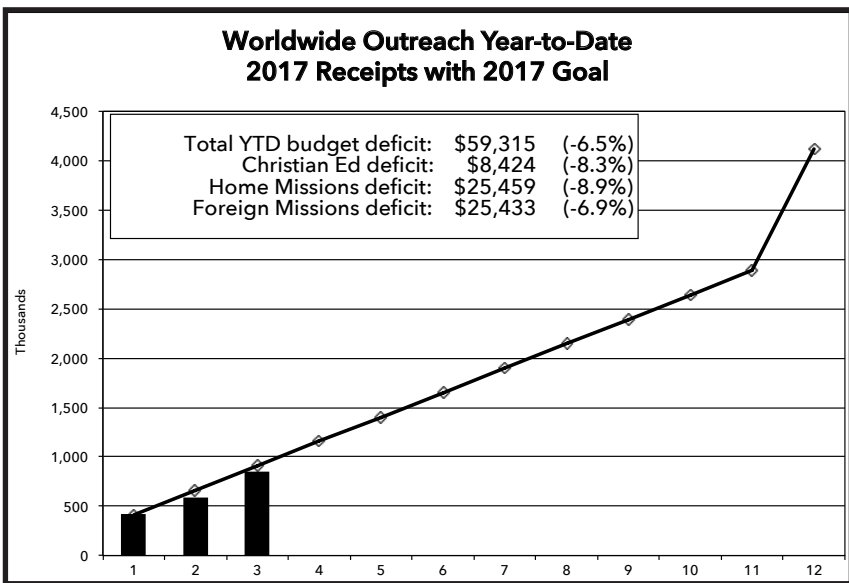
So at dusk they went into the Syrian camp. To their amazement, they found everything deserted. God had caused the Syrian army to hear the angelic army, and they fled for their lives, leaving all behind! They fled in a panic, like the fools of Proverbs 28:1 who “flee when no one pursues.” Exit, stage left, the Syrian army; enter, stage right, the four lepers!

It was midnight madness. These four lepers went on a looting binge of unmitigated greed! They ate and drank all they could, and then took their newfound treasure of silver and gold and buried it in the ground. Finally they realized, “We are not doing right. This day is a day of *good news* [*euangelias* in the Greek translation].” “Now therefore come,” they continued; “let us go and tell the king’s household” (v. 9).

So what is the point of the story for us? The lepers spread the news out of fear of punishment if they kept quiet, but, in the words of Matthew Henry, “They who have found the unsearchable riches of Christ will not long delay to report the good news to others; and *they will gladly share not only the good news, but their earthly good things with their brethren.*”

Our story is one of news that seemed too good to be true. But, as with all of God’s promises, *it was true!* Through God’s amazing provision, the Israelites received saving (though temporary) provision. We, on the other hand, have received eternal salvation! So the question becomes, *how much more* ought we to be willing both to tell others the good news and share with those in need! Can you see why it is that “God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Cor. 9:7)?

The author is the regional home missionary for the Presbytery of Southern California.



MAY

1. Pray that the congregations of the **Ethiopian Reformed Presbyterian Church** will be powerful witnesses in their communities. / **Jim and Bonnie Hoekstra**, Andover, Minn. Pray that newcomers at Immanuel OPC will be warmly received into the body. / Pray for tomorrow's meeting of the **Board of Trustees of Great Commission Publications**.
2. Home Missions staff administrator **Sean Gregg**. / **Charles and Connie Jackson**, Mbale, Uganda. Pray that God would bless Charles's teaching ministry at Knox Theological College. / Pray for the **Subcommittee for Internet Ministries** as it oversees the OPC website.
3. **Eric and Dianna Tuininga**, Mbale, Uganda. Pray for Eric as he mentors pastors in village churches. / Pray for **Dave and Elizabeth Holmlund**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of Philadelphia, as he works to plant a church in Downingtown, Pa. / **Jan Gregson**, assistant to the director of finance.
4. **Brett and Maryann Mahlen**, Orland Park, Ill. Pray for Brett as he ministers to inmates at Stateville Correctional Center. / Pray for missionary associate **Leah Hopp**, Nakaale, Uganda, as she promotes community health programs in local villages. / Pray that the production of **Trinity Psalter Hymnal** will go smoothly and efficiently.
5. Missionary associates **Sarah Jantzen** and **Angela Voskuil**, Uganda. Pray for their opportunities to talk to students about Christ. / **John and Wenny Ro**, Chicago, Ill. (downtown). Pray for love and unity as Gospel Life Presbyterian Church's core group strengthens. / **Doug Watson**, part-time staff accountant.
6. **Jay and Andrea Bennett**, Neon, Ky. Praise God for several new members at Neon Reformed Presbyterian Church. / **David and Rashel Robbins**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray that the gospel would take root in the hearts of seekers to whom David ministers. / **Charlene Tipton**, database administrator.
7. **David and Sunshine Okken**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for the believers who faithfully attend worship services each week. / **Phil Strong**, Lander, Wyo. Pray for the Lord's direction as Grace Reformed Fellowship looks for a new location for worship. / **Bulut Yasar**, yearlong intern at New Life OPC in Montoursville, Pa.
8. **Ron and Carol Beabout**, Gaithersburg, Md. Pray that the people of Trinity Reformed Church will glorify the Lord and abound in hope. / **Bob and Martha Wright**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for Bob as he oversees a construction project in Mbale. / **Kathy Bube**, Loan Fund administrator.
9. Missionary associates **Christopher and Chloe Verdick**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for the staff of Akisyon a Yesu Presbyterian Clinic. / **Mike and Katy Myers**, Royston, Ga. Praise God for his faithful work at Heritage Presbyterian Church. / Pray for **David Haney**, director of finance and planned giving for the Committee on Coordination.
10. **Andrew and Billie Moody**, San Antonio, Tex. Pray for wisdom for San Antonio Reformed Church's new officers as they begin their labors. / **Ben and Heather Hopp**, Haiti. Pray for Ben as he resumes his ministry in Haiti following a yearlong furlough. / **Janet Birkmann**, Diaconal Ministries administrative assistant.
11. Associate missionaries **Octavius and Marie Delfils**, Haiti. Pray for Octavius as he responds to the needs of the congregation in Port-au-Prince. / **Christopher and Ann Malamisuro**, Cincinnati, Ohio. Pray for the continued spiritual growth of Good Shepherd OPC. / **New Horizons** proofreader **Sarah Pederson**.
12. Home Missions general secretary **John Shaw**. / Retired missionaries **Betty Andrews, Cal and Edie Cummings, Greet Rietkerk**, and **Young and Mary Lou Son**. Pray that they will be an encouragement to their families and caregivers. / **Zachary (and Annie) Simmons**, yearlong intern at Bethel Presbyterian Church in Wheaton, Ill.
13. **Church in the Horn of Africa**. Pray for those who are instructing the children in the church. / **Bob and Grace Holda**, Oshkosh, Wis. Pray that God will add to Resurrection Presbyterian Church those he is calling to himself in Oshkosh. / **New Horizons** managing editor **Jim Scott**.
14. **Brad and Cinnamon Peppo**, Springfield, Ohio. Pray for the continued development in the ministry of Living Water OPC. / Affiliated missionaries **Jerry and Marilyn Farnik**, Czech Republic. Pray for Jerry as he leads the church in Modřany in worship. / **Ordained Servant** editor **Greg Reynolds**.
15. Missionary associate **Kathleen Winslow**, Czech Republic. Pray that many children will come to English Camp this summer in response to advertising efforts. / **Bill and Sessie Welzien**, Key West, Fla. Continue to pray for the Lord to add to Keys Presbyterian Church. / Navy chaplain **John (and Linda) Carter**.
16. **Eric and Donna Hausler**, Naples, Fla. Pray for wisdom as Christ the King Presbyterian Church seeks to reach families and find a new facility. / **Ben and Melanie Westerveld**, Quebec, Canada. Pray that God would



Octavius and Marie Delfils

expand the outreach of St-Marc Church. / *New Horizons* cover designer **Chris Tobias**.

- 17.** Pray for missionary associate **Janine Eygenraam**, Quebec, Canada, as she prepares for this summer's English for Kids Camps. / **Brian and Sara Chang**, Cottonwood, Ariz. Pray for wisdom for Christ Reformed Presbyterian Church in reaching the lost in Cottonwood. / **Mark Stumpff**, OPC office assistant.
- 18.** Pray for **David and Jane Crum**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of Southern California, as he seeks to determine where to plant churches. / Tentmaker missionary **T. L. L.**, Asia (on furlough). / **Adrian (and Rachel) Crum**, yearlong intern at Bayview OPC in Chula Vista, Calif.
- 19.** **Mr. and Mrs. M.**, Asia. Pray for Mr. M. as he works on the translation and editing of Reformed materials. / **Larry and Kalynn Oldaker**, Huron, Ohio. Pray that God would save local families and bring them to worship at Grace Fellowship OPC. / **Daniel (and Marcy) Borvan**, yearlong intern at Merrimack Valley Presbyterian Church in North Andover, Mass.
- 20.** **Matt and Elin Prather**, Corona, Calif. Ask God to bless Corona Presbyterian Church's outreach efforts and send new visitors to them. / **Mr. and Mrs. F.**, Asia. Pray for the ministry to a group of Russian-speaking students at the university. / *Ordained Servant* proofreader **Diane Olinger**.
- 21.** Missionary associates **E. K., D. V.**, and **S. Z.**, Asia. Pray for the relationships that they develop with students during the year. / **Jim and Eve Cassidy**, Austin, Tex. Ask the Lord to bless South Austin Presbyterian Church's outreach and advertising endeavors. / Navy chaplain **Tim (and Janine) Power**.
- 22.** **Lowell and Mae Ivey**, Virginia Beach, Va. Pray for God's blessing on the men's leadership class at Virginia Reformation Presbyterian Church. / Tentmaker missionary **T. D.**, Asia. Pray that people whose lives she touches will see Christ through her words and deeds. / Ministerial Training Institute of the OPC coordinator **Pat Clawson**.
- 23.** **Heero and Anya Hacquebord**, L'viv, Ukraine. Pray for Heero in his ministry responsibilities. / **David and Rebekah Graves**, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. Pray that God would grant growth to Coeur d'Alene Reformed Church through its many outreach efforts. / Pray for Christian Education general secretary **Danny Olinger** as he serves as director of the Ministe-



David and Rebekah Graves

rial Training Institute of the OPC.

- 24.** **Tim and Deborah Herndon**, West Lebanon, N.H. Rejoice with Providence OPC over the addition of new members and an increase in regular attenders. / Pray for the labors of affiliated missionary **Linda Karner**, Japan. / Pray for **the instructors and students** at the Intensive Training session of the Ministerial Training Institute of the OPC, held through tomorrow at Grace OPC in Vienna, Va.
- 25.** Affiliated missionaries **Craig and Ree Coulbourne**, Japan. Pray that seekers facing difficult situations will put their trust in God. / **Josh and Kristen McKamy**, Chambersburg, Pa. Pray that new outreach efforts at Covenant OPC will be effective in 2017. / **Joseph Johnson**, yearlong intern at Trinity OPC in Hatboro, Pa.
- 26.** **Kim and Barbara Kuhfuss**, Eau Claire, Wis. Pray that God would give the people of Providence Reformed Church a greater burden for the lost in Eau Claire. / **Ray and Michele Call**, Montevideo, Uruguay. Pray for their efforts to establish contacts that will open the door to witness. / **Bryan (and Heidi) Dage**, yearlong intern at Covenant OPC in Komoka, Ontario.
- 27.** Missionary associates **Markus and Sharon Jeromin**, Montevideo, Uruguay. Pray that the Lord would work in the hearts of the people they have befriended. / Home Missions associate general secretary **Al Tricarico**. / Pray for the work of stated clerk **Ross Graham** during the 84th General Assembly, meeting May 28–June 6 at Trinity Christian College in Palos Heights, Ill.
- 28.** **Joshua and Jessica Lyon**, Carson, Calif. Pray for unity and fellowship among the people of Grace OPC. / **Mark and Jeni Richline**, Montevideo, Uruguay. Pray that the new church members will grow in grace and knowledge of the Word. / Diaconal Ministries administrator **David Nakhla**. Pray for the final preparations and registrations for the third National Diaconal Summit to be held in June.
- 29.** Foreign Missions administrative assistant **Linda Posthuma** and secretary **Katrina Zartman**. / **Chris and Megan Hartshorn**, Anaheim Hills, Calif. Ask the Lord to send more members and converts to Anaheim Hills Presbyterian Church. / **Ryan (and Rachel) Heaton**, yearlong intern at Tyler Presbyterian Church in Tyler, Tex.
- 30.** **Paul and Sarah Murreale**, St. Louis, Mo. Pray for new visitors to come to Gateway OPC and for opportunities to reach the lost. / Pray for Foreign Missions associate general secretary **Douglas Clawson** as he maintains a busy speaking schedule. / **Ryan (and Rochelle) Cavanaugh**, yearlong intern at Prescott Presbyterian Church in Prescott, Arizona.
- 31.** Pray for Foreign Missions general secretary **Mark Bube**, attending General Assembly beginning this week. / **Mika and Christina Edmondson**, Grand Rapids, Mich. Praise God for his continued blessing on New City Fellowship. / **Miller (and Stephanie) Ansell**, yearlong intern at Faith Presbyterian Church in Garland, Tex.

NEWS, VIEWS, & REVIEWS



At the installation of Jesse Pirschel: front row (from left): Revs. Jonathan Moersch, Charles Telfer (PCA), Jesse Pirschel; elders Aaron Hook, Jim Toman; back row: elders Mike Jennings, Andy Taylor, Rev. David Crum

JESSE PIRSCHEL RETURNS TO TEMECULA

Andy Taylor

On March 5, Jesse Pirschel was installed as pastor of Providence OPC in Temecula, California. The church had called their pastor back home after he had served a year and a half as the senior pastor of Covenant PCA in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

IN MEMORIAM K. DALE COLLISON

Timothy L. Bero

The Rev. Kenneth Dale Collison entered into the church triumphant on March 12, 2017, at the age of sixty-eight. He was the husband of Jan for forty-six years, the father of Kevin, Tony, Ken, Mike, and Lacy (Hopper), and the grandfather of eleven granddaughters. Dale was born and raised in Kalamazoo, Michigan. He attended Covenant Theological Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri, and was ordained by the Presbytery of the Midwest. He moved into the Presbytery of Michigan and Ontario when it formed in 2000.

He had pastorates at Chain-O-Lakes Church in Central Lake, Michigan (seven years), and in Shedden and Komoka, Ontario, Canada (ten years), before his recent retirement.



Dale and Jan Collison in 2005

Dale loved Christ, his church, and his family. He lived a life of service to the Lord and others. He loved children and young people, and had a special way of relating to them. In his retirement, he was always willing to serve wherever there was need.

IN MEMORIAM RICHARD G. VINCENT

Peter H. deBoer, Jr.

Richard G. Vincent, a longtime ruling elder at Calvary Community Church in Phillipsburg (Harmony), New Jersey, went to be with the Lord on December 29, 2016. He was born on October 19, 1924, in Wilmington, Delaware. During World War II, he served in the U.S. Army in Europe. After the war, he met Lorraine Loughrey, who became his wife.

He served as a ruling elder at Calvary under all four of its pastors. He is survived by his wife of sixty-nine years, their six children, and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.



DICK VINCENT

UPDATE

MINISTERS

• **Derek W. Baker**, associate pastor of First Presbyterian Church, North Shore, in Ipswich, Mass., was received by the Southern New England Presbytery of the PCA on January 21.

• **Gregory A. Hills**, lead pastor of First Presbyterian Church, North Shore, in Ipswich, Mass., was received by the Southern New England Presbytery of the PCA on January 21.

• **Jesse A. J. Pirschel**, returning from a pastorate in the PCA, was installed on March 5 as pastor of Providence OPC in Temecula, Calif.

MILESTONES

• Retired OP pastor **K. Dale Collison**, 68, died on March 12.

• Longtime ruling elder **Richard G. Vincent**, 92, died on December 29.

LETTERS

WHOM DOES GOD LOVE?

Editor:

I am writing with regard to the article by Al Tricarico, “Missionary Transplant,” which appeared in the March issue. I enjoyed the article—it was good to get the perspective of one who had transitioned from the foreign mission field back to a position in the U.S.

But one thing in the article disturbed me. On page 6, Mr. Tricarico speaks of how the world became smaller to him. In that paragraph, he states, “We are all in trouble with God, and we are all loved by God and invited to believe in His Son for our everlasting blessing.” From the context, we can see that he is including all people of the world in the word “we.”

But our Reformed standards teach us from God’s Word that not all the people of the world are loved by God; he loves only his chosen people.

Including the above sentence in our denominational magazine sends an erroneous message to our churches. I realize that this may seem to be a small thing, but even small errors must be eliminated if our denomination is to remain pure in its doctrine. Our Presbyterian history teaches us this lesson.

Krista Groot
Newfield, N.J.

The author replies: God’s love has dimensions. The Bible speaks of his redemptive love that extends to his elect for their everlasting blessing (Mal. 1:2–3; Rom. 8:39). We who believe are all grateful for such love!

It is also true that God is good to his entire creation (Ps. 145:9), including all of broken humanity. Jesus had compassion on a hungry crowd (Matt. 15:32) and urged us to love our enemies because of his kindness to them (Luke 6:35). He wept over Jerusalem with tears of love, longing for the salvation of her residents (Matt. 23:37–39).

We can affirm that God loves all people in these ways, while praying that he would show his particular, saving love to them by granting them faith and welcoming them into his loving family.

REVIEWS

Resolving Conflict: How to Make, Disturb, and Keep Peace, by Lou Priolo. P&R Publishing, 2016. Paperback, 316 pages, list price \$15.99. Reviewed by OP minister Danny Patterson.

Lou Priolo has written a book that some in the Reformed and Presbyterian tradition will find to be a treasure trove of helpful information, while others will find themselves frustrated and unfulfilled. Priolo is the founder and president of Competent to Counsel International and is a fellow of the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors, which was previously named the National Association of Nouthetic Counselors (NANC).

Those who adhere to a philosophy of biblical counseling in which the Bible is understood to be the only sufficient resource for conflict resolution, will find much to commend the book. Particularly helpful, no matter what your philosophy of biblical counseling may be, is Part One of the book, in which the author discusses four prerequisites for resolving conflict: humility, gentleness, patience, and loving forbearance. An entire chapter is devoted to each of these prerequisites. Priolo provides the reader with multifaceted definitions of each prerequisite, turning each one like a diamond under a bright light, so that we might understand their rich meaning. Part One is far and away the most helpful portion of this book.

For those who adhere to a philosophy of biblical counseling in which integrative wisdom is used, and in which there is a recognition of common-grace insight by modern psychology and psychotherapy, Part Two of this book will be difficult. Although Priolo’s use of the book of Proverbs to lay down general principles of conflict resolution is solid, he often falls into what might be called proof texting. For example, Priolo argues that in conflict it is sometimes proper to respond with a totally different answer to someone’s question than what might be expected



(p. 166). As proof of this, he cites Jesus’ interaction with the Pharisees regarding the baptism of John. Although such a response to a question in a conflict may be appropriate at times, one is hard-pressed to demonstrate that this passage of Scripture prescribes it. This sort of proof-texting is prominent throughout Part Two of the book, and runs the risk of turning the Scriptures into an exhaustive manual on conflict resolution.

In addition to this concern, Part Two provides the reader with a number of examples of conflict resolution and counseling in which the responses of spouses or counselors seem harsh. For example, Priolo has a counselor respond to a counselee’s “I can’t” by saying, “You can’t say ‘can’t’ as a Christian. The Bible says you can do all things through Him who strengthens you. Please don’t say, ‘I can’t’; say ‘I will’ or ‘I won’t’” (p. 179). This response would come across to any counselee as lacking in empathy. Other examples of this are abundant in Part Two.

Finally, this book’s ignoring of the best insights of modern psychology leaves vast resources of helpful information untapped. Our belief, as Reformed people, in the antithesis *and* in common grace, demands that we do better here.

Finally, this book’s ignoring of the best insights of modern psychology leaves vast resources of helpful information untapped. Our belief, as Reformed people, in the antithesis *and* in common grace, demands that we do better here.

A Clear and Simple Treatise on the Lord’s Supper, by Theodore Beza, translated by David C. Noe. Reformation Heritage Books, 2016. Hardback, 248 pages, list price \$40.00. Reviewed by OP pastor Glen J. Clary.

At the Last Supper, the Lord Jesus said concerning the bread, “This is my body.” Those words have sparked more controversy in the history of the church than any other words in the Bible. The Reformers rejected the Roman Catholic doctrine that the consecrated bread is transubstantiated into the body of Christ. Unfortunately, however, they were unable to agree with each other on the exact meaning of the words of Jesus. The dispute between Luther and Zwingli at Marburg ultimately led to a rupture within the Protestant

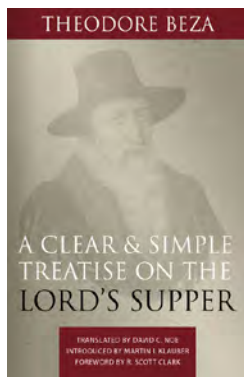
movement.

Calvin (like Zwingli) denied the local presence of Christ in the Supper, but he criticized Zwingli's failure to affirm that Christ is present by the agency of the Holy Spirit and that, through the sacrament, Christ's body and blood are truly received by believers. Calvin wrote, Zwingli "labored more to pull down what was evil than to build up what was good" (*Tracts*, 2:196). According to Calvin, Christ is "given to us in the Supper Spiritually because the secret virtue of the Spirit makes things which are separated by space to be united with each other and, accordingly, causes life from the flesh of Christ to reach us from heaven" (*Tracts*, 2:578). Even though Bullinger (Zwingli's successor) did not entirely accept Calvin's doctrine, the two Reformers were able to reach a consensus on the Lord's Supper.

Due to the influence of Philip Melancthon, some Lutherans (known as Philippists) became persuaded of Calvin's eucharistic theology. However, another group of Lutherans known as the Gnesio (genuine) Lutherans rejected Calvin's doctrine and defended Luther's teaching that (1) the body and blood of Jesus are locally and substantially present "in, with, and under" the consecrated elements and (2) believers and unbelievers alike receive his body and blood in the sacrament.

One of the leading proponents of the Gnesio-Lutheran position was Joachim Westphal. Beginning in 1552, Westphal published several treatises against Calvin's doctrine of the Lord's Supper. Calvin answered these attacks with three treatises of his own. Finally, in 1558, Westphal published his *Defense of the Lord's Supper against the Errors and Calumnies of John Calvin*. By this time, Calvin "had clearly had his fill of Westphal" and chose not to write a response (Beza, p. xxix).

However, in 1559, Beza, who had only recently arrived in Geneva, published *A Clear and Simple Treatise on the Lord's Supper in which the Published Slanders of Joachim Westphal are Finally Refuted*. This treatise is the clearest explanation of Calvin's doctrine of the Lord's Supper I've read. Beza completely demolishes



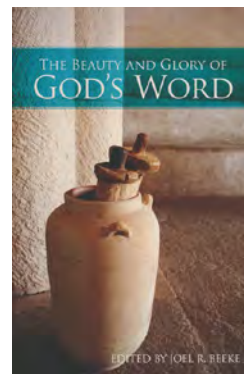
Westphal's doctrine, and with solid exegetical and theological arguments, he clarifies, defends, and advances Calvin's thought. Noe's translation is outstanding, and his editorial remarks are invaluable. This is an essential resource for any serious study of Calvin's doctrine of the Lord's Supper. I highly recommend it.

***The Beauty and Glory of God's Word*, edited by Joel R. Beeke. Reformation Heritage Books, 2016. Hardback, 142 pages, list price \$25.00. Reviewed by OP minister Cliff L. Blair.**

The ten chapters of this book are the presentations made at the 2015 annual

conference of Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary in Grand Rapids. The theme of the conference is in the title of the book. As one would expect from such a conference, all eight of the contributors present unwavering, traditional doctrine. That said, conference books are like albums: while generally uniform, there are usually one or two standouts. So here, a few chapters rise above the others (at least for me).

Geoff Thomas, the (now retired)



WINTER YOUTH CONFERENCE

Lloyd Sterrett

The Presbytery of Philadelphia hosted a Winter Youth Conference called Kamelos on February 17–19 at Streamside Camp and Conference Center in Northeastern Pennsylvania near Camelback Mountain. The conference was attended by sixty-two young people from Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware. The speaker was David Landow, associate pastor of Emmanuel OPC in Wilmington, Delaware, who spoke on the Beatitudes from Matthew 5. The weather was warm-

er than expected (nearly 60 degrees in February), but the kids were able to enjoy late-night snow tubing.

Many thanks go to Steve Corsello of Trinity OPC in Easton, Pennsylvania, for coming up with this idea and for working with the presbytery to make it a reality. The Lord answered many prayers and blessed the conference in many ways.

The Committee on Young Peoples' Work is already working to make this an annual event. Please keep an eye out for information about next year's Winter Youth Conference.



The participants in the Winter Youth Conference (Kamelos) of the Presbytery of Philadelphia

MTIOPC Summer 2017

OPC pastors, licentiates, men under care of presbytery, and elders are invited join the first class of students for two new courses: *Reformed Evangelism* and *A Hebrew Refresher*. There is also the opportunity to brush up on your Greek or gain a deeper understanding of OPC history.

Enroll today for a course offered by the Ministerial Training Institute of the OPC (MTIOPC). The enrollment deadline is **May 30, 2017**.

Classes begin on June 1, 2017, for the following courses:

- **A Greek Refresher**, taught by David Noe
- **A Hebrew Refresher**, taught by Matthew Patton
- **OPC History**, taught by John Muether
- **Reformed Evangelism**, taught by John Shaw and Eric Watkins

A mandatory Intensive Training session will be held **August 15-17** at Grace Presbyterian Church in Columbus, Ohio (travel August 14, 17).

Applications and more information are available at www.opc.org/cce/MTI.html.

pastor of Alfred Place Baptist Church in Aberystwyth Wales, has two sermons on the authority and sufficiency of Scripture. He breaks no new ground—decidedly the reverse—but brings foundational truth with the warmth and insight of a seasoned pastor. These sermons make good devotional reading.

Joel Beeke, president of Puritan Reformed, provides a closing chapter that is very much in the vein of his institution. His sermon, from James 1:21–25, is peppered with many quotes from the Puritans and contains many points of practical application on receiving and doing the word of God. Reading the sermon, I wondered what it was like to hear this information-laden work. I went online and listened (for just over an hour) and was pleasantly surprised at how lively and engaging it was.

Far and away the most satisfying chapter is the lecture by William Van Doodewaard, Puritan Reformed's professor of church history. His contribution,

“Challenges to the Word: A Case Study on Adam,” is a model of accessible apologetics.

In a brief compass, Van Doodewaard sets forth the biblical account of man's direct creation by God and the uniform testimony of Scripture to a literal reading of that account. He concludes that “there is no exegetical or theological reason to believe anything other than that God specially created Adam and Eve.... Nowhere in Scripture do we receive exegetical cues of lengthy processes involved in Adam's origin, nor does Scripture

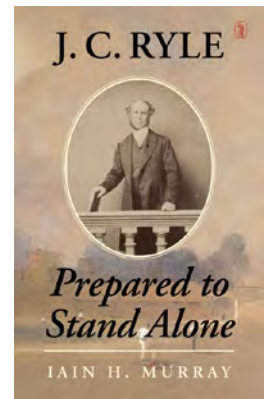
indicate any predecessors or ancestors to Adam and Eve” (p. 32). The biblical data is followed by a fascinating account of opposing views from ancient civilizations, some early church fathers influenced by Neoplatonism (notably Origen and Augustine), and across the medieval period to the Reformation. At the Reformation, the literal reading gained a nearly complete ascendancy in the church. Since then, opposition has come afresh, both within and without the church (e.g., Socinians, Darwinians). It is again today a point of controversy within the Protestant and Reformed church.

From this he unfolds the theologically erosive consequences of rejecting a historical Adam for hermeneutics, anthropology (i.e., defining human life, marriage, and the unity of the human race), and even the meaning of the gospel.

The book on the whole is a reliable restatement of the Reformed doctrine of Scripture, with a few of the chapters being of particular merit.

J. C. Ryle: Prepared to Stand Alone, by Iain Murray. Banner of Truth Trust, 2016. Hardback, 275 pages, list price \$28.00; paperback, \$18.00. Reviewed by OP pastor Brian De Jong.

When John Charles Ryle died on June 10, 1900, his life's work was already being dismissed as a relic of a bygone era. For the next half century, Bishop Ryle was largely



forgotten and his books gathered dust. Since then, interest in Ryle has gradually increased as his works have been reprinted and biographies of him have been written.

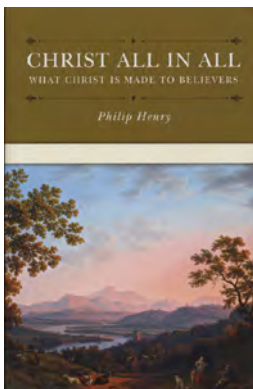
Last year another Ryle biography appeared—*J. C. Ryle: Prepared to Stand Alone*. It was written by arguably the finest Reformed biographer of our time, Iain Murray, and it does not disappoint. In certain respects, this is a more mature treatment of Ryle. While earlier biographies focused on the narrative of Ryle's impressive life and ministry, Murray has written a more analytical biography. He labors to take into account the theological milieu of Anglicanism in the latter half of the nineteenth century. By placing Ryle within the context of his own church and cultural setting, Murray brings out the tragedy of those times and the greatness of this man, who remained steadfast and immovable in the truth of the gospel.

Following a chronological outline, Murray paints portraits of the various chapters of Ryle's life. He doesn't give blow-by-blow accounts, but shows us the man and his heart in a very personable way. In addition, Murray provides a valuable critique and analysis in the final chapter, “What Does Ryle Say for Today?” Murray isn't afraid to be critical of Ryle at points, though he obviously admires his subject profoundly. A unique aspect of the biography is its use of photographs of Ryle and the environs in which he ministered—some taken by Ryle's wife.

What will make this biography even more interesting to Orthodox Presbyterians are the striking similarities to the experiences of J. Gresham Machen. Although separated by an ocean and living in different generations and ecclesiastical settings, both of these great men suffered for their defense of the gospel and their opposition to theological liberalism. Who would deny that Machen was “Prepared to Stand Alone”? Ryle was like Machen in his love for the gospel, a commitment to Reformed theology, an abhorrence of higher criticism and its effects upon the church, and a willingness to live “contra mundum,” even within the confines of the visible church. One last similarity is the clarity of their writing styles. Though both men possessed brilliant intellects, their ability to make the truth plain and compelling sets them apart from many other authors in the history of the church.

***Christ All in All: What Christ Is Made to Believers*, by Philip Henry. Reformation Heritage Books, 2016. Hardback, 384 pages, list price \$28.00. Reviewed by Prof. Ryan M. McGraw.**

What is the gospel? Is it good news? Is it justification by faith alone? Is it renewal in God’s image? Is it deliverance from sin and evil? The gospel is all these things



to some extent, but ultimately it is Jesus Christ himself, and he must be our all in all. In Christ, we are justified, adopted, sanctified, and glorified. Christ is the husband whom believers receive through marriage and, with him, they receive all that is his. Yet as a husband is more than his riches to a loving wife, so Christ is more than his gifts to believers.

This truth highlights a crisis in the church today, even as it stirs the hearts of true believers. The church needs to recover the glory of the Savior as the heart

of the gospel. Yet every true Christian resonates with the title of Philip Henry’s book without being told that they need to. This book, written by the father of the famous commentator Matthew Henry, shows why Christ is all in all in forty-one meditations. These meditations are simple and clear, and will help all Christians to meditate on Christ’s glory for the good of their souls.

The chapters present Henry’s sermons on this subject in abbreviated form. While this makes the style a bit choppy and uneven at points, the content is clear and easy to follow. Henry’s meditations on Christ are not as profound and thought provoking as the more famous treatments of John Owen, Thomas Goodwin, Isaac Ambrose, or Samuel Rutherford. Henry’s strength lies primarily in the simplicity of his thoughts. Sometimes the primary value of a book like this one is that it makes us stop and think about Jesus, and, in thinking upon him, to know and love him better.

Read *Christ All in All* to lead your thoughts in the right direction and to keep Christ at the center of your faith and life.

***Devoted to God: Blueprints for Sanctification*, by Sinclair B. Ferguson. Banner of Truth, 2016. Paperback, 296 pages, list price \$18.00. Reviewed by OP minister Arthur J. Fox.**

This book takes time to digest. It is written, says

Diaconal Summit Registration

May 15 is the deadline to register for OPC Diaconal Summit III. It will meet June 15–17, 2017, in Wheaton, Illinois. Get all the details and register now at www.opcstm.org/register.

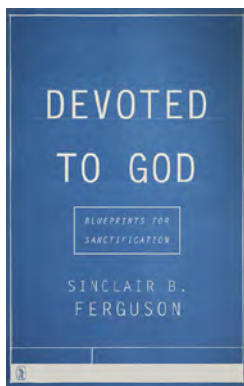


the author, “to provide a manual of biblical teaching on holiness developed on the basis of extended expositions of foundational passages in the New Testament” (p. ix). This is not a how-to-be-holy book.

Positions Available

Pastor: Christ Presbyterian Church in Janesville, Wisconsin, is seeking a new pastor. We are a congregation of moderate size (with 85 communicant members) located in a city of over 60,000. We seek a pastor to faithfully preach the Word, administer the sacraments, shepherd the flock, participate in various ministries of the congregation, and provide leadership along with the session. Interested candidates should submit their ministerial information form, including a link to three recently preached sermons, to: pastorsearch@christ-opc.org or Pastor Search Committee, Christ Presbyterian Church, 3625 Skyview Dr., Janesville, WI 53546.

Pastor: Bethel OPC in Oostburg, Wis., an established church in a rural area, is seeking a sound, biblical pastor who believes in the inerrancy of the Scriptures, to preach the Word of God and shepherd the congregation in partnership with the elders. If you are interested, please contact Bethel OPC. Go to <http://www.oostburgopc.org/> for contact information.



This is a book on how God has provided the resources of Christ to make us holy, what those resources are, and how we are to use them to grow in holiness. If the book is read

correctly, the reader will find his thinking on holiness guided and expanded by an increased knowledge of “passages that describe sanctification rather than passages that command it” (p. 10). It follows the principle that the commands of God to be holy are based on what God has done in Christ to make us holy.

Ferguson exposes the reader to ten foundational passages of Scripture that teach that transformed lives require renewed minds that understand what the gospel is and how it works holiness in us as we believe it and live on the basis of it. Each of the chapters focuses on one of these passages that reveal the spiritual resources God has given in Christ that help make us holy.

This book is very encouraging because it points to union with Christ as the foundation of holiness. All that Christ has done in redemption and earned for himself as a man has by God’s grace been made ours, including his holiness. This is not a book to be read quickly. Read it with pen and journal at hand, so that the information will become truly yours. And then ask God to make its lessons part of your life.



The participants in the Junior High Winter Camp at Efland, N.C.

YOUTH WINTER CAMP

Matthew Miner

Pilgrim OPC in Raleigh, North Carolina, held its first annual Junior High Winter Camp on February 24–26 in Efland, North Carolina. The goal of the camp is to provide opportunities for spiritual growth, fellowship, and fun for the junior high students in our presbytery and to facilitate good relationships and closer contact among the congregations of the presbytery.

Bill Dennison, a minister of our presbytery and a professor at Covenant College, did a phenomenal job with three lessons titled “Christ in Moses,” “Christ in Wisdom,” and “Christ in the Prophets.” He also led a regular Sunday-morning

worship service, which was attended by campers, counselors, and some of the parents picking up their children. The campers left camp after lunch on Sunday.

The kids enjoyed games and activities outdoors, great food, and the chance to get to know each other. The participants included twenty-one campers and five counselors from Covenant Presbyterian Church (New Bern, N.C.), Covenant URC (Pantego, N.C.), New Life Orthodox Presbyterian Church of Mbale (Mbale, Uganda), Pilgrim OPC (Raleigh, N.C.), Sandy Springs Presbyterian Church (Maryville, Tenn.), and Shiloh Presbyterian Church (Raleigh, N.C.). If you’re in or near the Presbytery of the Southeast, watch for information about plans for 2018!