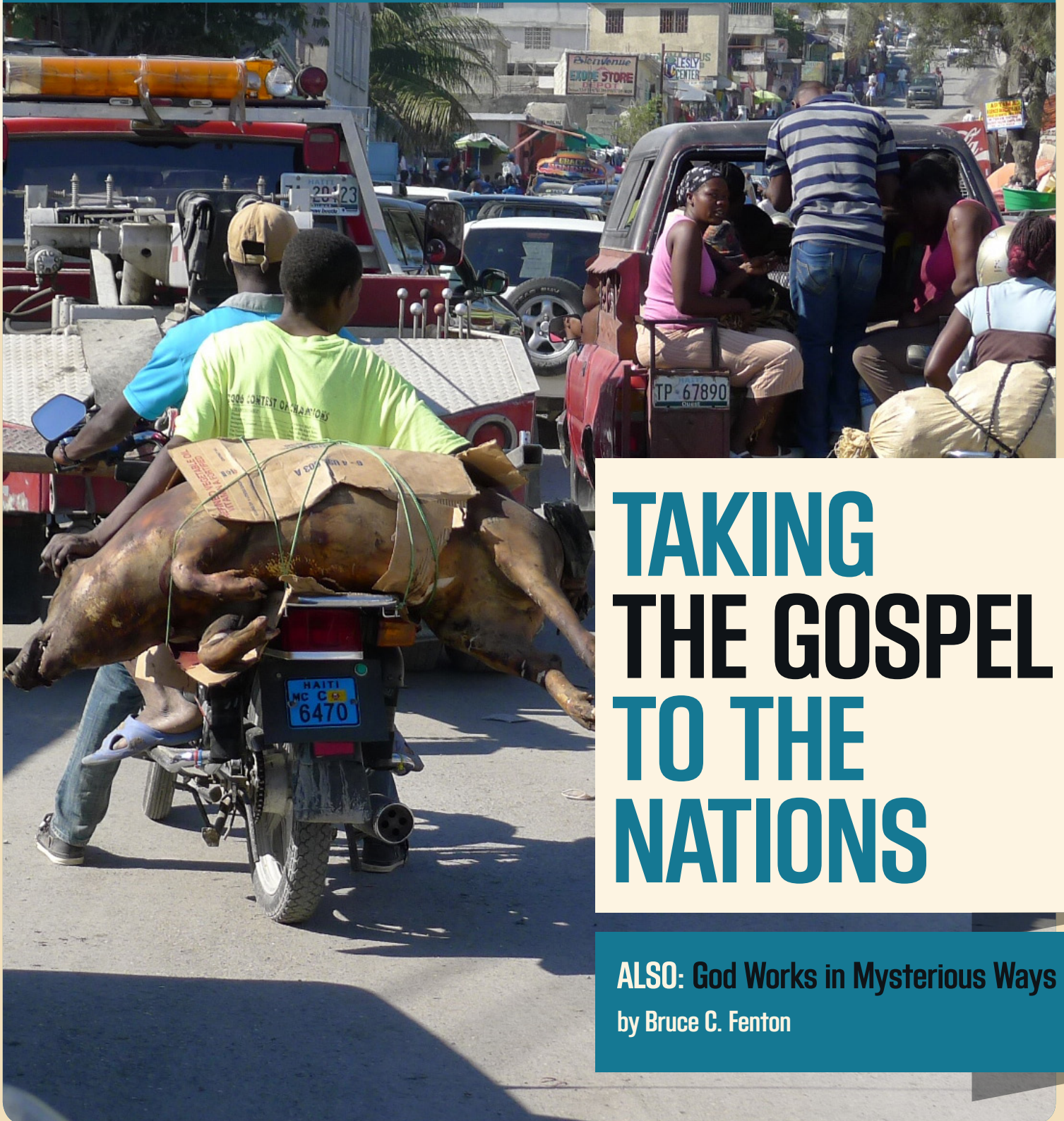


REVIEW: Versteeg's *Adam in the New Testament* by D. Patrick Ramsey

# New Horizons

IN THE ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

MAY 2013



## TAKING THE GOSPEL TO THE NATIONS

ALSO: God Works in Mysterious Ways  
by Bruce C. Fenton

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## NEW HORIZONS

IN THE ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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It turns out that there is a church in the OPC that is even older than Limington OPC (formerly the Congregational Church) in Limington, Maine (established 1789)—pictured on page 2 of the March 2013 issue of this magazine. That church is Second Parish OPC in Portland, Maine, whose pastor is Daniel F. Patterson. It traces its roots to Second Parish Congregational Church, which was founded in 1787. Second Parish and Park Street Presbyterian Church (USA) united in 1923 as Second Parish Presbyterian Church (USA). In 1936, that church left the PCUSA and entered what soon became the OPC, under the leadership of then-pastor John H. Skilton. Second Parish moved to a new building in Portland in 1964.



ERIC W. TUINGA

# A Light Shining in the Darkness

**G**reetings in Christ from Mbale, Uganda! Christ rules over all nations! I praise God continually that Christ's kingdom has reached many formerly pagan lands, including Europe, America, Asia, and Uganda!

The Mbale area is home to many tribes and languages. While visiting believers in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church of Uganda (OPCU), you might hear the following greetings: *Mulembe!* (Lugisu), *Kojeyo!* (Lunyole), *Koizeyo!* (Lugwere), *Habari!* (Swahili), *Oli Otya?* (Luganda), or even *How are you?* (English). Worshipping and teaching here often reminds me of the triumphant verse, “[You] have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation” (Rev. 5:9 NKJV).

The way Christ ordained for his kingdom to reach Uganda is inspiring and encouraging. The gospel first reached Uganda in 1875, about ten years after Islam first arrived. The first Anglican missionaries, invited by the king (Kabaka), arrived in 1877. One early missionary, Alexander Mackay, told the Kabaka that Islam is the religion of the false prophet Mohammad, that slavery is a great evil, and that the traditional Lubaale cult is wrong. On one occasion, to prove his point, Mackay threw a Lubaale charm into the fire, to the gasps of his terrified audience. When no evil befell him for such a scandalous act, many began to take his Christian message seriously. In 1881, the first converts were baptized.

“Here in Africa, before, people were worshipping mountains, trees, and spiritual dark powers. But now, because God has put a desire in our lives, we seek him. At first we did not seek him, but now we seek him.” So said Knox Theological College student Hagada Medad, in a sermon preached in February 2013 on Isaiah 65:1.

However, wherever Christ is at work, Satan also fights. And Satan fought hard to keep the gospel out of Uganda. One missionary, Bishop James Hannington, was killed by warriors

on order of the king, on October 29, 1885. His words were, “Tell the Kabaka that I die for Uganda.”

The persecution of Christians intensified when one of the Ugandan kings attempted to force his pages to engage in homosexual acts with him. They refused because of their faith in Christ. He was furious that these early converts would put loyalty to Christ above loyalty to the king, and so on June 3, 1886, thirty-one of them were burned alive, bearing joyful testimony of their assurance of heaven. The blood of the martyrs proved to be the seed of the church, and Christianity began to spread, enthusiastically preached by Ugandans themselves.

The Anglican mission strategy was that wherever churches were planted, Christian schools would also be built. Poor village families eagerly sent their children to these schools. As a result, within one or two generations, Christianity had reached most of Uganda! Today Muslims are copying this strategy and building many Muslim schools, sometimes giving free tuition to attract Christian children. While 80 percent of Ugandans now consider themselves Christian, pagan practices continue in the villages. Even in the church, the true gospel is being undermined by the prosperity gospel, moralism, and empty ritual.

Into this situation, for the last twenty years, the OPC has sent missionaries to Eastern Uganda in order to assist the church here. As a result, new converts come to Christ, new churches are planted, believers grow in their faith, Reformed theological education is provided, and Christ is honored and glorified by having a faithful, godly, doctrinally solid church here in Uganda.

Eric Tuininga with students and staff at Knox Theological College



It has been said that there is a famine in Uganda—not a lack of food or rain, but a lack of theological training for pastors. My primary task since arriving in Uganda in July 2012 has been to train men for the ministry at Knox Theological College (KTC), a seminary operated by the OP Uganda Mission. There is a great need for solid training, and it is a great privilege for the Orthodox Presbyterian Church to be here to provide this blessing. Currently there are ten students at KTC from a variety of backgrounds: five from the OPCU, three from the Reformed Fellowship Churches of Kenya, a denomination across the border in Kenya, and two from a Pentecostal background (eagerly embracing Reformed doctrine).

Reformed theology is a great treasure that we are able to provide the church here. One of the students at KTC is from a large Pentecostal church that teaches the prosperity gospel. In our soteriology class (soteriology is the doctrine of salvation), he asked, “How can we get this doctrine to more people?”

When his pastor gave him an opportunity to preach, he preached on justification by faith through the righteousness of Christ, a doctrine the congregation had never heard before. This student also had a long conversation successfully convincing an elder that the commonly held doctrine of a distinct “second

blessing” accompanied by speaking in tongues is unbiblical. Pray for a modern reformation in the churches here!

## SPIRITUAL WARFARE

I would like to give you a picture of the spiritual warfare in the midst of which KTC students and OPCU pastors are proclaiming Christ. Recently I asked the students at KTC to write a short paper describing common sins in their culture or tribe and how to address these sins. Here is a portion of what one young man wrote:

In my tribe of Banyole in Butaleja District, most people believe in the spirit gods. Each clan in Bunyole has a spirit god which they worship, and there are more than three hundred clans. Every year, beginning from August until December, they go to serve the spirits. That is when the harvest finishes, and most people have harvested the crops from the gardens. So each clan prepares to serve the ancestor spirits. During this time there is beating of drums in the whole of Bunyole. People take food, drinks, hens, and goats to slaughter blood for their demons or spirits. There is a god of the rain, a god of mountains, a god of marriage. . . . There are men who put on animal skins—those are the ones who present before the spirit gods all the problems of the clan. . . . Each clan has one man who puts on animal skins, and this man is called *Omutusa*. This man is chosen by the spirits/demons. This person doesn’t do any work. The clan will provide for him everything because he speaks with the spirits. They offer to him food, hens, milk, etc., during the harvest time. This fellow has the power to command anything either to curse or bring barrenness [even] to the young boys and girls, and he is the most feared person, for

Women from the Ugandan church sending their greetings



he speaks to the demons. . . . Everyone in Uganda fears my tribe because of curses. They can curse a tree, and it dries—they claim to have this power. They curse crops not to grow well until they come to *Omutusa* [and get him] to say something; then their crops will

grow well and produce.

When I come across these persons [demon worshippers], I ask them questions to know for sure if their spirits can save them from death and the wrath of God, or if they can find peace eternal. Can they have assurance of eternal life by consulting their demons?

Then I can tell them about the true God and his Son Jesus Christ, who can save them all from the bondage of sin and death. I can tell them what is written in the law—the first of the Ten Commandments—and how we were weak to keep that law, so God sent his Son, who kept it perfectly for us.

There is life in Jesus Christ.

There is grace in Jesus Christ.

There is now no condemnation in Jesus Christ.

This is the one whom we must worship, the Creator of heaven and earth and all that is in them. The one who has the power over death and to give life, the one before whom every knee shall bow down and worship—even their [evil] spirits are subject to him! He is the judge of all nations under the sun! And if they believe this good news, then I can pray with everyone for his salvation in Jesus' name.

Into the spiritual darkness, the light of Jesus Christ is shining as the gospel is preached! We, as the OPC, have a great privilege to partner with the OPCU churches here in this work! In addition to teaching at KTC, I help to mentor and encourage the congregations that form the Orthodox Presbyterian Church of Uganda. The OPCU has ten congregations: one here in Mbale and nine village churches: Bukonde, Kama, Mazimasa, Kakoli, Petete, Nampologoma, Kachonga, Kaiti, and Khamoto. I realize that to you these are just names, but to us, they are people: brothers and sisters, friends, and fellow believers. I wish you could meet them all, but I am privileged to greet them on your behalf and to enjoy the unity of Christ's church around the world!

More than 90 percent of OPCU members are peasant farmers, which means that they have no regular employment. Instead, they grow their own food, and hopefully have some to sell in order to provide for basic needs like soap, sugar, and

## Statistics for the U.S. and Uganda

The average purchasing power parity (PPP) per capita is a measure of the purchasing power, adjusted for differences in cost of living, between nations. In international dollars, the U.S. is at \$48,112, and Uganda is \$1,345. Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_countries\\_by\\_GDP\\_\(PPP\)\\_per\\_capita](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_GDP_(PPP)_per_capita).

Additionally, U.S. life expectancy is 78 years. Ugandan life expectancy is 53 years.

blankets. Many of them live in very small homes with dirt floors and no electricity or running water. Many people in Uganda endure real suffering, some of whom we have had the humbling privilege to meet.

## LOVING OUR UGANDAN NEIGHBORS

The material poverty of our Reformed brothers and sisters in Uganda provides a wonderful opportunity for us to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. One of the key themes of God's Word is that believers must joyfully give to one another; especially those with more earthly possessions have a duty to joyfully give to those who have less. For example, 1 Timothy 6:17–18 *ESV* says, “As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty. . . . They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share.” The OPC seeks to be generous and ready to share with our brothers and sisters in the OPCU.

A wonderful example of this kind of church-to-church, cross-cultural giving is found in 2 Corinthians 8 and 9. There Paul is taking collections from the Greek churches in Macedonia and Achaia, in order to provide for the poor believers in Judea. We are urged to abound in this grace: “But as you abound in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all diligence, and in your love for us—see that you abound in this grace also” (2 Cor. 8:7 *NKJV*).

In an effort to abound in this grace, the OPC helps our OPCU brothers and sisters in a variety of ways. We provide their diaconal committee with a small amount for each congregation to use to help support their widows and orphans (about \$25 per month per congregation). We have an arrangement with a local Christian health clinic, whereby OPCU brothers and sisters can receive medical care. We also help to subsidize a radio program where OPCU pastors preach. We have promised to drill wells for the village churches. One goal of the mission here is to have a full-time deacon living here in Mbale to oversee these projects and help in other ways, so that the OPCU brothers and sisters can become more and more self-sustaining.

There are other ideas of how the work here might move forward, including setting up a reading room to distribute Reformed literature, starting Reformed Christian schools, and expanding KTC with vocational programs. Please pray for wisdom as we look to the future and explore how we can partner with the Ugandan churches to advance Christ's kingdom.

Thank you for your prayers! Thank you for your support! My wife, Dianna, and I, with our eight children, are very much enjoying our life and work here. Pray that we will faithfully reflect Christ and be a real blessing here in Uganda. □

*The author is an OP missionary in Uganda.*



DAVID A. OKKEN

# Persevering through Heartaches

Last year was a very difficult year for our young church in Nakaale. The attacks of the Evil One were severe and felt deeply. It was heartbreaking to see church members falling into sin, especially as it happened among three men whose faith in Christ and growth in grace had so encouraged us.

Our hearts ached as we asked ourselves, “How could these dear brothers be following some of the very practices that they had renounced?” As believers in Christ, they had promised to walk in obedience to his commandments. In particular, they had professed their belief that God desires marriage to be between one man and one woman. As husbands, each had promised to be faithful to his one wife. Now, we were discovering, they had decided to take additional wives. In almost twelve years of ministry in Karamoja, I had never felt so discouraged.

In an e-mail update, I shared these struggles that we were experiencing. Among the many encouraging responses that I received was a communication from one brother who reminded me of the great difficulty that the apostle Paul had with immorality in the early church. When we think of Corinth, we remember that the gospel of Jesus Christ had come to an evil culture. That it had come in great power was evidenced by the men and women who had been converted out of extremely wicked lifestyles.

In his first letter to that church, Paul reminded them that some of their members had been sexually immoral, idolaters, adulterers, homosexuals, thieves, greedy, drunkards, revilers, and swindlers (1 Cor. 6:9–10). And even though Paul could write that they were no longer such, but had now been washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God (v. 11), the struggle with sin was not over. It seems that their pagan background continued to aid and abet their sinful natures.

Add to that the insidious false teachings within the church

(e.g., antinomianism) condoning immorality. Believers faced the danger of being deceived into thinking that they could be Christians while willfully continuing to follow the sinful practices of the culture. Hence Paul’s strong warning (v. 9): “Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived.” Similar warnings in other epistles (Gal. 5:21; Eph. 5:5) indicate that the problem was not unique to Corinth. Sinful practices from pagan backgrounds threatened to creep into Christ’s church in many places.

In Karamoja, we are struggling against an approach to marriage that is deeply embedded in the culture. Sometimes it feels like, in telling our friends to abstain from certain practices, we are asking them not to breathe. This is a culture in which young girls are commonly treated by their parents or husbands more like

Worship in Nakaale



possessions than persons created in the image of God. After a man and a woman have already begun living as husband and wife, parents retain ownership of their daughter until the dowry has been paid in full. Generally, that does not happen for many years. So a “wife” may be reclaimed by her parents, even if it is contrary to her wishes, and given to a better suitor who can more quickly pay the cows (the dowry).

It saddens us deeply to see persons going in and out of “marriages” this way. Furthermore, polygamy is rampant. The commonly prescribed remedy for a troublesome wife is to take another one. It is common even among members of the Roman Catholic and Anglican Church (Church of Uganda). Folks are certainly taught by example, if not by false doctrine, that you can be a Christian and live by the standards of the world.

## OUR DETERMINATION TO BE DIFFERENT

In 2001, when we first came to Karamoja and observed all of this, I was determined that it would be different in the Presbyterian and Reformed churches that we would plant. We just needed to preach the true, clear biblical gospel in all of its fullness. Surely the Spirit would work powerfully in the hearts of men and women, so that they would see the glory and grace of Jesus and turn to him in true repentance and faith. They would gladly leave behind the polygamy, along with all of the other unsatisfying, sinful practices of the culture. Our churches would be full of examples of godly, monogamous Christian marriages. Well, here we were, eleven years later, in 2012. Our dear brothers, members of Nakaale Presbyterian Church, had given in to the influences of the world, the flesh, and the devil. Heartbroken, how could I not ask myself, “What have I done wrong here?”

There is no doubt that we have made mistakes in our ministry. Nonetheless, my friend’s encouragement was right on. We were facing struggles very similar to those that Paul faced. Had Paul preached a deficient gospel or compromised his life or doctrine? As we read his letters to the Corinthians, every indication is that he proclaimed and lived the gospel without compromise (see, for example, 1 Cor. 9:23–27). Surely, Paul could say to them what he told the elders from Ephesus: “I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27).

Yet Paul too found himself heartbroken over sin in the church. Prior to his visit to Corinth, while ministering in Macedonia (Acts 20:2), Paul wrote to the Corinthians, “I

fear that when I come again my God may humble me before you, and I may have to mourn over many of those who sinned earlier and have not repented of the impurity, sexual immorality, and sensuality that they have practiced” (2 Cor. 12:21). Such sin was no doubt a significant cause of the daily pressure he felt from his anxiety for the churches, which he listed along with all of his other sufferings for the gospel (2 Cor. 11:28).

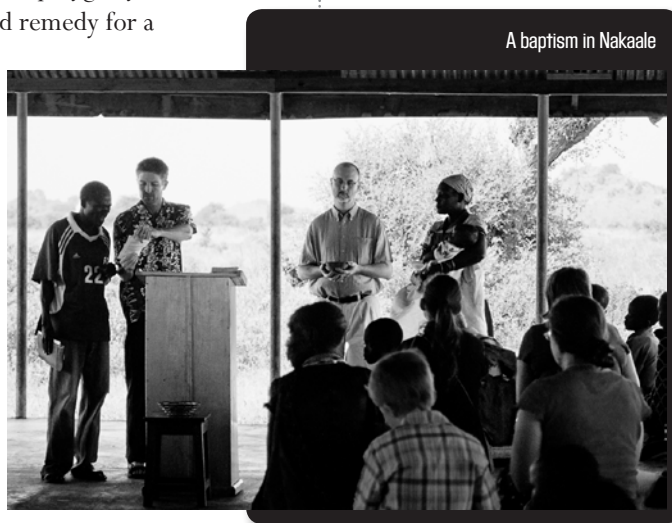
Such is life in God’s kingdom as it exists in this world,

and we await its coming in glory. Yes, as it was for Paul, so it will be in Karamoja and the church everywhere, as the gospel continues to fill the earth. There will be an ongoing conflict with sin, even among the saints. And we should be encouraged that, even amidst the “lost battles,” God is at work. Christ is in control and continues to fulfill his great purposes.

In the case of Paul, within three months of arriving in Corinth (Acts 20:2–3), he penned his epistle to the Romans, in which he wrote that his work in the East (including Corinth) had been fulfilled. We do not know the details of the confrontation that occurred between Paul and the Corinthians, but it seems likely that the Spirit worked repentance on the part of many. In this way, the sin in the church became an occasion for Christ to bring a great victory in the fight against immorality. No doubt the battles would continue. Yet Paul would not look back on his ministry as a grand failure, but could instead write that he had “fulfilled the ministry of the gospel of Christ” (Rom. 15:19).

May this encourage us all never to give up in the battle against sin. Let us persevere, even through the heartaches. Christ is faithful. This is a war that he has won! In Karamoja, we were encouraged that all three men were willing to stand before the congregation of Nakaale Presbyterian Church and confess their sin. It was a great opportunity to demonstrate before the world that sin should not simply be overlooked among God’s people who are called to be holy. What a humbling reminder to us all of our need of grace! We praise God for forgiveness through Jesus’ blood and for the ongoing work of the Spirit in us all. Let us press on until that day when the battle will be over, sin will be no more, and we will be with Christ forever in the dwelling place of righteousness (2 Pet. 3:13)! ◻

*The author is an OP missionary in Karamoja, Uganda.*



# Ministering to the Needy in Japan

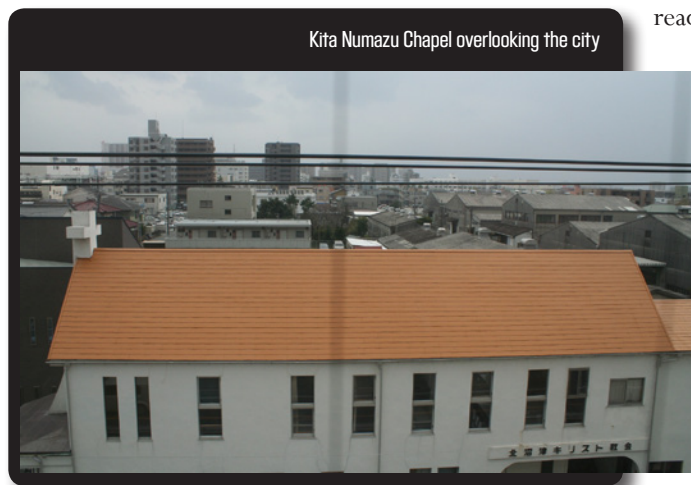
STEWART E. LAUER

*Blessed are you who are poor,  
for yours is the kingdom of God.*  
—Luke 6:20

Since our arrival in Numazu almost five and a half years ago, we have encountered what most American city churches experience on a regular basis, though perhaps not as frequently: needy people coming to us for help.

Located about a mile northwest of the city's main train station and only a few hundred yards from its major shopping mall, our building—with its classic but simple church design and a prominent cross extending well above the roof of the second floor—gives Kita (North) Numazu Chapel of the Reformed Church in Japan a visible profile in this inner-city community. The church's meeting location, paired with the reputation that churches worldwide often have for providing a refuge for the needy, has brought numerous indigent, homeless, or abused men—and sometimes women—to our doorstep seeking help, usually material, but occasionally spiritual as well. This, in turn, has added a new and rewarding, though often challenging, dimension to ministering the Word of God here in this strongly Buddhist area of Numazu.

The people of Japan have been suffering the fallout from economic stagnation for much of the past twenty years. The nation has been more or less in recession since the so-called “bubble burst” of the early 1990s. With the end of the postwar economic boom, many



Kita Numazu Chapel overlooking the city

businesses have struggled to stay afloat, and many others have failed. The lifetime employment that “Japan, Inc.” used to provide to regular company employees has been replaced by uncertainty and sometimes even unemployment.

As companies have failed and employees have become victims of *restora* (restructuring), another problem that was virtually unknown two decades ago, homelessness, has become commonplace—not only in the big cities like Tokyo, Osaka, and Yokohama, but even in much smaller cities, including Numazu (pop. 210,000).

A homeless or otherwise destitute man shows up at the church on average every couple of months. The pleas for help that we hear have common themes: “I haven’t eaten in three days.” “I am cold from sleeping in the park down the street; please give me money for a bed and for food.” After welcoming the visitor into our building and calling the manse to have Laurie serve a meal to him, her, or (on rare occasions) them,

reading Scripture, and praying with the needy individual, he begins to tell his story.

“At one time I worked for enterprise XYZ. Two years ago, I was let go, and because I am over fifty, companies won’t consider my

application. Since I am considered able-bodied, I don’t qualify for welfare, but no one will hire me. After I lost my job, my wife left me, taking the kids, moved back with her parents, and divorced me so that she could receive welfare. I did find a contract job temporarily, but that company, too, went bankrupt. Two months ago, it threw me out of the company housing that came with the job, and I have nowhere to go and no income. Please help me.”

We have heard stories similar to this repeatedly over the last five years. On a recent occasion, the local police substation sent a desperate man to our doorstep. He began and continues to attend worship regularly, and has expressed an interest in receiving baptism. The church helped him find work and furnish an apartment. To be sure, as in the U.S., not all who come begging are really destitute and hungry. On one occasion, we served a meal to a man who claimed to be famished, but then he turned his nose up at the meal



and left, saying it was not to his liking. Others, after asking for money to buy food, have immediately left when offered food. Nevertheless, we are truly grateful that the Lord has answered our prayers and enabled us to help the homeless with the Word and by deeds.

Like many American deacons, we make it a rule not to give or lend cash to visitors in need, but we do—when a story seems to hold up—provide help *in kind*. Several individuals and one couple have come seeking help to get back to their hometowns, or to some other city where they claim to have work awaiting them. We have responded by either driving them to their destination, or taking them to the train station, where we buy the ticket and personally put it through the electronic wicket (since a partially used ticket is nonrefundable). Currently there are four individuals, all (now) single, who attend services at least occasionally. Here we share the story of the Lord's blessing upon one of them.

Mr. Omizu first came to the church several years before we arrived, after leaving his job as a manager of a chain shoe store. His wife had divorced him, taking their two kids. She now lives with them in her parents' home not far from Mount Fuji. He was out of work and destitute. Almost age fifty by that time, he could not find new work. Mr. Saikawa, a church member with his own contract company that does work for a major transformer manufacturer, took him in and provided a bed, and eventually helped him to find contract work with the parent corporation. Mr. Omizu began attending church services. However, a year or so before our arrival, he suffered a serious workplace accident: a 200 kg piece of a transformer fell on his foot. Botched surgery immediately following the accident left him with chronic pain and permanent damage to his foot. Since the company failed to record this as a workplace accident, he did not receive workman's

compensation or disability and had to continue doing the same heavy work, despite his condition.

When we arrived, Mr. Omizu was attending worship and Wednesday prayer meetings. His prayers reflected his struggle of whether or not to believe in God's existence—and at the same time asking for help. He was bitter because of the trials in his life. Six months later, he stopped fighting against God



and believed his Word. Mr. Omizu began classes for baptism and was baptized in 2009, while he was still working for the transformer company. He also began attending the Saturday night men's fellowship time, which included prayer, a meal, and study of the Westminster Shorter Catechism.

As the months went on and he underwent trial after trial, his prayers grew in depth and earnestness. At first, his prayers were largely introspective, but over time he has come to pray for others in need and for the maturity of the church as a whole. He has often expressed his concern to bring the gospel and diaconal help to those outside the church. Soon after we began 7:00 a.m. prayer meetings twice weekly, he began to attend those, too—even though the

noise from the bar beneath his apartment often keeps him awake into the early hours of the morning. Two and a half years ago, he was laid off, and we have been helping him off and on since that time, as he sought new work.

Finally, early this year, the Lord mercifully answered his prayers and ours. After several months on welfare, Mr. Omizu was hired as a regular employee by a corporation that gives care to the elderly. Once again, he is able to fulfill the apostle's exhortation: let a man labor, "performing with his own hands what is good, in order that he may have something to share with him who has need" (Eph. 4:28 NASB). He has begun formal training to gain a license for higher-level caregiving. The joy on his face since he resumed regular work is evident to all. We praise God.

What is more, Mr. Omizu has matured in his faith. The work of a caregiver can be quite stressful. A young woman with whom we have been working has a license for it, but the stress has caused her to leave or lose several such jobs over the past year. In prayer meeting, Mr. Omizu gave glory to God for working in his life. He declared that it is only by God's grace that he has been changed so as to be able to show the kind of care and concern that is necessary to do such work properly. Furthermore, Mr. Omizu has begun to reach out to others—to visitors and those in need in the church. This, too, represents a real change from the man we once knew. "If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come" (2 Cor. 5:17 NASB).

Please pray for Mr. Omizu's continued growth in the faith, that the Lord might shape him into a deacon or elder for our congregation, which has no officers of its own. Also, please pray that the Lord would grant faith in Christ to the other needy people whom God has sent or will send to Kita Numazu Chapel.

# The Sexual Secularization of Our Society

BRYAN J. WEAVER AND  
CHRISTOPHER H. WISDOM

In the second decade of the twenty-first century, one out of every two marriages in America now ends in divorce. One out of every five Americans has contracted or will contract a sexually transmitted disease in his or her lifetime. January 2013 marked the fortieth anniversary of the *Roe v. Wade* decision of the U.S. Supreme Court, which legalized abortion on demand and brought with it the scourge of four decades of wrongful death for over 60 million unborn American children. And in the year 2012 there were more deaths of American soldiers by suicide (349) than in combat (229)—and that during a time of war.

How have we come to this place in our culture, whose previous history embraced (at least outwardly) the sanctity of marriage and of human life? The history of modern Western thought bears witness to the determination by certain major social thinkers and leaders to rationalize immoral sexual behavior and project it onto a universal canvas. During the last 125 years, the agenda of the Western cultural elite has entailed the reversal of Christian ethics and its impact on intellectual and social life, making desire the final criterion of morality. Nietzsche, Freud, Wilde, Mead, Sanger, Kinsey, and Foucault are but a few of the progenitors of modern Western thought. And if you dissect the thinking of such intellectual notables regarding morality, you will note the common thread of sexual license. They deliberately chose ideologies and lifestyles that cast aside moral decency and embraced the exigencies of sexual misbehavior.

Christianity, for Nietzsche, was at its end, especially in terms of its intellectual

respectability. Since his declaration that God was dead in his book *The Gay Science* (1882), only the shadow of Christian morality remained. Many of these intellectual and cultural elites, following Nietzsche, began debunking religion, especially Christianity, during the early decades of the twentieth century. Following the rise of Nietzsche's philosophy, biblical morality began to be seen as the culprit in any cultural suppression of desire.

## KINSEY AND FREUD

Or take the research of Albert Kinsey, published in *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (Alfred C. Kinsey and others, 1948). According to the Kinsey Institute, "Kinsey sought to accumulate 'an objectively determined body of fact about sex' (p. 5, *Male*) that readers of the reports could use to make interpretations that fit with their understanding of 'moral values and social significances' (p. 5, *Male*)" (see <http://www.kinseyinstitute.org/resources/ak-data.html>). By formally interviewing numerous human subjects and studying all manner of human sexual behavior (whether moral or immoral from a biblical perspective), Kinsey purportedly amassed "an objectively determined body of fact about sex."

But as the late professor of apologetics at Westminster Theological Seminary, Cornelius Van Til, observed, "It is fatal for the Reformed apologist to admit that man has done justice to the objective evidence if he comes to any other conclusion than that of the truth of Christian theism" (*Defense of the Faith*, 3rd ed., 1967, p. 145).

Why then did Kinsey reach such errant conclusions about human sexual behavior? Because, as Van Til notes,

A "fact" does not become a fact, according to the modern scientist's assumptions, till it has been made a fact by the ultimate definitory power of the mind of man. The modern scientist, pretending to be merely a describer of facts, is in reality a maker of facts. He makes facts as he describes. His description is itself the manufacturing of facts. He requires "material" to make facts, but the material he requires must be raw material. Anything else will break his machinery. The datum is not primarily given, but is primarily taken. (*Common Grace and the Gospel*, 1972, p. 4)

Consider also Sigmund Freud's book, *The Future of an Illusion*. In it he attacks religion by perversely imputing sexual motivation to the infant's desire for its mother, its fear of its father, and its projection of those fears and need for protection onto a god, which the developing individual has supposedly created out of psychological necessity (S. Freud, *The Future of an Illusion* [1927], in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 21, p. 24, at <http://www.free-ebooks.net/ebook/The-future-of-illusion/pdf/view>).

By contrast, Christian theistic ethics teaches that guilt is the natural result of any transgression of the moral law (James 2:10), and that the work of the law is inherent in every human being (Rom. 2:14), so that guilt has its roots in the moral real world (John 3:20–21). The intellectual life of a thinker is not hermetically sealed off from his moral life; instead, it turns out that the intellectual life is a function of a person's moral life (Rom. 12:2–3; Heb. 5:11–14).

Apprehension of the truth can only take place when the clamoring of the passions has died down (James 4: 1–8). The thoughts of the mind, when expressed, are thus like windows to the soul (Matt. 15: 18–20; Rom. 8: 5–8).

How then did human guilt come into the real world? Romans 1: 18–19 declares how man, the creature of God, having willfully sown the seeds of rebellion by rejecting God’s self-revelation seen in creation (and especially in man as the image of God) has reaped a harvest of vain thinking, a foolish heart, and debased sexual behavior. Romans 1: 21–25 highlights how such rejection of divine revelation leads to moral reprobation:

For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

As Van Til elsewhere asserts,

It need be no matter of surprise to the Christian that non-Christian scientists are, at bottom, fighting for their purely man-centered interpretation even when they engage in “open-minded” and “neutral” description of facts. Scripture informs us that all men are sinners and seek in all that they do to suppress the basic truth of their responsibility to their Creator. They always have an “axe to grind.” To say this is not to charge men with a lack of the surface honesties and sincerities of civilized life.... It is only to be concerned with the deepest controlling motives of men and to interpret these motives in accordance

with Scripture. (*The God of Hope: Sermons and Addresses*, 1978, p. 242)

## THE TWO ULTIMATE ALTERNATIVES

There are thus only two ultimate alternatives: either the thinker, activist, or leader can subject sexual desire to truth or he will subjugate truth to sexual desire. If a person is dominated by desire, i.e., Eros, then that desire will be the surest explicator of his thought. The turning away of the mind from truth to carnal, distorted passions does not mean the mind stops functioning; it only means that the mind will not perceive the truth. After laboring in this abyss, the mind will choose disorder over order, carnality over spirituality, and falsehood over truth, and will create for itself idols in an attempt to usurp the rightful place of a beneficent Creator. As Paul wrote in Romans 1: 28, “And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper.”

Van Til comments:

This is, in the last analysis, the question as to what are one’s ultimate presuppositions. When man became a sinner he made of himself instead of God the ultimate or final reference point. And it is precisely this presupposition, as it controls without exception all forms of non-Christian philosophy that must be brought into question. If this presupposition is left unquestioned in any field all the facts and arguments presented to the unbeliever will be made over by him according to his pattern. The sinner has cemented colored glasses to his eyes which he cannot remove. And all is yellow to the jaundiced eye. There can be no intelligible reasoning unless those who reason together understand what they mean by their words. (*Defense of the Faith*, 1967, p. 77)

The sexual secularization of our Western culture is a fundamentally dishonest game in more ways than one. As the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, such as AIDS, has shown, the real death wish of the West is its persistent

desire to engage in sexual liberation, and not in chastity. Truth was an early victim in Margaret Mead’s 1928 controversial best seller, *Coming of Age in Samoa*. The issue for Mead was sex, sex disconnected from the norms of Christianity. *Coming of Age in Samoa*, with its portrayal of idyllic sex beneath the palm trees, proved to be as accurate as a Shakespearean play. What was purported to be a ground-breaking anthropological study of Samoan culture turned out in reality to be a massive rationalization of immorality.

The fact of the matter is that large numbers of the progressive trendsetters in Western society are radically dissatisfied with the traditional sexual mores of their culture and are looking for an opportunity to justify their violation of Christian sexual ethics. Historic Christian theology has always claimed that one of the results of lust is the darkening of the heart (Rom. 1: 21). Hatred of God is another. In his *Confessions*, Augustine grasps the significance of the apostle Paul’s teaching on this serious matter. He writes, “Thy law is written in the hearts of men, which iniquity itself effaces not.”

So this intellectual and sexual rebellion rages on in our day, but the final epitaph has not yet been written. In this decadent culture of immorality, death, and self-destruction that we are witnessing in our time, let us remind ourselves, then, of the words of the apostle Paul: “But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one.... But we have the mind of Christ” (1 Cor. 2: 15–16). If we have the mind of Christ, then let us determine in our minds that we will not be conformed to this world of secularized sexual sin, but that we will be transformed by the renewing of our minds, so that we may approve what is the holy, perfect, and acceptable will of God (see Rom. 12: 2).

*Rev. Weaver is a Navy chaplain; Rev. Wisdom is an Army chaplain. Both are OP ministers. They quote the NASB (updated version). This article was written against the backdrop of ongoing issues involving women and homosexuals in the U.S. military.*

# When to Let Your Left Hand Know

PAUL N. BROWNE

**B**ut when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret" (Matt. 6:3-4).

Sometimes we interpret our Lord's words here as meaning, "Once you have decided what to give, don't ever think about it again, because this will only lead to sin." We think that Jesus requires a carefully maintained ambidextrous ignorance, in which we forget the value of what we drop in the offering plate.

This disembowels God's gift to us of giving back to him. He stands in need of nothing; all things are his (Ps. 50:10-12). He fills up our hands with his good things, so that both left and right may adoringly concur to lay our gifts at his feet. "For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen" (Rom. 11:36).

Our Lord did speak against the sinful motives and manners of the Pharisees in almsgiving. Don't give with self-congratulation or ostentation. But whenever God tells us to put off sin, there is always a corresponding goodness to put on. This oxymoronic "self-centered giving" must give way to the God-glorifying, church-building, man-helping, Christian-transforming act it should be.

On Sunday, then, when the plate is approaching, should you numb your hand, anesthetize your mind, and forget the value of what you give to the Lord Christ? The answer lies in remembering that the giving of offerings is a biblically prescribed act of worship (1 Cor. 16:1-2). Was the Lord ever pleased with numb, anesthetized, forgetful worship?

Love gives for the beloved what

it feels to be precious. The Father set this divine pattern by giving us his own infinitely precious Son, "his inexpressible gift" (2 Cor. 9:15; Rom. 8:32), who likewise "loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20). We then give ourselves as living sacrifices, acceptable to God through Christ (Rom. 12:1; 2 Cor. 8:5), and in token of our very selves we offer to God spiritual sacrifices (1 Pet. 2:5; Heb. 13:15; Ps. 50:23). The gifts given and the gifts received are precious and ought to be felt as such.

Pouring out our treasure on Jesus is our confession of faith lived. By the deed we say, "But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord" (Phil. 3:7-8). Our offerings become worship specifically as we reckon their value, but then feel the immeasurably greater value of Jesus Christ as Lord.

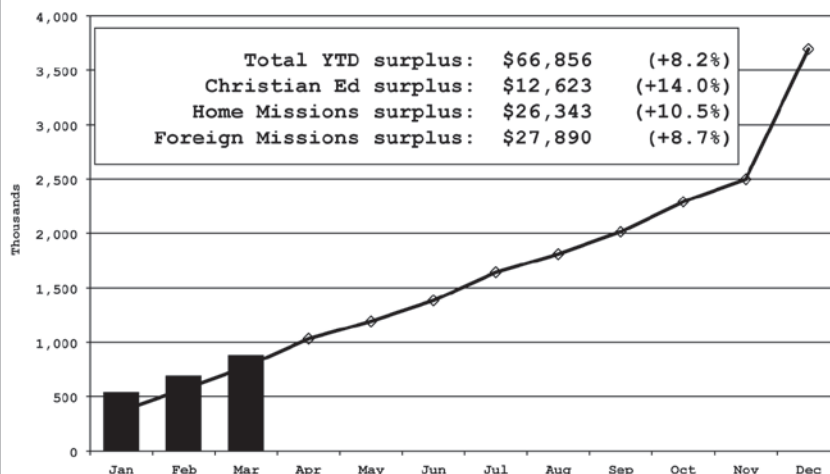
In the giving of what is otherwise

dear for that which is dearer, love is expressed—but it is also deepened. Here lies the devotional necessity of letting the left hand know what the right hand is doing as the gift is offered. Feel for a moment the costliness of what you hold in your hands, with its purchasing power. Then say as you give, "Dear as this is, Lord Jesus, you are infinitely dearer. You I love; you I trust. With this gift, I rest myself, body and soul, in you."

You have just offered yourself, through your things, as a spiritual sacrifice. This repeated relinquishment really does build your faith and love in Jesus. At such a moment, again coordinate your left hand with your right hand long enough to clap for joy (silently!), for such knowledgeable giving is evidence that God's saving grace is upon you (2 Cor. 8:1; 9:13-14).

*The author is pastor of New Life OPC in Williamsport, Pa.*

Worldwide Outreach Year-to-Date  
2013 Receipts with 2013 Goal



WORLDWIDE OUTREACH

# May

1. **Brian and Dorothy Wingard**, South Africa. Pray that mentoring relationships with students at Mukhanyo Theological College will develop. / **Daniel and Jill McManigal**, Seattle, Wash. Pray for Hope OPC as they begin receiving denominational financial support. / **Andrew Moody**, OPC.org website technical assistant.
2. **Ken and Cressid Golden**, Davenport, Iowa. Pray that God would send more visitors and a core family to Sovereign Grace OPC this month. / **Heero and Anya Hacquebord**, L'viv, Ukraine. Pray for several women in the church who face family opposition to their belief in Christ. / **Charlene Tipton**, office assistant for the Committee on Coordination.
3. Retired missionaries **Betty Andrews, Greet Rietkerk, Young and Mary Lou Son**, and **Fumi Uomoto**. Thank the Lord for their ongoing intercessory prayers for the work of the church. / Home Missions general secretary **John Shaw**. / **Mark Lowrey**, publications editor at Great Commission Publications.
4. **Brandon and Laurie Wilkins**, Crystal Lake, Ill. Pray that God would continue to bring new growth to Christ Covenant Presbyterian Church. / **Ben and Heather Hopp**, Haiti. Pray for Ben and Pastor Octavius Delfils as they work with the Port-au-Prince congregation. / **Geoff (and Heather) Downey**, yearlong intern at Trinity OPC in Hatboro, Pa.
5. **Mark and Jeni Richline**, Montevideo, Uruguay. Pray for a bold witness as they interact with unbelieving contacts. / **Jeremiah and Elizabeth Montgomery**, State College, Pa. Pray for gospel connections between Resurrection OPC and the community. / **Carson Ryan**, yearlong intern at Lake Sherwood OPC in Orlando, Fla.
6. **Carlos and Diana Cruz**, San Juan, P.R. Pray for unity and growth within the congregation of Iglesia Presbiteriana Reformada. / Pray for **the church in the Horn of Africa**, which continues to meet for worship in the face of persecution and threats of arrest. / **Jan Gregson**, office manager and assistant to the director of finance.
7. **Ben and Melanie Westerveld**, Quebec, Canada. Pray for Ben as he counsels young adults in matters of the faith. / **Jay and Andrea Bennett**, Neon, Ky. Pray that the evangelism efforts of Neon Reformed Presbyterian Church will lead some to faith in Jesus Christ. / **Alan Strange**, Psalter-Hymnal Committee chairman.
8. **Robert and Christy Arendale**, Houston, Tex. Pray for the continued growth and spiritual development of Cornerstone OPC. / Missionary associate **Debra Blair**, Quebec, Canada. Thank God for the involvement of many members of St-Marc Church in outreach events. / **Doug Watson**, staff accountant.
9. Missionary associates **E. C.** and **T. L. L.**, Asia. Pray that God would equip them to disciple their students. / **Philip and Andrea Strong**, Lander, Wyo. Pray for Grace Reformed Fellowship and their organizing pastor as denominational field support begins.
10. **Roberto and Marieta Laranjo**, Lowell, Mass. Pray that God would save local families and bring them to worship at Igreja Presbiteriana Brasileira. / **Mr. and Mrs. M.**, Asia. Pray for Mr. M. as he works with church leaders in the northeast region of his country. / **Justin (and Hannah) Rosser**, yearlong intern at Matthews OPC in Matthews, NC.
11. Missionary associates **Mr. and Mrs. C.**, Asia. Pray that they will be an encouragement to their students. / **Bill and Sessie Welzien**, Key West, Fla. Pray for Keys Presbyterian Church, that the preaching of the Word will bring edification and conversion. / Army chaplain **Graham (and Carla) Harbman**.



For the past ten years, the Committee on Foreign Missions has sent missionary and other instructors to help with the training of church leaders on the island of Lagonav in Haiti. Pictured here are men from a class earlier this year, who were also in the first class taught in February 2003. Please pray that they will persevere in the faith and continue to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Fourth from the right is Douglas Clawson, associate general secretary for the Committee on Foreign Missions.

12. **Jim and Tricia Stevenson**, Tulsa, Okla. Pray that the Lord would add new families to Providence OPC. / **Mr. and Mrs. F.**, Asia. Pray for Mr. F. as he maintains a busy schedule of teaching and ministry oversight. / **David (and Karen) Koenig**, yearlong intern at Covenant OPC in Orland Park, Ill.
13. Missionary associates **T. D.** and **E. H.**, Asia. Pray for fruitful contacts with their students. / Home Missions associate general secretary **Dick Gerber**. / **Jim Scott**, managing editor of *New Horizons*.
14. **Philip and Jenny Dharmawirya** and Emmanuel Chapel (Indonesian), Philadelphia, Pa. / Pray for Foreign Missions associate general secretary **Douglas Clawson**, in Malawi to assist with the training of church leaders. / **Mark (and Karissa) Soud**, yearlong intern at Calvin Presbyterian Church in Phoenix, Ariz.
15. Foreign Missions general secretary **Mark Bube**. Pray for wisdom and insight as he provides counsel to our missionaries. / **Tim and Joanne Beauchamp**, Bridgton, Maine. Pray for God's Spirit to direct and empower Pleasant Mountain Presbyterian Church's gospel witness. / **David Haney**, director of finance and planned giving for the Committee on Coordination.
16. **Tom and Martha Albaugh**, Pittsburgh, Pa. Pray that those attending outreach events of Redeemer OPC Mission will hear the gospel and that it will prevail on willing hearts. / Foreign Missions administrative assistant **Linda Posthuma** and secretary **Janet Birkmann**. / **Sarah Pederson**, *New Horizons* proofreader.
17. **Cal and Edie Cummings**, Sendai, Japan. Pray for churches in the Tohoku Presbytery currently without pastors. / **Joseph and Carla Fowler**, Gastonia, N.C. Pray that the people of Reformation OPC will continue to learn to observe all that Christ commanded. / Pray for **Danny Olinger**, Christian Education general secretary, as he edits *New Horizons*.
18. **Christopher and Della Chelпка**, Tucson, Ariz. Pray for more disciples and the faithfulness to minister to each family at Covenant OPC. / Missionary associates **Adam and Sarah Thompson**, Sendai, Japan. Ask God to use them in reaching young people for the Lord. / **Pat Clawson**, Christian Education office secretary and MTIOPC coordinator.
19. **Kaz and Katie Yaegashi**, Yamagata, Japan. Pray that several seekers at Yamagata Chapel will be brought to profess their faith in Christ. / **Brian and Sara Chang**, Cottonwood, Ariz. Ask the Lord to strengthen and establish Verde Valley Reformed Chapel. / Pray for **the students and instructors** of the Ministerial Training Institute of the OPC during this week of intensive training at Bethel Presbyterian Church in Wheaton, Ill.
20. **Jonathan and Kristin Moersch**, Capistrano Beach, Calif. Pray for visitors to come as a result of Trinity Presbyterian Church's recent Facebook ads and for provision for local housing for the pastor's family. / Pray for the ministry of affiliated missionaries **Craig and Ree Coulbourne**, Urayasu, Japan.
21. Pray for **Woody and Laurie Lauer**, Numazu, Japan, as they begin a seven-month furlough this month. / **Chad and Katie Mullinix**, Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. Pray that Holy Trinity Presbyterian Church will grow in grace, the knowledge of Christ, and the evangelism of unbelievers. / Pray for **George Cottenden**, stated clerk, as he makes final preparations for the 80th General Assembly.
22. Pray for affiliated missionary **Linda Karner**, Japan, and the ministry team with which she works. / **Stephen and Catalina Payson**, Mifflinburg, Pa. Pray that the ministry of the pastor, elders, and congregation of Providence OPC to regular attenders will yield the fruit of membership. / **Kathy Bube**, Loan Fund administrator.
23. **Eric and Dianna Tuininga**, Mbale, Uganda. Pray that God would raise up godly men to lead the OPCU congregations and to plant new ones. / **Ben and Sarah Miller**, Huntington, N.Y. Pray that God would guide and bless Trinity OPC in the practice of biblical neighborly. / Navy chaplain **Tim (and Janine) Power**.
24. **Mark and Michele Winder**, Collierville, Tenn. Pray that the Lord would provide a new meeting facility for Wolf River Presbyterian Church. / Pray for the labors of missionary associate teachers **Erika Bulthuis**, **Emily Pihl**, and **Christi Zekveld**, Uganda. / Army chaplain **Jonathan (and Marion) Gibbs**.
25. **Doug and Kristi Bylsma**, Beamsville, Ontario. Pray that God would bring men to fill positions of leadership at Living Hope Presbyterian Church. / **James and Jenny Knox**, M.D. and R.N., Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for Clinic ministries in outlying villages. / Navy chaplain **John (and Linda) Carter**.
26. **Drew and Sonya Adcock**, Williamsport, Pa. Pray for the continued growth and spiritual development of Omega OPC. / **Bob and Martha Wright**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for their teaching and outreach ministries.
27. Missionary associates **Christopher and Chloe Verdick**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for their health and strength as they labor in a tropical climate. / **Brad Hertzog**, Queens, N.Y. Pray for leaders to be raised up and brought in at Reformation Presbyterian Church.
28. **John and Wenny Ro**, Chicago, Ill. (downtown). Pray that Gospel Life Presbyterian Church's midweek Bible study groups will flourish. / **Al and Laurie Tricarico**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for our missionaries in Nakaale as they study the Karimojong language.
29. Pray for missionary associates **Leah Hopp** and **Jesse Van Gorkom**, Nakaale, Uganda, as they build good relationships with the Karimojong people. / Home Missions staff administrator **Sean Gregg**. / Pray with short-term missions coordinator **David Nakhla** for the many teams and individuals preparing for short-term mission projects this summer.
30. **Todd and Julie Wagenmaker**, St. Louis, Mo. Pray that the regular visitors at Gateway OPC will desire to become members. / **David and Sunshine Okken**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray that God would send the church in Karamoja men who will become elders and deacons.
31. Affiliated missionaries **Jerry and Marilyn Farnik**, Prague, Czech Republic. Pray that those attending outreach activities will come to know Christ. / **Andrew and Billie Moody**, San Antonio, Tex. Pray for the Lord to bring more mature families to help with the discipleship of younger believers at San Antonio Reformed Church.

# Summer Camps and Conferences

## ALASKA—Family Camp

(Grace OPC, Wasilla, Alaska)  
LaVerne Griffin Youth Camp, Wasilla, AL  
Family/all ages, July 26–28  
Scott Johnson, johnson.3@opc.org

## CALIFORNIA—Blue Ridge Bible Conference

(Presbytery of Southern California)  
PineCrest Christian Conference Center,  
Twin Peaks, CA  
Family/all ages, June 17–21  
www.familycamp.dreamhosters.com

## CALIFORNIA—Sierra Christian Conference

(OP churches in Northern California)  
Sierra Christian Conference Association,  
Groveland, CA  
Family/all ages, May 24–27  
Brad and Janet DeBoer,  
bradandjanetdeboer@yahoo.com

## CALIFORNIA—Summer Bible Camp

(Presbytery of Northern California and Nevada)  
Redwood Christian Camp, Boulder  
Creek, CA  
Family/all ages, July 15–19  
www.pncnopc.org/contact-us/summer-camp

## FLORIDA—Reformed Youth Conference

(Presbytery of the South)  
Young Adult Retreat, May 24–26  
Blue Springs Baptist Conference Center,  
Marianna, FL  
www.lsopc.org/outreach/RYS\_Retreat.htm  
High/Middle School Youth Camp, June 17–22

Lakewood Retreat Center, Brooksville, FL  
www.lsopc.org/ryc

## MAINE, NEW HAMPSHIRE—Deerwander Bible Conference

(Presbytery of New York and New England)  
Junior High (entering 6th–8th), Aug. 10–17  
Windsor Hills Camp, Windsor Hills, NH  
Senior High (entering 9th–12th), Aug. 10–17  
Chop Point Camp, Woolwich, ME  
www.deerwander.org

## MICHIGAN—OPC Family Camp

(Presbytery of Michigan and Ontario)  
Camp Concordia, Gowen, MI  
Family/all ages, Aug. 5–9  
www.harvestopc.org (Connect)

## OHIO—Summer Camp

(Presbytery of Ohio)  
Camp Piedmont, Piedmont, OH  
Junior Camp (ages 9–12), July 15–20  
Senior Camp (grades 7–12), July 15–20

opcohioyouth.wordpress.com

## OREGON—Family Camp

(First OPC, Portland, OR)  
Camp Morrow, Wamic, OR  
Family/all ages, Aug. 21–24  
www.firstopcportland.org/camp.php

## PENNSYLVANIA—Conestoga Bible Conference

(OP churches in Pennsylvania and nearby states)  
Promised Land Camp, Conestoga, PA  
Grades 6–9, July 29–Aug. 3  
Grades 10–12, July 29–Aug. 3  
www.conestogabibleconference.org

## PENNSYLVANIA—French Creek Bible Conference

(OPC affiliated)  
French Creek State Park, Elverson, PA  
Grades 4–6, Aug. 12–17  
Grades 7–8, Aug. 3–10  
Grades 9–10, July 22–29

Campers at the Sierra Christian Conference



Grades 11–12, July 15–22  
 Post-High, July 12–15  
 Family, Aug. 30–Sept. 2  
[www.frenchcreek.org](http://www.frenchcreek.org)

### **SOUTH DAKOTA—OPC-PCA Bible Camp**

(Presbytery of the Dakotas)  
 Camp Judson, Keystone, SD  
 Grades 4–12 (completed), June 22–28  
 Facebook: OPCPCA CampJudson

### **TEXAS—Summer Camp**

(Presbytery of the Southwest)  
 Alto Frio Baptist Encampment, Leakey, TX  
 Youth entering grades 4–12, July 1–6  
[www.opcsouthwest.org](http://www.opcsouthwest.org)

### **VIRGINIA—Machen Retreat and Conference Center**

(Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic)  
 Machen Retreat and Conference Center,  
 McDowell, VA  
 Young Adult Conference, May 29–June 1  
 Home Missions Conference, June 21–23  
 Science Camp, July 8–13  
 Music Conference, July 25–28  
 Marriage and Family Conference, Aug.  
 14–17  
 Labor Day Family Conference, Aug. 30–  
 Sept. 2  
[www.machen.org](http://www.machen.org)

### **WISCONSIN—Camp Westminster**

(Presbytery of the Midwest)  
 Green Lake Conference Center, Green  
 Lake, WI  
 Family/all ages, Aug. 5–9  
[www.pmwopc.org/CalCamUpc.html](http://www.pmwopc.org/CalCamUpc.html)

### **WOMEN'S RETREATS**

For women's retreats and Bible conferences in Michigan, New Jersey, Ohio, New England, and Southern California, see [www.opc.org/cce/camps.html](http://www.opc.org/cce/camps.html).

## Congratulations

**The Shorter Catechism has been recited by:**

- Lauren Taylor (Providence OPC in Temecula, Calif.)

## Four Favorites

### Books on Media Ecology

#### 1. Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death*. Viking Penguin, 1985.

A groundbreaking critique of the pervasive influence of the visual media, especially television, on all areas of culture, demonstrating that intelligent, substantive public discourse is thereby severely diminished. Postman believes that the genius of the image media is entertainment, and that it makes entertainment out of everything it touches. Postman applies the second commandment to the modern use of images in his especially insightful chapter on television worship. *Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology* is the sequel. Postman considered himself to be Marshall McLuhan's successor.

Although McLuhan is the pioneer of the discipline of media ecology, he is very difficult to understand, so I recommend Postman instead.

#### 2. Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America*. Harper & Row, 1964.

A classic, pioneering study of the influence of the "graphic revolution" on American culture, by one of America's premier historians. Boorstin focuses on the nature and effect of advertising and celebrity as they relate to the creation of "pseudo-events," what we would call virtual reality.

#### 3. Jacques Ellul, *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes*. Vintage Books, 1965.

A unique critique of propaganda as a sociological phenomenon. Analyzes the inadequate concepts of other propaganda theorists. Propaganda goes hand in hand with a technological society. Propaganda is not "one way," but depends on the willingness of people to receive the illusion or myth being propagated. "Thus, propaganda, by first creating pseudo-needs through 'pre-propaganda' and thus providing 'pseudo-satisfactions' for them, is pernicious." Relevant, unwittingly, to the "church growth" movement.

#### 4. Sven Birkerts, *The Gutenberg Elegies: The Fate of Reading in an Electronic Age*. Faber, 1994.

A beautifully written and insightful critique of the deleterious effects of the electronic media on the fine art of reading and the act of writing. Birkerts is an unashamed apologist for the written and printed word. He maintains that the dramatic increase in linkage and referentiality, combined with the evanescent quality of electronic text, expand us laterally while diminishing our cognitive depth.

Gregory E. Reynolds

## Out of the Mouth ...

While reviewing what our children had learned in school, we asked six-year-old Lisa to tell us the four types of precipitation. She enthusiastically replied, "Rain, snow, sleet, and, ummmm, hell—that last one can really kill you!"

—Ryan and Lorraine Pinsenschaum  
 Dayton, Ohio

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



# Coming to Capistrano

The Orthodox Presbyterian Church has come to Capistrano ... Beach, a short distance from San Juan Capistrano, California, famous for the returning swallows.

One of our newest mission works is meeting for worship in Capistrano Beach. The endeavor actually began two and a half years ago. Jonathan Moersch was serving as the associate pastor of Ocean-side United Reformed Church. He did some ministry in that congregation, but was called primarily to pursue a church plant in Orange County around San Clemente and Dana Point. This was midway between two URC congregations, in a region of over a million people that had few other Reformed churches.

Jonathan spent about six months assessing the interest in starting a Reformed church. He had a blog and a Facebook page, and he sent e-mails about starting a new church to everyone he knew. Two families responded, and a monthly Bible study was begun. They studied Ephesians in a home in San Clemente. Then David and Carrie Keck arrived with a strong zeal to get a church started. This helped the Bible study to begin meeting every Sunday evening in a small Roman Catholic chapel in Dana Point. The chapel allowed them to use the building without charge. Over the next year and a half, advertising was intensified. More regular visitors came to the study.

The URC had no classis or federation-wide structure for planting churches. And Jonathan needed help to move the work ahead. With the blessing of his consistory, he turned to the OPC. He was wonderfully surprised when his first e-mail inquiry to the OPC's Presbytery of



Pastor Jonathan Moersch

Southern California was answered within five minutes. Now Trinity Presbyterian Church (OPC) is a mission work of the Presbytery, and Jonathan is a ministerial member of the OPC. The group has been thrilled with the care and support it is receiving from the OPC.

Jonathan and his wife, Kristin, are natives of Southern California. They have known each other since they were in a Christian high school together. They have been married fourteen years and have two sons. Jonathan loves to surf. The family enjoys walks on the beach.

The Fish House Vera Cruz, a restaurant in San Marcos, has been a vital part of the Moersches' and Trinity Church's story. For the past eight years, from when Jonathan was in college until recently, he was on the staff there. His flexible hours

allowed him to support his family as he completed college, earned his M.Div. at Westminster Seminary California, served as an unpaid associate pastor, and gathered a core group for the church plant.

The area in which Trinity Church is located is beautiful and diverse. It still reflects its Roman Catholic mission roots in the architecture and the strong Roman Catholic presence. There is also a large evangelical Christian presence. The area has retained its historic flavor, avoiding industrialization and overcommercialization. Million-dollar homes along the beach contrast with pockets of low-income families and homeless people.

Trinity Church consists of young families with a good number of children from infancy through age eleven. There are also singles and middle-aged couples. Jonathan's mother and grandmother are part of the church.

The mission work's aspiration is to be a healthy, robust expression of the Reformed faith with clear biblical teaching, vibrant gospel proclamation, and the sacraments rightly administered.

Recently Jonathan put together Facebook ads featuring "a new old church" with a picture of an open Bible. Over three hundred people clicked to go to Trinity's website. The congregation is still prayerfully expecting those people to come to worship. During the Bible study phase, five people came through Facebook advertising. The congregation is also focusing on personal contacts, making

The children at Trinity Church discussing the sermon with the pastor



friends in the community, and getting the word out within the Reformed community that they are in Capistrano Beach. Please pray that many new people will begin to attend the worship services that are held in a public school building.

Jonathan and his family have been living thirty to forty minutes away. They are now seeking to sell their home at a good price in order to be able to buy a home in the Capistrano Beach area. Please pray that they will be able to buy a home in this high-priced area that will be suitable for hospitality and hosting Bible studies.

## Tomorrow's Pastors

Twenty-five men participated in the 2013 Readiness for Ministry in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church seminars. On the campuses of Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando, Westminster Seminary California in Escondido, and Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, men explored their giftedness and readiness for pastoral leadership in Presby-

terian and Reformed churches. During sessions lasting nine and a half hours on Friday evening and Saturday, they learned more of the values of the OPC. Internship, church planting, and pastoral ministry opportunities were also presented.

Pray that by God's grace most of these men will become Reformed pastors over the next few years, and that many of them will minister among us in the OPC.

At each of the seminars, ministers and ruling elders of the OPC observed the participants as they introduced themselves, exhorted, and participated in problem-solving exercises.

The exhortations are ten-minute expositions of a biblical

text, which is assigned ahead of time. The men are expected to give appropriate applications for the text. Praise God for the fine preachers he is preparing for our congregations.

The observers had the opportunity to interact with the participants over breaks and to listen to them as they discussed six "Problem Solving in Reformed Ministry" scenarios. These provide an opportunity to see how well the men integrate their biblical and theological knowledge with real-life ministry situations and how well they understand people. The scenarios also provide a window into how a man relates to and works with peers.

The ministers and ruling elders who are present contribute to the observations that are given to the men during the one-on-one feedback interview. Many participants have expressed appreciation for the straightforward comments made to them during this interview.

Recent graduates of each seminary, who are now OP pastors, spoke on "Being a Reformed Pastor." Jonathan Hutchison spoke in Orlando, Roth Reason in Philadelphia, and Joel Fick in Escondido. Danny Olinger and Douglas Clawson, from the committees on Christian Education and Foreign Missions, respectively, spoke on "What is the OPC?" Dick Gerber, from the Committee on Home Missions, spoke on "Planting a Reformed Church."

Participants in a 2013 Readiness for Ministry in the OPC seminar



## Home Missions Today

For up-to-date Home Missions news and prayer updates, e-mail [HomeMissionsToday@opc.org](mailto:HomeMissionsToday@opc.org).  
New editions: **May 8, 22.**



BRUCE C. FENTON

# God Works in Mysterious Ways

**M**uch has been written and shared about the tragedy that resulted from “Superstorm Sandy” hitting the communities of coastal New Jersey, New York City, Long Island, and Connecticut on October 29, 2012. While a record number of homes and businesses were without power for a record number of days, the major impact was caused by the record tidal surge, coupled with sustained high winds, which caused major damage and loss to personal and business properties, as well as utility infrastructure. The estimated replacement costs also set new records.

To many of the people living there, it was more than the “inconvenience” of being without power in an otherwise undamaged home—it meant being displaced from their homes indefinitely, if not permanently. The people in these devastated communities have certainly been blessed by volunteer assistance groups from the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the Presbyterian Church in America, the United Reformed Churches in North America, and the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America.

However, within the context of these recent tragic events, God was working in a mysterious way in the life of an Orthodox Presbyterian church hit by the storm. Until late October, Redeemer OPC was meeting in a rented church building in the summer resort town of Seaside Heights, New Jersey, on one of the barrier islands. Redeemer completed four years as an OP home missions work before being organized as a

separate congregation in 2000, when Geoffrey Willour was installed as their pastor. After years of steady numerical and spiritual growth, the congregation began to struggle as mature families and ordained men left because of job transfers and retirements. Their meeting place just before the storm was their third rental property. With that building up for sale, and the congregation unable to purchase it, there was uncertainty

The congregation of Faith Bible Church—Orthodox Presbyterian



about the future.

In early 2012, Rev. Willour developed a relationship with Ron Pritts, an Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church minister who was serving as the pastor of Faith Bible Presbyterian Church (Independent) in nearby Brick, New Jersey. After spending an initial three years in the Bible Presbyterian Church, Faith Bible Church declared itself independent in 1957. The congregation owns two properties, on which are the church building and a manse. The two men saw the wisdom in a merger of the two congregations for separate yet complementary reasons. Rev. Pritts was close to retirement, his church of twenty communicant members was mostly elderly, and he felt that they needed to come under the oversight of a presbytery. Rev. Willour saw the need for the stability of church building ownership in a year-round neighborhood. Also, Redeemer OPC's thirty-eight communicant members (plus about sixteen noncommunicants) complemented the membership of the older Faith Bible congregation.

Before Rev. Willour could follow through on these plans, he accepted a call to a pulpit near Cleveland, Ohio, in June 2012. The Presbytery of New Jersey assigned Jim Zozzaro as ministerial advisor, and the congregation approved ruling elder John Hauser to serve on the augmented session. Both men came from Calvary OPC in Wildwood, New Jersey, and they were now the entire session, since the last ordained man at Redeemer had recently retired.

Throughout the summer and into October, the attempts to bring the two congregations together were largely unsuccessful. Then "the storm" came, bringing havoc to towns like Seaside Heights. Redeemer's rental building experienced significant damage from the intrusion of salt water. The facility would not be usable without major repairs. Six of the families from the congregation were displaced from their homes. To date, five of those families continue to live in temporary housing or with extended family members, and face an uncertain future. In addition, two families from the Faith Bible congregation continue to be displaced from their homes.

Within a week of the storm, Rev. Pritts received an inquiry from someone from Redeemer asking, "Is your church open?" He replied, "Yes, it is open with no major damage, but we have no electricity." The power to the church was restored within a week, well before many along the New Jersey coast—thanks to the work of an Alabama-based power company. Rev. Pritts recalled that, at the height of the storm, the ground around the church building, just a few miles off the island on the mainland, was flooded with about one foot of water. Since the first floor of the building sits on a foundation about two feet above the ground, the building was usable!

With power restored, Faith Bible invited the Redeemer congregation to join them for worship. The response was wonderful! For the first time, the majority of both congrega-

tions met together for worship. In the months that followed, it became obvious to Redeemer that their Seaside Heights building would not be usable for the foreseeable future. In the meantime, God blessed their fellowship in so many ways that they began planning to merge the two congregations into one.

One man from Redeemer (and perhaps others who were driven from their homes by the storm) was impressed by the effectiveness of the relief volunteers from the OPC and other denominations. To him it demonstrated just one of the many practical values of belonging to a denominational body. (See the report in *New Horizons*, January 2013.)

Since the independent Faith Bible congregation was seeking to be affiliated with a Reformed denomination, they basically said to Redeemer OPC, "Come and take over our church and we'll worship with you," according to Rev. Pritts. He added, "That was not an easy thing to do." The new congregation decided that the merged church would be known corporately as Faith Bible Church – Orthodox Presbyterian.

With the revised incorporation documents essentially complete, the first official worship service of the unified congregation was held on February 24, 2013. Rev. Pritts, acting as "supply pastor," led the service and emphasized its significance in the life of this local church. Rev. Zozzaro asked the communicant members of Redeemer Church and Faith Bible Church to stand and respond in unison to the membership questions. Rev. Zozzaro's sermon, entitled "What Is an Orthodox Presbyterian Church?" was based on Hebrews 13:7–17. A time of refreshment and fellowship followed the service. Many of the elderly members from Faith Bible expressed the joy and blessing of seeing and hearing so many people of all ages, including young people and children, worshipping together.

While the newly constituted congregation anticipates a wonderful ministry in Christ's visible church, the months ahead present many challenges for them. They need to call a pastor and identify men who can serve as ruling elders and deacons. Today, if you drive through the coastal New Jersey communities, especially north of Atlantic City, as Rev. Zozzaro stated, "You see all the heartbreak, the tragedy, not the good things." The recovery is still in its early stages. Massive amounts of debris are being removed. The start of major repair and reconstruction waits on the bureaucracy of recovery logistics, town hall meetings, insurance claims, FEMA forms, and interpretation of changing building codes. Volunteer work groups from churches, scheduled to come over the next few months, are really needed. However, in all of this, God's sovereign hand is at work for the good of his people, to build his church, and for his glory! □

*The author, a ruling elder at New Hope Presbyterian Church in Bridgeton, N.J., is the home missions administrator for the Presbytery of New Jersey.*

**JONATHAN SHISHKO ORDAINED**

*Dick Gerber*

Jonathan W. Shishko, son of the Rev. William and Margaret Shishko, was ordained as an evangelist of the Presbytery of Connecticut and Southern New York on December 8 to serve alongside the Rev. Brad S. Hertzog as the organizing pastors of Reformation Presbyterian Church in Queens, New York City. The ordination service took place at the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Franklin Square, New York, where Jonathan grew up and his father has served as pastor since 1981.

Bill had the wonderful opportunity to give the “charge to the minister” to his son. Brad Hertzog offered the prayer of ordination. The Rev. Benjamin W. Miller of Trinity Church (OPC) in Huntington, New York, a daughter church of Franklin Square, preached a sermon entitled “Gauging Your Ministerial Competency.”

Jonathan and his wife, Lauryn, live with their children in Jamaica, Queens.



Jonathan and Lauryn Shishko (left) with William and Margaret Shishko

Personnel, gave the charge to the congregation. It was a joyful time of praise to God and fellowship among his people.

In addition to his work at Second Parish, David will serve as a chaplain in the Maine Army National Guard.

Heights, N.J., and Faith Bible Church, Independent Presbyterian, in Brick, N.J., took membership vows to form **Faith Bible Church—Orthodox Presbyterian** in Brick.

**Ministers**

- Effective February 23, the Presbytery of New Jersey has erased **Richard S. Anderson** from its roll of ministers, consequent to his renouncing of the jurisdiction of the OPC.

- Effective February 23, the Presbytery of New Jersey has erased **Martin L. Dawson** from its roll of ministers, consequent to his renouncing of the jurisdiction of the OPC.

- **David M. DeRienzo** was ordained as a minister and installed as associate pastor of Second Parish OPC in Portland, Maine, on March 8.
- Ruling elder **Mark A. Green** was ordained and installed as an evangelist of the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic on February 8; he serves as president and COO of White Horse Inn.
- **Lloyd J. Sterrett** was ordained as a minister and

**DAVID DeRIENZO ORDAINED**

David DeRienzo was ordained as a minister and installed as associate pastor of Second Parish OPC in Portland, Maine, on March 8. David graduated from Westminster Seminary (Philadelphia) in 2012, and since that time has served at Second Parish as a pastoral intern.

At the ordination service, the Rev. Dr. David Christensen, pastor of Galilee Baptist Church in Gorham, Maine, preached a sermon from Nehemiah 6. The Rev. Daniel Patterson, pastor of Second Parish, gave the charge to David from Acts 20:28. Chaplain (Brigadier General) Douglas Lee, executive director of the Presbyterian and Reformed Commission on Chaplains and Military

UPDATE

**Churches**

- On February 24, the members of Redeemer OPC, formerly in Seaside

Dave Christensen, Danny Patterson, David DeRienzo, Doug Lee



installed as pastor of Grace OPC in Philadelphia, Pa., on February 15.

## LETTERS

Editor:

In his March review of *Talking with Mormons*, by Richard Mouw, Jody Morris says that, in Mouw's view, some Mormons may have "genuine" faith in Christ, despite being "wrong in their theology." No doubt many Mormons have a sincere faith in "Christ," but what Christ? That determines whether someone is truly Christian (1 John 4:1–3).

The Mormon "Christ" is not the Christ of the Bible, the Son of God who has "come in the flesh" in the sense the apostle John teaches. The issue with false religion and false gospels is not about sincerity or the lack thereof. It is about believing the witness that God has borne regarding his Son (1 John 5). A "Mormon" who is genuinely a Christian would not believe what the Mormon church teaches, for their teaching presents a different "Christ."

Those who reject the full authority of the Bible as God's Word often have played up a sincere love for Christ and ignored the biblical view of him. But the deepest issue in religion is not sincerity versus insincerity, but truth versus falsehood. The postmodern "Christ" who stirs up the warm emotions of many today is not the same person as the one described in God's Word or in the church's historic creeds and confessions. Any "Christ" other than the incarnate Son of God found in

the Bible is an antichrist, an impostor who cannot save sinners.

Along this same line, I would also like to express my appreciation for Carl Trueman's wonderful article in the February issue on the importance of being a confessional church. He was very clear that the Confession does not replace God's Word. However, he reminds us that without such a public statement of what we believe the Bible teaches, we easily slip into error.

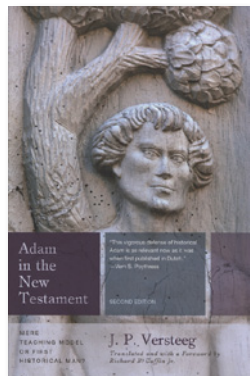
Allen Tomlinson  
Merrimack, N.H.

## REVIEWS

*Adam in the New Testament*, by J. P. Versteeg. Published by P&R Publishing, 2012. Paperback, 96 pages, list price \$12.99. Reviewed by OP pastor D. Patrick Ramsey.

A comparison of Romans 14–15 with Galatians reveals that we need to distinguish between beliefs that are fundamental to the Christian religion and beliefs that are not. An example of the former is the historicity of Adam, which is the subject of J. P. Versteeg's *Adam in the New Testament: Mere Teaching Model or First Historical Man?*

This short book was originally a contribution to a volume published for the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Theological Seminary of the Christian Re-



formed Churches in the Netherlands over forty years ago. An English translation by Richard B. Gaffin, Jr., first appeared in 1978. This new edition remains substantially the same, except that it has a new title and includes a lengthy

foreword by the translator.

*Adam in the New Testament* addresses the view that the New Testament does not present Adam as a historical figure, but as "an illustration, an explanation of the reality of Jesus as Messiah" (p. 4). In this sense, Adam serves as a "teaching model." The biblical doctrine of Adam teaches us about the person and work of Jesus, not the history of humanity. Versteeg critiques this view in a number of ways.

First, he examines the New Testament passages pertaining to Adam. The most important one is Romans 5:12–21, and Versteeg devotes an entire chapter to it. He also considers Luke 3:38, 1 Corinthians 15:22, 45, 1 Timothy 2:13–14, and Jude 14. In each case, the author demonstrates the bankruptcy of the "teaching model" interpretation.

Second, the author examines the rabbinic references to Adam. He does this in order to refute the argument that the Jewish rabbis referred to Adam merely as a teaching model and that the New Testament should be interpreted in light of their understanding.

Third, Versteeg argues that if it was Paul's intention to view Adam as a historical figure, then we cannot say that Adam is merely a teaching model without denying the significance of Paul's treatment of Adam for us today. Similarly, we cannot deny Paul's historical view of Christ's resurrection without denying the significance that Paul saw in that event.

Finally, Versteeg helpfully lays out the consequences of denying the historicity of Adam. In so doing, he establishes that this doctrine is a fundamental one. Richard Gaffin takes up the same theme in his

### Corrections

On page 5, column 2, of the April issue, in the second full paragraph, the sentence in the third line should read, "It does not reign in the kingdom of God."

And pictured on page 12 is not Miami football coach Al Golden, but OP pastor Ken Golden.

## Keeping the Focus on Salvation

How can we balance physical and spiritual needs in missions?

[www.opc.org/qa.html?question\\_id=225](http://www.opc.org/qa.html?question_id=225)

foreword and applies it to a recent book by Peter Enns. These two sections, along with the chapter on Romans 5, make this book well worth reading, especially by ministers and elders. The historicity of Adam is once again under attack, and one aspect of the argument is that it is not a fundamental doctrine. In other words, people are saying that the gospel is not at stake in the denial of the historicity of Adam. This book will show you otherwise. Highly recommended.

\* \* \*

***Dangerous Calling*, by Paul Tripp. Published by Crossway, 2012. Hardback, 240 pages, list price \$22.99. Reviewed by OP pastor Greg Hoadley.**

*Dangerous Calling* begins with the story of a pastor that is all too common. While this pastor's ministry appeared to be doing well, his success was illusory. The persona he projected toward his congregation was brazenly at odds with how he was behind closed doors. He was prideful, often said contemptuous things about those to whom God had charged him to minister, became dismissive of his wife's repeated warnings, and was growing increasingly distant from his family.

Who was this pastor that author Paul Tripp was describing? Paul Tripp. Through providential circumstances, he came to realize that he was not conducting his ministry in a godly manner. But through his many travels and classroom lectures, he discovered that many other pastors have the same struggles.

Here's the bottom line: because pastors are in the trenches, they don't get the spiritual nourishment that they are called to give to Christ's flock. Therefore, many are in survival mode, silently struggle with their own sins, and live in fear of their being discovered. These struggles can include having a seminary mind-set (i.e., valuing academics over ministering to people), being blind to their own heart issues, succumbing to isolation, and slouching towards mediocrity.

Tripp wrote *Dangerous Calling* to alert pastors to these very real dangers

and to give them the tools to combat them—most particularly, regaining a sense of awe of God and his Word. In this book, he shows a compassionate tenderness toward pastors who are discouraged. Tripp reminds them of the great, merciful God they serve, and he tells them how to first feed themselves from God's Word before they feed their congregation.

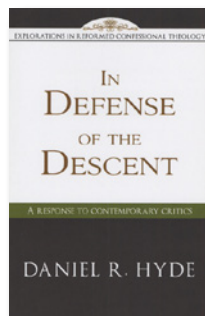
But Tripp is also confrontational where he needs to be: "As a pastor, you'd better be ready to fight for the gospel, but you'd better also be ready to war for your own soul. You'd better be committed to being honest about the battles that are going on in your own heart. You'd better be prepared to preach the gospel to yourself. You'd better arm yourself for the inner conflict that greets anyone in ministry."

While *Dangerous Calling* is geared toward pastors, it is also a useful tool for ruling elders, because it will help them to better understand and minister to their pastors. It will also help elders to better watch out for warning signs that their pastor may need help.

With so many pastors leaving the ministry every year, the publication of *Dangerous Calling* is a much-needed and timely book. All pastors, elders, and seminarians should read it carefully.

\* \* \*

***In Defense of the Descent: A Response to Contemporary Critics*, by Daniel R. Hyde. Published by Reformation Heritage Books, 2010. Paperback, 88 pages, list price \$10.00. Reviewed by Prof. David VanDrunen.**



As Christians, we are to confess with our mouths what we have first believed in our hearts (Rom. 10:9–10). That idea may give us pause when we recite in the Apostles' Creed, "He descended into hell." Do we really believe this, and if so, how do we understand it? Would things be simpler just to eliminate these words from the

Creed? Reformed Christians may be especially confused, since the Westminster Larger Catechism and the Heidelberg Catechism interpret this clause in different ways. Daniel Hyde, a pastor in the United Reformed Churches, addresses such issues in this clear, concise, and helpful book. He argues that the debated clause not only belongs in the Creed, but also provides theologically rich, practical benefit to the church as she confesses it and teaches it.

Hyde begins by relating the objections of several contemporary Reformed authors to the use of this clause. He then provides some historical background on the development of the Apostles' Creed and the inclusion of the clause within it. In the lengthier third chapter, Hyde describes six main interpretations of the descent clause. The first four are non-Reformed: that Christ went to hell (1) to continue suffering, (2) to offer a second chance to those who died as unbelievers, (3) to announce his victory to those who died as believers, and (4) to announce his victory to Satan. Hyde briefly explains why the first two views are explicitly contrary to Scripture. He critiques the third and fourth views—typically espoused by Roman Catholics and Lutherans, respectively—in more detail. Here he includes helpful discussion of Ephesians 4:7–10 and 1 Peter 3:18–19, two texts that are commonly cited in this debate.

At the end of the third chapter, Hyde introduces the final two interpretations of the clause, which are common among Reformed believers: (5) that Christ was buried as one who was truly dead (see Westminster Larger Catechism, 50), and (6) that Christ suffered the agony of hell during his whole life and especially on the cross (see Heidelberg Catechism, 44). The fourth chapter defends *both* of these views. Hyde rightly recognizes that they are harmonious and, in fact, capture two aspects of the broader Reformed doctrine of Christ's humiliation. This chapter includes exegesis of Psalm 16:8–10, another historically important text for these debates.

In Chapter 5, Hyde concludes by

## NEWS, VIEWS, REVIEWS (cont.)

discussing the benefits of retaining “He descended into hell” in the Apostles’ Creed and in our catechetical training. This clause links us with the historic, catholic Christian church that has confessed it for so many centuries. Its truth also bolsters our assurance in times of doubt, provides hope in our suffering, and grants us peace as we face death.

This book is highly recommended, not only for those who may have objections to the descent clause, but also for any who wish to gain a richer understanding and appreciation for it. It will also be useful for those catechizing children. Its short length and clear writing make it accessible to a wide audience.

### **JOHN P. GALBRAITH— A CENTURY OF SERVICE**

With one hand on his cane and the other hand raised overhead, the Rev. John P. Galbraith pronounced the benediction at the March 10, 2013, morning service at Calvary OPC in Glenside, Pennsylvania, marking his one hundredth birthday doing what he loves—worshipping God. He is the oldest living minister in the OPC—and only the second (after Russell Piper) ever to reach one hundred years of age.

Mr. Galbraith was a seminarian studying under J. Gresham Machen when he witnessed the start of what would become the OPC in 1936. Ordained in 1937, Mr. Galbraith was pastor to three congregations, general secretary of Foreign Missions (twice) and Home

Missions, served on the Committee for Christian Education, and was moderator of the General Assembly. During his Foreign Missions tenure, Mr. Galbraith ministered when one missionary died, another was murdered, and a third was kidnapped.

More than 110 people from as far away as California, Florida, Maine, and Michigan came to Calvary OPC to attend his birthday celebration on March 9. At the celebration were his two daughters, Priscilla Toth and Suzanne deBoer, with their families, as well as his sole surviving cousin. They were joined by former OP missionaries Greet Rietkerk and Betty Andrews and by Robert W. Eckardt (who was also present at the First General Assembly, as a child) and his wife Mary. Friends even came down from his summer home in Maine for

the occasion.

Mr. Galbraith spoke for ten minutes. He told about his Christian upbringing, in which passages of Scripture were memorized. He recited and exegeted Psalm 23, calling it an autobiography of King David’s life. He spoke of how God cared for David throughout his life. Then he recited John 3:16 and everyone sang the Doxology.

“I have had a wonderful life, and I have more to come,” said Mr. Galbraith. Paraphrasing Paul, he said: “To die is better than to live. The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. I begin my second century tomorrow. We’ll see how far that goes.”

Mr. Galbraith’s speech is available at [http://youtu.be/\\_ff1\\_Q500L0](http://youtu.be/_ff1_Q500L0).

John Galbraith with retired missionary doctor Greet Rietkerk

