

NEW HORIZONS

— in the ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH —

3 Making Melody to the Lord:
Pianist Wael Farouk //
by Patricia E. Clawson

MARCH 2015

8 Expressing One's Faith
as a Christian Artist //
by Rebecca Sodergren

THE CHRISTIAN

and the Arts



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New Horizons

in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church

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Sketched at the right is ruling elder Jim Gidley (currently president of the Committee on Christian Education) at a past general assembly. To learn about the artist, OP elder Mike Mahon, and how his faith informs his work, read "Expressing One's Faith as a Christian Artist," by Rebecca Sodergren, on page 8.



MAKING MELODY TO THE LORD: PIANIST WAEL FAROUK



PATRICIA E. CLAWSON // The hand of the Lord has been evident in Wael Farouk's life from his childhood in Cairo to today as the first pianist ever to perform all ninety-eight of Sergei Rachmaninoff's solo piano compositions within six months. That's similar to an actor performing all of Shakespeare's plays in one season,

he says. What makes this achievement even more remarkable is that he was once told he could never play the Russian composer's music because his hands could not be straightened or even made into a fist. Yet the thirty-three-year-old has performed in New York City's Carnegie Hall. He also accompanies worship at his home church, Grace OPC in Hanover Park, Illinois.

Wael's story begins as a two-and-a-half-year-old who couldn't hold things in his hands in a normal way because of his shortened ligaments. To help strengthen Wael's hands, a doctor urged his father to help him exercise his fingers. His father's gift of a toy piano on his third birthday changed his life. Wael's love of music was kindled as he continually played the piano.

Growing up in a Christian family in Cairo, Wael started to play in Coptic churches and even played before the Coptic Pope at four and a half. By eight, he played the first of many annual performances for Egypt's then-First Lady Suzanne Mubarak.

Enrolling at the Cairo Conser-

vatory at the precollege level when he was eight set the course of his life. Even though Wael scored the highest on the entrance exams, the school initially refused to admit him because of his physique, claiming it could hurt his psyche. Wael's father, a hard-working man, negotiated a three-month trial in which his son would do the workload of two years in three months, which he did. Fourteen years later, Wael graduated with the educational equivalent of elementary school, high school, and college, scoring 100 out of 100 annually on his finals, which had never happened before.

Four years into his studies, he was appointed a Russian teacher for three years, who showed Wael how to be professional, dedicated, and hard working. At twelve, Wael was in a class of twenty-two-year-old graduate students who were sometimes left in tears by their teacher. But he worked hard, so it never happened to him. Wael got up at five, rode the bus ninety minutes to and from the conservatory, took classes from eight to five, studied his other subjects,

and practiced at least six hours daily.

Wael's father taught him his work ethic: "If there is something you really want, you have to give it everything." When Wael's father was nine, he and his older brother had to work two jobs to support their mother and four siblings. His father worked to put himself through college, often studying under a street light when there was no light at home.

One day Wael's teacher gave him a recording of Rachmaninoff's Third Concerto. "It was like dropping a bomb on somebody's head," said Wael. "It was just too much—in a great way." He told his teacher he would like to work on it. The teacher smiled and said, "A wise man knows his limits. I have worked on this piece all my life, but have not been good enough to play it." The news shocked Wael since his teacher was very good. His teacher knew that Rachmaninoff was six feet, six inches tall, with large hands that spread more than an octave and a half. But Wael was only five feet tall, and his fingers barely stretched an octave. In the summer,

Wael increased his practice time to thirteen hours a day or more. Two years later, he could play the piece.

Wael was scheduled to play the concerto with the Cairo Symphony, but the French conductor refused to let an eighteen-year-old play it in concert. However, if he played another piece well in concert, he would let Wael perform it the following season. His solo received multiple curtain calls. The next year, Wael played the Third Concerto, the first time it was performed in Egypt.

“The Voice of God”

Over the years, Wael Farouk toured internationally, playing in England, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Spain, and Russia, where he played Tchaikovsky’s own piano. He received seven full scholarships, including more than one Fulbright fellowship, to various schools. Hurricane Sandy canceled his first performance at Carnegie Hall, but he played there seven months later in 2013.

In 2014, Farouk accomplished what no other pianist has ever achieved. He performed all ninety-eight solo piano compositions of Rachmaninoff in five concerts within six months. While playing such a massive amount of complex music, he knew that he could make a mistake on any note.

Despite that renown, Farouk said his greatest accomplishment was marrying Amy Stahl, who grew up at Emmanuel OPC in Wilmington, Delaware. Farouk met his wife, then a senior English major, while earning his master’s at Converse College in Spartanburg, South Carolina. She invited Farouk to the Easter service at the PCA church she attended. Afterward they ate the first of many lunches with Chris and Susan Bennett. A PCA elder, Bennett taught him the Reformed faith, which Farouk often recognized as an articulation of his own beliefs. When he told his parents that he had joined



Wael and Amy Farouk after his performance at Carnegie Hall

a Presbyterian church, his father said, “You know, your grandparents were Presbyterians.” They had left the one Presbyterian church in Cairo after they moved, because they had no transportation to return there for worship.

Once engaged, Farouk studied in New York while his fiancée earned her master’s in Tallahassee, attending Calvary OPC. OP pastor William Hobbs performed their marriage ceremony. The Farouks then moved to Chicago, where he earned a degree and now teaches at Roosevelt University. He also travels to Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey, to work on his doctorate.

The Farouks found a church home at Grace OPC, where he accompanies worship when he is available. As a child, Farouk learned stage presence from playing in the Coptic churches. Once, while playing for a service, he froze and couldn’t focus because people were eating while he played. Today in concert, Farouk may wait five minutes for the audience to become quiet.

It is different today when he plays the prelude before the worship service and people are chatting in the pews. “When I’m playing in church, it’s not really about me,” said Farouk. “It’s not really even about the pastor. We’re here

to be in God’s house. We try to block everything out, not for the sake of music, but for the sake of hearing God’s Word.”

Grace OPC pastor Matthew Cotta said of Farouk, “His quiet, humble, thoughtful, and godly life has been a constant source of encouragement and edification to us all.”

“I believe really great music is God’s voice,” said Farouk. “Luther said music is only second to the gospel. All the psalms praise him with music skillfully. It’s not a career. It is something I am completely in love with, and it really takes over me.”

Farouk believes music has a spiritual aspect. There are no directions for the listener—just sounds—unlike watching a ballet

where the dancer runs from the witch. The greatness of concert music is the way that the performer transmits the composer’s emotional context when he wrote the piece. Beethoven doesn’t describe his feelings when he wrote a piece, so the performer must learn about Beethoven, digest that information, and then creatively reflect it in the interpretation given to the music, Farouk said. The music then goes straight to the listeners’ heart and brain in a magical way.

“You are able to move somebody to tears without saying a word,” Farouk said. “If you’re doing it for God’s glory, then you’ll have the commitment and desire to do it all well.”

Farouk, who practices two to seven hours daily, hopes his newborn daughter, Nabiela Joy, will enjoy music because it will be in her blood.

“I want to be a good husband and father,” said Farouk. “On the professional level, I want to keep doing what I’m doing to the best of my ability. I’m very fortunate that I get to do what I love the most. It’s all for God’s glory.”

More information is available at www.waelfarouk.com. □

The author is the editorial assistant for New Horizons.

A JAZZ PIANIST PLAYING FOR THE GLORY OF GOD



REBECCA SODERGREN // Music became both Pamela York's vocation and her introduction to Christ.

She played in her high school band with the sons of a Christian Reformed Church pastor, and she began playing piano in their church even before taking membership vows at age 20. Now she

accompanies worship at Providence OPC in Kingwood (Houston), Texas, where her husband, Adam, is the pastor.

But her vocational music is very different from *Trinity Hymnal*.

A jazz pianist, she discovered improv as a ten-year-old, when a musical family moved into her neighborhood in Nanaimo, British Columbia. They took her to open-mic country jam sessions, where she had to “rise to the occasion and follow songs by ear.”

She now plays jazz piano around the Houston area and tours occasionally in the U.S. and Canada. She has recorded albums and has a Pandora station. Her repertoire is a mix of hymns, spirituals, and her own compositions.

She is also a homeschooling mom to Anna, 11, and Jonathan, 5.

These roles can leave her feeling like she inhabits very different worlds.

She sometimes feels “like a rebel in the church, but *way* conservative in the world,” she said. It helps that there seem to be more Christian musicians in Houston than in other places where she has lived.

It also helps that jazz has gained respectability. The “smoky bar image”

of old has been replaced, now that jazz is taught at the university level. And some jazz musicians, such as Duke Ellington and Mary Lou Williams, performed sacred music in the jazz style, so York isn't alone in jazzing up hymns.

It's also a challenge to be both a mom and a professional musician, and it can leave her feeling like she's “not doing 100 percent at either thing.” But she also finds blessing in combining the two roles. As a musician, she's more relaxed because she realizes there are “other things in life to nourish” her. And after a good practice session, she feels fulfilled creatively and carries that joy into her home duties.

“It was very helpful for me to get a lot of experience before I married and had children,” she said, noting she worked a lot while her husband was in seminary. Now her career is moving more slowly than those of her single



Pamela York

friends.

“There's always a tension between what I need to get done in domestic life and the things I need to get done at the piano”—including writing and

[Continued on page 20]

THE OPERA AND ORCHESTRAL MUSIC



ALAN D. STRANGE // When the editor asked me if I wished to write on the value of listening to and attending the opera, or of listening to and attending the symphony orchestra, I felt as if he had asked a gourmand to write about food. I readily agreed and was delighted at the prospect!

I like music in a variety of genres, but, for me, there is nothing quite like opera or the orchestra. I should note that I exclude from this evaluation the music of the church, which holds a unique place in my heart and life, as I trust it does in the life of many of you.

But outside the music of the church, there is so much music that one may sample, so why should I bother to make a case for opera and orchestral music? My case is not that one should listen only to that, but rather that there should be some significant place for this vast landscape of music in what you listen to outside of church. I do this in the full recognition that many people do not listen to such music at all, and I would challenge you that failure ever to listen to this sort of music leaves you musically impoverished. This will serve as a little primer, utterly unnecessary and too simple for some. For others, it may help you to get started on a musical journey that you'll never regret.

One may start with that which is closest to church music, namely sacred music, beginning with that greatest of composers (as some regard him), Johann Sebastian Bach. One may listen to one of his many cantatas, written for

Sunday performances in his Lutheran church in Leipzig. One may choose his *St. Matthew Passion*, his *St. John Passion*, or his Mass in B Minor. Also quite delightful, but of a more secular nature, are his six Brandenburg Concertos, his French and English Suites, or his other keyboard works (think *Goldberg Variations* or *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, not to mention his great organ pieces). Other sacred music worth sampling may be found in the oratorios of Handel (not just *Messiah*, but also *Samson* and *Israel in Egypt*—twenty-nine oratorios altogether), Haydn (*Creation*), and Mendelsohn (*Elijah*). The *German Requiem* of Brahms is especially moving.

We'll start in "secular music" with the Baroque era. In addition to Bach and Handel, there are Telemann, Buxtehude, and Vivaldi, whose *Four Seasons* never fails to please. We could go to medieval (Gregorian chant, madrigal, etc.) and Renaissance music (Josquin, Palestrina, Gabrieli, etc.), which has become more popular in recent years, but Baroque is the beginning of what's called music of "common practice" and a good starting place for most. Then there's Classical: Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven are essential, with the last

being the bridge to the Romantic Era of the nineteenth century.

Beethoven's nine symphonies are masterpieces that remain unequalled. His Third Symphony, in fact, is widely recognized as the transition piece from the Classical to the Romantic era (I'll never forget a performance of this with the Boston Symphony and Leonard Bernstein at Tanglewood). His Fifth is rhythmically genius, the Seventh is, according to Wagner, "the apotheosis of the dance," and the Ninth points to a whole new world, with the introduction of soloists and a chorus in the last movement. Brahms was so intimidated, as were others, by Beethoven's symphonies that it took him years to write his First Symphony. Afterwards he wrote three others that became, together with the First, masterpieces in their own right. Symphonies of this period likely to be enjoyed by *New Horizons* readers would also include those of Schubert, Tchaikovsky, and Dvořák.

Mozart is probably the best place to start one's journey into opera (though Handel wrote forty-two operas that some of us love): *Don Giovanni*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Così fan tutte*, and *The Magic Flute* are themselves enough



Some of the Chamber Singers of Illiana Christian High School singing to God's glory; at far left: the author's son Greg

to furnish a lifetime of delight. For Italian opera, Puccini and Verdi are indispensable. For Puccini, *La Bohème*, *Tosca*, *Madama Butterfly*, and *Turandot* are essential. For Verdi, *La traviata*, *Rigoletto*, *Il trovatore*, and *Aida* are required. Don't miss nineteenth-century French opera (Gounod, Massenet, Saint-Saëns), which has an incomparable sweetness; think of the "Méditation" from Massenet's *Thaïs*.

Backing up to *bel canto* ("beautiful singing"), the main players are Rossini, Donizetti, and Bellini. I could talk about Donizetti and Bellini all day, but let me just commend these: for the former, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *The Daughter of the Regiment*, and *The Elixir of Love*, and the latter, *Norma*, *I Puritani*, and *La sonnambula*. For those who like the German operas of Mozart and Beethoven (*Fidelio* was his one opera), Wagner reaches the height of what he called the "music drama." One should not miss his *Tannhäuser*, *Lohengrin*, and *Tristan und Isolde*, before getting to his *Ring Cycle* and *Die Meistersinger*.

Wagner is a good bridge to the later symphonists Bruckner and Mahler (whose "Resurrection" Symphony is gorgeous), who themselves serve as a link to greats like Stravinsky, Shostakovich, and others in the twentieth century like Sibelius, Prokofiev, Holst, and Vaughn Williams. The French Impressionists (Debussy and Ravel) are not to be bypassed; they recall earlier

composers of piano music like Chopin and Liszt.

If you are procuring music, make sure that you spend a bit more and obtain recordings by top orchestras or opera companies (led by great conductors like Furtwängler, Karajan, Abbado, Muti, and Levine). For orchestras, look for the Concertgebouw of Amsterdam, the Berlin Philharmonic, the Vienna Philharmonic, the London Symphony Orchestra, and in this country the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO), the Cleveland Orchestra, the New York Philharmonic, and other major orchestras. As for opera, the Metropolitan Opera of New York has no peer in this country (or perhaps the world nowadays); great international companies include the Royal Opera House (Covent Garden, London), the Teatro alla Scala (Milan), the Vienna State Opera, the Paris Opera, and the Bayreuth Festival (for Wagner).

As for performers, going back to Bach, one would not want to miss Marie-Claire Alain or Ton Koopman on the organ. For the piano, there are showmen like Vladimir Horowitz and Van Cliburn, and then there are pianists' pianists like Murray Perahia and Alfred Brendel. For the violin, Nathan Milstein, David Oistrakh, Itzhak Perlman, or Joshua Bell could join Yo-Yo Ma or Jacqueline du Pré on the cello. The French have had their share of instrumental masters, with few coming

close to Maurice André on the trumpet and Jean-Pierre Rampal on the flute. Two of the best orchestral musicians I've ever heard played trumpet and flute in the CSO: Adolph "Bud" Herseth and Mathieu Dufour. Dufour has flawless technique, and Herseth was famous for his legato (connected, continuous, and smooth) playing and for making his instrument sound like the human voice.

Speaking of the human voice, in the *bel canto* repertoire, Joan Sutherland, Luciano Pavarotti, and Marilyn Horne were a remarkable troika. For Verdi, Leontyne Price, Carlo Bergonzi, and Leonard Warren are first rate; for Puccini, Renata Tebaldi, Franco Corelli, and Robert Merrill. In the German repertoire, Fritz Wunderlich, Peter Schreier, and Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau delight endlessly, as do Birgit Nilsson and Elisabeth Schwarzkopf. Current singers one might look for are Angela Meade, Anna Netrebko, Ramón Vargas, and Cecilia Bartoli. I have heard many of the more recent singers live, as well as some of the older ones. There is nothing quite like hearing a great singer in the opera house. It is the most skillful and gorgeous use of the greatest instrument. I'll never forget hearing Beverly Sills when young, Kathleen Battle in a magnificent recital, Juan Diego Flórez at the beginning of his glorious career, and Luciano Pavarotti at the Met in brilliant voice.

The point of all of this is aural beauty. Few things in creation are as moving as music. The organ, the violin, the piano, Maria Callas, Jussi Björling, the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields, the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, and the Vienna Boys Choir all speak to us at deep, virtually indescribable levels. They all testify to the God who is there; such purposefulness and beauty make it unreasonable to imagine them to be the products of random chance. Every note sounded gives glory to the God who is the ultimate author of all that is lovely and beautiful in music (Phil. 4:8). □

The author is professor of church history at Mid-America Reformed Seminary.

EXPRESSING ONE'S FAITH AS A CHRISTIAN ARTIST



REBECCA SODERGREN // **Discovering the Reformed faith gave Mike Mahon the freedom to pursue his calling as a landscape and portrait painter. He began studying fine arts at Texas Tech University in the late 1960s. But he quickly became disillusioned because “all anybody was interested in doing was making**

philosophical or political statements.” Also, most artists embraced abstract art and dismissed traditional painting and concepts of beauty.

Mahon, an agnostic at the time, felt he had no particular agenda: “I just wanted to do beautiful artwork.”

He switched his major to design and illustration, where he found the drawing and painting studies more serious, and went on to a commercial art career.

Shortly after college, Mahon and his wife, Cynthia, joined a Bible study. The group was dispensationalist, but one member became a Calvinist and kept pressing the issue. Things got so tense that the Calvinist was told he had to leave.

But “within six months, we were all Calvinists,” Mahon said.

The group sought counsel from Covenant Presbyterian Church in Abilene, Texas, eventually forming an OP chapel in Lubbock.

In 1976, the Mahons moved to Amarillo, Texas, where they helped to start Christ Covenant Presbyterian Church. One weekend, Cornelius Van Til led a seminar there. In reading Van Til’s books, Mahon found his mission as a painter: to fulfill the Christian’s calling to “think God’s thoughts after him.”

“If you believe that God created the

universe and conceived it even before he created it, then everything we see was in his mind from the beginning,” Mahon said. The job of the painter becomes offering “a reflection of him.”

Suddenly, Mahon was free, not only from the political and philosophical expectations of other artists, but also from the fundamentalist misconception he had grown up under: that the arts were a “heathen activity.” He began painting portraits and landscapes as a sidelight to his commercial art studio, which he ran until 1998, when he switched to full-time painting. He also teaches art workshops around the country and sells an easel he designed.

“If you’re in music, you go to Nashville; if you’re an artist, you go to Santa Fe,” Mahon said, explaining the couple’s move in 2008 from Amarillo to Santa Fe. There they joined the fledgling Orthodox Presbyterian Church of Rio Rancho, New Mexico. Mahon has been an OP elder for about thirty years.

Mahon doesn’t often paint overtly Christian works, although he does paint covers for *The Confessional Presbyterian* (see www.cpjournal.com)—usually portraits of famous theologians. During

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Mike Mahon

FROM PAINTER TO PASTOR



PAUL BROWNE // “Oh, do you still make art?”

Kind people commonly ask that when they hear I am now a pastor, but have a degree in painting. The easy answer is, “Not much, these days.” The implication, that a pastor’s life is busy—who has time to break out the acrylics?—is true enough. The conclusion

that my being a pastor is unrelated to art, however, is false.

The longer answer, which I don’t always inflict on people, is that there is a clear logic to God’s calling me from painter to pastor. When I was an unbeliever, I desperately longed to be ravished by beauty. Making art was a diagnostic tool to find a beauty that would satisfy the eye, the mind, and the heart. Struggling to create a painting was an immersion of the bodily senses in color, shape, texture, line, and space, but also a pursuit of something bigger than myself. It offered purpose and hope.

Of course, art utterly failed me.

But it worked according to its intended limitations. There was too much ugliness in me (never mind the world): hurt, hatred, fear, guilt. What beauty can fill a broken heart? What is the beauty behind all beauty, of which every glimpse in a shattered mirror leaves more yearning than satisfaction?

He came to me when I was crying. The Beauty. The Glory. The Love. It had been a rough patch. I hadn’t been making art for a while because, well ... why? My eyes were bleary. He came to Mary Magdalene in a moment like that. She thought he was the gardener. For a long

time, I also had seen him standing there before my dawn, and had mistaken his identity.

He called me by name, and I looked at him, the Beauty so perfect that it had long terrified me, the original that is glimpsed in everything pleasing to the eyes and desirable, whose image was borne in every model I sketched. The beauty of all beauties, whose light beckons through everything he makes, whose glory is revealed in every vessel he shapes.

Jesus Christ is the end of the aesthetic quest.

I had loathed him as the death of all I desired. When Jesus sovereignly summoned me to turn to him and live, I saw that he himself is the fulfillment of every longing for life, joy, love, light, and beauty.

“Your eyes will behold the king in his beauty. Strength and beauty are in his sanctuary. Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God shines forth. My eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!”

He is the creator of the primordial splendor. But now, with an artfulness that no eye has seen nor ear heard, he is the beautifier of all that is ugly. On

the cross, he comprehended all that, with his own visage marred more than all the sons of men, having been made sin for us, so that the original critique at the end of God’s work may sound again with deeper appreciation: “And, behold, it was very good.” For we are his craftsmanship, created in Christ Jesus.

Of course, Christians should still make art to the glory of God.

For me, Christ simply had another vocation, employing other gifts that had lain dormant in sin’s sleep. As a minister of the gospel, I work in a different medium and on a vaster canvas. The God-breathed words of Scripture are the heavenly hues, the new and more beautiful palette of the pastor’s work. I do not wish to preach artistic sermons, but sermons about the Artist. As Christ is preached scripturally, people and pastor rejoice together to see his glory. Serving Christ, the Beauty, in this way, I wait for and hasten the coming day when all his people and even the universe itself will shine out visibly in his loveliness. The Christian life and hope are thus inescapably aesthetic. □

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

EMPOWERING NEW CHURCH PLANTERS

// SEAN D. GREGG



Church planter Mika Edmondson

Church planters face numerous and serious challenges. Their work can be difficult and frustrating, and it is often done without the benefit of local ruling elders to share the burden. Each year the Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension holds the Church Planter Training Conference to provide instruction, encouragement and fellowship, and an introduction to the ministries of the OPC for those men who began their labors in an OP church plant within the last year.

In early January, a dozen men gathered at Redeemer OPC in Atlanta to attend this year's conference. There were a few additions to the schedule this year. A representative for Christianity Explored Ministries described their method for evangelism, and the church planters had an opportunity to film an introductory video for their congregations' websites.

Pastoral experience and exposure to the OPC varied greatly among the church planters who attended. Jim Cassidy, who has pastored two established congregations, is now serving at his first church plant: South Austin Presbyterian Church in Austin, Texas. Mika (pronounced "Micah") Edmondson, of New City Fellowship in Grand Rapids, Michigan, on the other hand, was introduced to the OPC less than three years ago, when he began his studies at Calvin Theological Seminary.

Each of the church planters who attended the conference said that it was a blessing. "I wish this were provided for every first-time pastor," said Cassidy. "If I had attended this conference twelve years ago, it would have been invaluable." Chris Hartshorn, who serves as Anaheim Hills Presbyterian Church's organizing pastor, went home from the conference "encouraged, refreshed, and ready to hit the ground running." He found it helpful to get away for a few days and think about church planting without needing to focus on the everyday tasks associated with it.

Instruction and Prayer

Much of the time at the conference is spent in instruction regarding various aspects of church planting. General Secretary John Shaw said that he prefers a conversational format. Jim Cassidy was encouraged by the opportunity for the men to share the wisdom they had gained from their experiences. Hearing what Shaw had learned during his own time as a church planter encouraged Chris Hartshorn.

"There's always one more book you can read," Shaw told the church planters regarding their sermon preparation, "but you have to put a limit on it." Several of the men commented on the challenging transition from spending virtually all their time on theological study while in seminary to making time for outreach and shepherding when planting a church.

Shaw also told them to consider their audience when preaching. Those who gather at New City Fellowship in Grand Rapids saw an immediate application of what Mika Edmondson had learned. Considering the "capacity of the hearers," who include young children there, as in many OP congregations, he shortened his sermon a bit. He also decided to spend a bit less time in the study and "spend more time shepherding through other means." Hartshorn also said he'll be looking for more face-to-face meetings with his people. He is also considering what he can do to meet more people who are not connected to the church.

Alan Avera, executive director for Christianity Explored, was invited to present the ministry as one tool to help a local congregation with the work of evangelism. Several of the church planters who attended the conference plan to use Christianity Explored materials. Hartshorn has already set dates in April and May when Anaheim Hills Presbyterian Church will present the program, which walks people through the gospel of Mark.

Shaw read through the book of Jonah during the conference, and each session began with Scripture, a hymn, and

prayer. Three times during the conference, the men separated into small groups to spend time in prayer. During each time of prayer, the men prayed for specific things: their mission works, their families, each other, and the ministries of the OPC.

Introduction

In addition to receiving instruction and discussing the challenges of planting churches, the attendees were reminded that they are part of a larger body by listening to presentations on the other ministries of Worldwide Outreach. “We’re not lone rangers,” said Cassidy. “We’re churchmen, Presbyterians.” For some, like Cassidy, the OPC’s foreign missionaries were familiar, but to those newer to the OPC, the introduction was a further reminder of the connectedness of the denomination.

Danny Olinger, general secretary for the Committee on Christian Education, gave a brief history of the committee’s work and presented resources available to the church planters. Mark Bube, general secretary for the Committee on Foreign Missions, and Douglas Clawson, the committee’s associate general secretary, presented the OPC’s work in other countries.

David Nakhla, the OPC’s short-term missions coordinator, not only spoke about the OPC’s disaster relief work and opportunities to serve in other countries, but also told how church plants can benefit from the short-term labors of others in the OPC. Indeed, teams have recently worked on Providence Presbyterian Church’s new building in West Lebanon, New Hampshire, while others have helped with outreach and evangelism in places like New York City.

David Haney spoke on Christian stewardship, giving the men practical instruction on church finances. He also told stories of how the OPC Loan Fund has helped mission works throughout its decades-long history.

Fellowship

This conference was Edmondson’s first opportunity to get to know his fellow ministers from around the country. After seeing how other men labor with overseeing sessions some distance away, he came away with a greater appreciation of the blessing of having three ruling elders worshipping regularly at New City Fellowship. Cassidy expects that these new acquaintances will be lifelong friends, and he was encouraged by the faithful pastors who have come into the OPC.

“Hanging out with the other church planters, discussing various topics, and bouncing ideas off of each other” was a highlight of the conference for Hartshorn. Cassidy, too, was glad to be reminded that he’s not alone, but has camaraderie

with the others at the conference. “To a man,” he said, “they are sinners saved by grace with a desire to pastor people. They are down-to-earth.” He was encouraged that “none of them has an agenda, but each is looking for the best way to shepherd God’s people.”

Video

More and more people are finding churches through on-line searches, and many churches are effectively using videos on their websites as a way to introduce themselves. But producing a good quality video, even a brief one, can be expensive.

In order to lower the cost, the committee decided to hire someone to shoot video of each of the church planters in one place. John Shaw contacted former OP church planter Brad Hertzog, who currently works as a consultant helping businesses and organizations effectively use electronic media. Brad’s experience as a church planter and his knowledge of digital media served the church planters well as he worked with them to produce brief introductory videos for their congregations’ websites.



Mark Soud (Redeemer OPC, Birmingham, Ala.) preparing for his video shoot

“It was great working with Brad on the video,” Edmondson said. “He was as excited about the project as we were.” Hertzog contacted each of the men long before the conference to get to know them and help them think through what they would say in their videos. The videos are short, only a few minutes long, so there was not time to develop complex theological arguments. Hertzog encouraged the men to focus their message on what sets their church plants apart from other churches in the area. They answered the question, “Why are you planting a church here?”

The church planters went home with new tools and a fresh perspective for doing their work. They also returned with a fresh reminder that they are not alone. The God who has sent them into the fields has also sent others around the country to gather in the harvest, and he has promised that the gates of hell will not prevail against them.

Home Missions Today

For up-to-date Home Missions news and prayer updates, e-mail HomeMissionsToday@opc.org.
New editions: March 11, 25.

MAKING THE GOSPEL CLEAR (PART 1)

// JEREMIAH MONTGOMERY



Jeremiah Montgomery doing open-air preaching at Penn State University

Clarity about the gospel of Jesus Christ is a part of who we are in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. J. Gresham Machen and his associates organized our denomination in 1936 because they would not passively cohabitate in the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. with those who preached a different gospel. Put another way, our forebears simply could not tolerate ambiguity regarding the gospel. Who Jesus is, what he did to rescue us, and how we must respond are far too important *not* to make clear.

A passion for the clarity of the gospel remains a cornerstone of our denomination's Christian identity today. In an age of rapid defection from the truth, in a day when the serpent's whisper, "Did God actually say ...?" is echoed even by many professing Christians, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church *must* be clear about the gospel of Jesus Christ. It isn't just our heritage. It is our only hope—our only comfort in life and in death.

But the question I want to explore in these articles is not "Are we clear about the gospel in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church?" Rather, the question I wish to explore is a related question: "Are we *making* the gospel clear to others?" The question I have in mind is not a matter of our *confession*, but rather of our *communication*.

The question of how we communicate the gospel becomes all the more urgent as we consider our shifting cultural landscape. Even within my relatively brief lifetime, the changes have been dramatic, rapid, and widespread. Whether or not the United States, Canada, and other Western nations were ever "Christian nations" is a debatable question, both historically and theologically. But regardless of bygone history, our present situation is far different. Whether or not we ever lived in "Christendom" in the past, the reality is that we now live on a mission field.

The fact that Western societies are now mission fields

should encourage us. Why? *Because we serve a missionary God!* Yes, a secular culture presents various obstacles. But it also presents opportunities. Michael Green, a historian of the early church, has observed that pluralistic Greco-Roman people of the first century felt a desperate need for "cleansing, security, and immortality" (*Evangelism in the Early Church*, p. 22). For all our technological sophistication, are twenty-first century Westerners that much different? In every age, people are still people. And, more importantly, God is still God.

If we remember these two facts, then we have every ground for encouragement in evangelism. Now as then, the gospel will change life and destiny forever. Now as then, the church bears the same witness: "Here were men and women of every rank and station in life, of every country in the known world, so convinced that they had discovered the riddle of the universe, so sure of the one true God whom they had come to know, that nothing must stand in the way of their passing on this good news to others" (Green, *Evangelism*, p. 236).

Yet it is at this point—the point of passing on the good news to others—that our new missionary context presents us with a challenge. In a context where our surrounding culture no longer takes its moral or spiritual assumptions from the teachings of Christianity, how do we most effectively communicate the good news? How do we make the gospel clear? This is our challenge.

In facing this challenge, we can learn much from two earlier periods in the history of the church where the gospel faced extensive cultural barriers. The first of these was the early church—the centuries in which the gospel exploded into the darkness of Greco-Roman paganism. The second was the period of the Reformation—when the gospel was rediscovered amidst the darkness of Roman Catholic ritualism.

Although both of these periods were different in many significant ways, they faced a similar challenge of communication: *how can Christians proclaim Christ clearly to people whose notions of biblical truth are either completely lacking or seriously*

flawed? For the remainder of this article, let's take a brief look at the period of the Reformation.

How did the Protestant Reformers seek to make the gospel clear in their day? Two things stand out. First, they translated and disseminated the Scriptures *in the common language of the people*. Second, they crafted confessions and catechisms that articulated the teachings of Scripture with *clear definitions* and *real-life connections*.

Have you ever noticed how extensively the Westminster Shorter Catechism employs definitions? Before getting too far along in telling us about what God has done (questions 7–38), the catechism tells us who God is (questions 4–6). Likewise, before going on to talk about the benefits of justification, adoption, and sanctification (questions 36–38), it pauses to give us a definition of each term (questions 33–35). The catechism always insists on defining its terms clearly.

Also, the Shorter Catechism isn't shy about showing how God's truth connects to the real issues of life. In a day when accrued tradition misled people into gross superstitions, the catechism taught that Scripture "is the only rule to direct us" (question 2). In a world where the papacy directed the faithful to trust in saints and the Virgin Mary, the catechism insisted that "the only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ" (question 21). The Westminster divines wanted even children to understand *how and why God's truth mattered to them*.

Because the wording of our catechism has not been updated in 350 years, it's easy to miss these points. Yet close examination demonstrates that clarity of communication is an integral part of our Reformed heritage. Have we lost some of that clarity today? If so, how can we leverage lessons of our heritage to help us make the gospel clear(er)? We'll explore these questions in our next installment.

The author is the pastor of Resurrection OPC in State College, Pa.

☆ Congratulations

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

- **Leah Clifford**, Grace OPC, Vienna, VA
- **Alexis Lansberry**, Providence Presbyterian Church, Denver, CO
- **Isabella Lansberry**, Providence Presbyterian Church, Denver, CO
- **Ava Noble**, Redeemer OPC, Beavercreek, OH
- **Lydia Noble**, Redeemer OPC, Beavercreek, OH
- **Erik Samuelsen**, Redeemer OPC, Carlisle, PA
- **Eliana Sigmon**, Columbia Presbyterian Church, Columbia MD

ABCs of PRESBYTERIANISM

Guidance from the Lord (1)

Larry Wilson

Our Lord Jesus runs his church by graciously working through his Word and Spirit. Part of how he does so is by making fallible humans to be officers in his church (see Eph. 4:11–12; Acts 20:28). Church government is not a human invention. It's the structure that the exalted Christ himself gives to the life of his body.

In order to do this, our Lord guides and enables the people in the church to recognize the men of his choice for the offices. We see an example of this in Acts 6. But how does he guide them?

Romans 12:1–2 answers this way: "I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."

These verses appeal to believers to respond in obedience to the salvation that God has given. Considering all that God has done in Christ and by the Spirit (Rom. 1–11), it is only reasonable that we should serve him by offering our bodies as a living sacrifice. We should devote ourselves to God in all that we are and do. God issues this summons to each believer.

But how peculiar! "Bodies" is plural and "sacrifice" is singular! It seems sort of like saying, "We is a Presbyterian." Moreover, it's not only "sacrifice" that is singular, but also "living," "holy," "acceptable," "reasonable," and "worship." In this way, God's Word makes a very important point: each of us is to offer himself to God, but all of us are to do so together to make up one living and holy corporate sacrifice (cf. Eph. 4:15–16).

The fruit of this gospel obedience will be that "by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect." In other words, as God's people devote themselves to seeking their Lord—listening to Christ speaking by his Word and Spirit, and following in faith—he supernaturally changes them from the inside out by renewing the way they think. Then they will together be able to discern and accept what God's will is. Then they together will be able to understand and embrace what their Lord wants. In this way, the Head of the church guides his people to discern those whom he has chosen for church office.

● Out of the Mouth . . .

After learning about Jesus' words on the cross, my son Abraham, 6, prayed that night, "Father, forgive me. I did not know what I was doing today."

—Aimee Friz
Huntington, Ind.

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

HOW GOD BUILDS HIS CHURCH IN UKRAINE

// HEERO E. C. HACQUEBORD



A fellowship meal at Holy Trinity Reformed Church of L'viv

If it wasn't for my huge financial debt, I would probably not have become a believer." So said "Mykola," sitting across the table from me at a noisy pizza place near his house. I had to strain my ears to hear what he was saying in Ukrainian, but that sentence I heard very clearly. He had paid for the pizza we were enjoying, in spite of being tens of thousands of dollars in debt to various banks and individuals. "Having daily faith is a struggle," he acknowledged. "Sometimes I wonder if it's all worth it.... But I know that God is taking care of me in spite of all the problems. He has been providing for my family and me in incredible ways. Every day when I open the fridge, there's food in it!"

Mykola became a member of our L'viv church last year. A few years ago he started his own business selling industrial and motor oil. More recently he also ventured into industrial alternative-fuel furnaces. One of his employees was Oleh, a founding member of our congregation. While Mykola's business was struggling and his dream of personal riches was evaporating, God used the man's financial trouble to drive him toward the bigger questions in life. Providentially, Oleh was there to provide biblical answers.

While the gnawing pressure of huge personal debt became a vehicle for faith and repentance in Mykola's life, God was using revolution and war to purify and revive the country of Ukraine. Last year was unlike any other in the short history of independent Ukraine. It began with a nationwide revolution that finally led to the president's fleeing to neighboring Russia, but not before his security forces brutally ended the lives of more than a hundred demonstrators. While the Ukrainian parliament was reeling from events and organizing a new, temporary government, Russia stealthily invaded and annexed the Crimean Peninsula. Not satisfied with that bold move, it also fomented, financed, and fronted a separatist war in Ukraine's eastern, industrial coal basin. That war has already

cost the lives of thousands of people. The Ukrainian separatists are mostly a mixture of former security forces linked to the previous president and criminal gangs—although these two groups are often indistinguishable. They have been joined by Russian soldiers and by Ukrainian and Russian citizens who believe in the idea of a greater, Orthodox Russia. Many separatist soldiers believe that they are fighting for the future of Russia and the Russian Orthodox Church. Because of this view, there are many accounts from both Crimea and eastern Ukraine of the seizure of non-Orthodox church buildings, universities, and seminaries. There are even cases of Protestants being killed for their faith! Apart from geopolitics, a religious battle is being waged in the parts of Ukraine currently under Russian control. It is a stark reminder of events during the Soviet Union, when Russia's current president was a mid-level agent of the KGB.

Yet none of these events is outside the control of our almighty God. It is already evident how he is working through them to build his church. While there are many stories of an increased openness to faith in God and reliance upon him, one event in particular stands out in my mind: On a bleak day in February 2014, when government snipers in Kiev were killing one protester after another, the announcer of a popular Internet TV news station was interviewing a local pastor. When asked what could be done to help the desperate situation, the pastor said, "Pray." The announcer skeptically scoffed at that idea, saying something more concrete was needed. The killings continued. By the end of the day, that same announcer was on his feet desperately pleading with God for help!

While people haven't been streaming into our church recently, the Lord has added two new families from Crimea. Yuriy and Anya both grew up on that sunny peninsula. There they became believers and attended a Christian university, where they met one another and eventually got married. When Russia annexed Crimea last March (and their million-dollar Protestant university facilities were simply turned over

to different owners), Yuriy and Anya decided not to move to mainland Ukraine, but to remain in their home, close to their parents—despite the growing injustices, people disappearing in broad daylight, and the foreboding Russian military presence. One day, though, when Anya was playing with their two-year-old son in a local park, an armed personnel carrier loaded with Russian troops came driving by. One of the soldiers' guns was carelessly aimed in the direction of her son. That decided the matter for them. They left Crimea and moved to L'viv—at the opposite end of the country. They are pursuing membership in our church now, and we are happy to welcome this mature Christian family into our community!

Sasha and Oksana are also Crimean natives, who lived very close to the border with Russia. Oksana heard about the annexation of her homeland when she was away for studies in mainland Ukraine. She called her husband that same evening, and the next day he and their two sons left Crimea with everything they could carry. In L'viv they were warmly welcomed as refugees. Although they are from a Pentecostal background, Sasha and Oksana have become more convinced of the Reformed understanding of Scripture. They started attending our church last summer and have recently also expressed a desire to become members, along with their twelve-year-old son!

We've witnessed the Lord's loving provision for both of these families as they've begun a new life in a very different part of Ukraine. We thank our Father for strengthening our young church through the addition of these mature believers. He works in unforeseen ways, but always for the benefit of his church and the glory of his name!

Some of the people to whom Mykola owes money could resort to extreme measures in order to get their cash back. I asked him how he deals with those people. His answer: "I try not to see them!" I wish I could make Mykola's problems go away. I wish I could help him get tens of thousands of dollars to pay off his debt. I really want his business to develop and for him to enjoy great success.

In the same way, I hope that the war in eastern Ukraine will end soon. I long for the day when Ukrainian and Russian soldiers will no longer return to their families in caskets, when the cruel injustice and destruction of war will no longer ravage towns, farms, and families in Ukraine, and when children of God will not be persecuted by those who wield the symbol of the cross, but do not know Christ's saving power.

Yet I know that God works through the darkest days to make us see his light most clearly. He uses the foxhole to drive the atheist out of our heart. So I pray that he will bring faith and hope in Christ Jesus—not only to Mykola's life, but also to the hearts of his wife, his nine-year-old daughter, and his



Taking communion at the L'viv church

extended family members—through any means necessary. And I pray that our Savior will give true repentance to many more Ukrainians (and Russians), changing them, their families, and their towns into beacons of light across this country and all of Europe! We are very thankful for the opportunity to serve in Ukraine during this uncertain time. We hope that God will use all of us who follow him here so that the trials of this life will truly not be in vain!

What's New

// Appointments

The missionary associate appointment of **Miss J. R. B.** (OPC, Franklin Square, N.Y.) to Asia has been extended for one year.

Mr. and Mrs. M. W. C. (Woodruff Road Presbyterian Church, PCA, Greenville, S.C.) have been reappointed to serve for two years as missionary associates in Asia. They arrived on the field in mid-February.

Miss Hannah M. Keller (Christ Covenant Church, OPC, Dallas, Texas) has been appointed to serve as a missionary associate in Nakaale, Karamoja, Uganda, for six months. She arrived on the mission field in mid-January.

// Comings/Goings

Missionary associate **Miss Leah J. Hopp** (Parkwood Presbyterian Church, Presbyterian Church in Canada, Ottawa, Canada) returned to her community health work in Nakaale, Karamoja, Uganda, in mid-February, following a seven-month furlough.

THE GENESIS OF GRACE GIVING

// DAVID M. CORNETTE

When it comes to stewardship, Christians typically say that old covenant believers were required to give a tithe, while new covenant believers give voluntarily on the basis of grace. The primary text for “grace giving” is 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, where the word *grace* appears ten times in relation to giving. The gist of it is this: though freed from the mandated Old Testament tithe (8:8), because of God’s grace at work in us, we give gladly, generously, and gratefully for the advance of the gospel and to the glory of God.

Basically, the distinction has been that old covenant giving was by law (though there were also freewill offerings, 1 Chronicles 29), but that new covenant giving is by grace. But long before the Moses-mandated tithe, Abraham, the very first “church member,” practiced grace giving. In Genesis 14:17–20, we find the first mention in Scripture of a tithe, given by Abraham to a priest of God.

In the narrative, five kings revolt against the tyranny of four eastern kings, but the eastern kings crush the revolt, routing the rebels and conquering their lands. In the process, they kidnap Lot, so uncle Abram sets out with 318 trained men from his own household, rescues Lot, plunders the tyrant kings, and liberates the region. The climax, however, is not the liberation, but the revelation of God as the victor, through the appearance of a mysterious king-priest with no genealogical record. Melchizedek, whose name means “king of righteousness,” who was king of Salem (meaning “peace”) and “priest of God Most High,” blesses Abram. In response to Melchizedek’s food-and-word blessing, Abram refuses to keep the spoils of war, choosing to rely on God. He rejects the king of Sodom, who symbolizes the city of man (this world), committing instead to the king of Salem, who symbolizes the eternal the city of God (Heb. 11:10).

Before anything else, however, “Abram gave him a tenth of everything” (Gen. 14:20). Whether or not it was a tenth of

the plunder *and* what he already possessed (cf. Heb. 7:2, 4), the point is that he voluntarily gave a portion *to the Lord* through Melchizedek, God’s priest (v. 18). This was an act of worship, an expression of gratitude for God’s grace—for divine provision, protection, and promise.

Melchizedek brought out bread and wine—that is, held a feast. This victory meal was provision from and communion with God, who prepares a table before us in the presence of our enemies (Ps. 23:5). It was a covenant meal, alluding to “the same blessings of the covenant of grace that bread and wine do in the sacrament of the Lord’s supper” (Jonathan Edwards, “A History of the Work of Redemption,” in *Works*, 1:544). Melchizedek also gave a word of blessing, revealing that deliverance from enemies, along with the seal and pledge of bread and wine, fulfilled the covenant promise. Abram confirmed this, pledging full allegiance to the covenant God, “the LORD” (Yahweh) (v. 22).

Abram’s tithe speaks to the church. The genesis, or origin, of grace giving is found in the *old* covenant, before the Mosaic administration, and remains today in the new covenant. All of redemptive history, then, gives us a grace-grounded reason for tithing. The grace of God in Christ is the only motive needed for faithful stewardship. However, as one who lived in the time of shadows, Abraham’s only outlet was Melchizedek, the mysterious king-priest of God. But we come to Jesus, the guarantor of a better covenant (Heb. 7:22), and, unlike Abraham, we have a clear outlet: Christ’s church. By giving faithfully to Worldwide Outreach, as a response to grace, we contribute to God’s mission, the spread of the gospel until God’s kingdom covers the earth.

The author is the pastor of Grace Church in Pennsville, N.J.

Worldwide Outreach in 2014

Contributions to Worldwide Outreach totaled \$3,668,044 in 2014, down \$190,389 from 2013 and \$121,956 short of our goal of \$3,790,000. While thankful for this support of their ministries, the three program committees had to cut back on expenditures and draw on reserves.

The 2014 Thank Offering was a success. Contributions by year’s end (included in 2014 Worldwide Outreach giving) totalled \$777,999. An additional \$260,029 was received in January (to be credited to Worldwide Outreach in 2015), and further Thank Offering receipts are still expected. This pushes the total well above our \$950,000 goal.

Let’s make 2015 a year to rebound!

MARCH

1. **Bob and Martha Wright**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for those who are constructing the new clinic building. / **Mike and Katy Myers**, Hartwell, Ga. Pray that the Lord would cause the people of Heritage Presbyterian Church to continue to grow in their love for one another. / **Mark Lowrey**, director of publications at Great Commission Publications.
2. **Joseph and Carla Fowler**, Gastonia, N.C. Pray that visitors to Reformation OPC will desire to join in communicant fellowship. / **Al and Laurie Tricarico**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for comfort for families who are grieving the loss of loved ones. / Pray for the **Psalter-Hymnal Committee** as it meets with the URCNA representatives March 3-5 in Joliet, Ill.
3. Missionary associates **Christopher and Chloe Verdick**, Nakaale, Uganda. Give thanks for their contributions to the work of the Uganda Mission. / **Joshua and Jessica Lyon**, Carson, Calif. Pray that God's elect will be brought in at Grace OPC. / **Caleb T. Nelson**, yearlong intern at First Church of Merrimack in Merrimack, N.H.
4. Pray for **David Crum**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of Southern California, as he follows up on contacts and visits Bible study groups. / Missionary associates **Leah Hopp** and **Hannah Keller**, Nakaale, Uganda. / **Jeff (and Diane) Downs**, yearlong intern at Covenant OPC in Orland Park, Ill.
5. **James and Jenny Knox**, M.D. and R.N., Nakaale, Uganda. Pray that workers at the mission station will come to faith in Christ. / **Drew and Sonya Adcock**, Williamsport, Pa. Pray that God would bless Omega OPC's various outreach efforts this spring. / **Sarah Pederson**, *New Horizons* proofreader.
6. **Kim and Barbara Kuhfuss**, Eau Claire, Wis. Pray that visitors will come to Providence Reformed Church. / Pray for missionary associates **Erika Bulthuis**, **Taryn Dieckmann**, and others teaching at the Mission's preschool in Nakaale, Uganda. / **Jeffrey (and Maryfrances) Carter**, yearlong intern at Calvary OPC in Glenside, Pa.
7. **Eric and Dianna Tuininga**, Mbale, Uganda. Pray that Eric's students will gain a fuller understanding of the Scriptures. / **Chris and Megan Hartshorn**, Anaheim Hills, Calif. Pray that many will attend Anaheim Hills Presbyterian Church's Sunday evening Bible study. / **James Jordan**, yearlong intern at Church of the Covenant in Hackettstown, N.J.
8. **Tony and Mica Garbarino**, Morgan Hill, Calif. Pray that God would bless Providence Presbyterian Church with additional families. / **David and Sunshine Okken**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for continued progress in their study of the Karimojong language. / **David Haney**, director of finance and planned giving for the Committee on Coordination.
9. **Brian and Dorothy Wingard**, South Africa. Pray that God would bless their teaching ministry at Mukhanyo Theological College. / **Brad and Cinnamon Peppo**, Springfield, Ohio. Pray that visitors will come to Living Water OPC and for opportunities to reach the lost. / **Jim Scott**, *New Horizons* managing editor.
10. **Andrew and Billie Moody**, San Antonio, Tex. Pray that the Lord would provide San Antonio Reformed Church with a more central meeting facility. / **Woody and Laurie Lauer**, Numazu, Japan. Pray that unbelieving spouses of church members will come to faith in Christ. / **Pat Clawson**, CCE secretary.
11. **Cal and Edie Cummings**, Sendai, Japan. Pray that many in Japan will find peace with God through faith in Christ. / **Mika and Christina Edmondson**, Grand Rapids, Mich. Pray for spiritual maturity and faithful gospel proclamation at New City Fellowship. / **Roberto (and Irma) Quiñones**, yearlong intern at Primera Iglesia Presbiteriana in San Juan, P.R.
12. **Jim and Eve Cassidy**, Austin, Tex. Praise God for providing a new meeting place for South Austin Presbyterian Church. / Pray for Foreign Missions general secretary **Mark Bube** as he promotes OP foreign missions. / **Robert (and Adelinda) Canode**, yearlong intern at Providence Presbyterian Church in Pflugerville, Tex.
13. **Kaz and Katie Yaegashi**, Yamagata, Japan. Pray that the Lord would provide necessary funding for rebuilding projects at Yamagata Chapel. / **Ben and Sarah Miller**, Huntington, N.Y. Pray that Trinity Church will grow in grace and holiness as they grow in number. / Pray for **Danny Olinger**, Christian Education general secretary, as he prepares for the Committee on Christian Education meeting on March 16-18.
14. Home Missions staff administrator **Sean Gregg**. / **Mark and Jeni Richline**, Montevideo, Uruguay. Pray for opportunities to build good relationships with people in their community. / Pray for stated clerk **Ross Graham** as registrations arrive and preparations are made for the 2015 General Assembly, which will begin June 3.
15. **Robert and Christy Arendale**, Houston, Tex. Pray that the Word will not return void and that recent visitors at Cornerstone OPC will become more involved. / **Ray and Michele Call**, Montevideo, Uruguay. Pray for Michele as she homeschools their children. / Pray for



Mika and Christina Edmondson

the CCE's Subcommittee on Ministerial Training's approval of interns and mentoring churches for 2015.

- 16.** **Jim and Bonnie Hoekstra**, Andover, Minn. Pray for the unity and growth of Immanuel OPC. / Missionary associates **Allison Zylstra**, Uruguay; **Mary York**, Czech Republic; and **Jennifer Nelson**, Quebec. / **Matthew (and Melinda) Cole**, yearlong intern at Immanuel Presbyterian Church in Bellmawr, N.J.
- 17.** Foreign Missions administrative assistant **Linda Posthuma** and secretary **Abigail Yates**. / **Jeremiah and Elizabeth Montgomery**, State College, Pa. Pray for opportunities for those at Resurrection OPC to have conversations with people seeking God. / **Janet Birkmann**, Diaconal Ministries administrative assistant.
- 18.** Home Missions general secretary **John Shaw**. / Affiliated missionaries **Jerry and Marilyn Farnik**, Prague, Czech Republic. Pray that seekers will respond in faith to the message of salvation. / Pray for **Greg Reynolds** as he edits *Ordained Servant*, the online magazine for OPC church officers.
- 19.** Pray for missionary associate **Amanda McCrina**, Sendai, Japan, who concluded her term of service and returned to the U.S. last week. / **Christopher and Ann Malamisuro**, Cincinnati, Ohio. Pray that Good Shepherd OPC's spring picnic outreach will bear much fruit. / Part-time staff accountant **Doug Watson**.
- 20.** **Everett and Kimberly Henes**, Hillsdale, Mich. Praise God for raising up officers and bringing Hillsdale OPC to the point of particularization. / Retired missionaries **Betty Andrews, Greet Rietkerk, Young and Mary Lou Son**, and **Fumi Uomoto**. / *New Horizons* cover designer **Chris Tobias**.
- 21.** **Heero and Anya Hacquebord**, L'viv, Ukraine. Pray for successful evangelism and outreach. / **Phil Strong**, Lander, Wyo. Pray that the people of Grace Reformed Fellowship will have a growing delight in the Lord and a love for others. / *Ordained Servant* proofreader **Diane Olinger**.
- 22.** **Jonathan and Lauryn Shishko**, Queens, N.Y. Pray that the Lord would add several new families to Reformation Presbyterian Church. / Pray for Foreign Missions associate general secretary **Douglas Clawson**, who is in Colombia to assist with the training of church leaders. / **Jan Gregson**, assistant to the director of finance.
- 23.** **Eric and Donna Hausler**, Haiti. Pray for Eric, teaching at a leadership training seminar in Port-au-Prince this week. / **Brandon and Laurie Wilkins**, Crystal Lake, Ill.



Jerry and Marilyn Farnik

Pray that God would bless Christ Covenant Presbyterian Church's witness and add new families. / Army chaplain **Stephen (and Lindsey) Roberts**.

- 24.** **Ron and Carol Beabout**, Gaithersburg, Md. Pray for the continued growth and spiritual development of Trinity Reformed Church. / **Ben and Heather Hopp**, Haiti. Pray that children from the area around the church will come to Sunday school and worship services. / **Kathy Bube**, Loan Fund administrator.
- 25.** Associate missionaries **Octavius and Marie Delfils**, Haiti. Pray for spiritual fruit from the Bible classes that Octavius teaches. / **John and Wenny Ro**, Chicago, Ill. (downtown). Pray for renewed excitement and enthusiasm for worship and evangelism at Gospel Life Presbyterian Church. / Diaconal Ministries administrator **David Nakhla**. Pray for wisdom for the Committee on Diaconal Ministries as it meets March 27-28 in Matthews, N.C.
- 26.** **Christopher and Della Chelpka**, Tucson, Ariz. Praise God for his continued blessing on Covenant OPC. / **Ben and Melanie Westerveld**, Quebec, Canada. Pray that God's Word would take root in those who attend regular outreach activities. / **Andrew (and Samantha) Fortenberry**, yearlong intern at Trinity OPC in Hatboro, Pa.
- 27.** **Mr. and Mrs. F.**, Asia. Pray that more men will become interested in studying for ministry in the church. / **Greg and Stella Hoadley**, Fargo, N.Dak. Pray for continued unity among the members of Grace OPC and for fruit from outreach opportunities. / Army chaplain **Earl (and Susan) Vanderhoff**.
- 28.** **Jay and Andrea Bennett**, Neon, Ky. Pray that the Lord would bless Neon Reformed Presbyterian Church's outreach and evangelism efforts. / Missionary associates **Mr. and Mrs. C.**, Asia. Ask God to use them to reach young adults for the Lord. / **Charlene Tipton**, database administrator.
- 29.** **Mr. and Mrs. M.**, Asia (on furlough). Pray that their family ties and friendships will be strengthened during their furlough. / **Jim and Tricia Stevenson**, Tulsa, Okla. Pray that God would bless the men in Providence OPC's officer training class. / **Matthew (and Trina) Patton**, yearlong intern at Bethel Presbyterian Church in Wheaton, Ill.
- 30.** Pray for **Steve Doe**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic, as he counsels organizing pastors and overseeing sessions. / Missionary associates **C. B. and T. D.**, Asia. Pray for God's blessing on their recent engagement. / Navy chaplain **Bryan (and Shelly) Weaver**.
- 31.** Tentmaker missionary **T. L. L.**, Asia. Pray that the Holy Spirit would work in the hearts of those attending Bible studies. / **Tom and Martha Albaugh**, Pittsburgh, Pa. Pray that people who attend Redeemer OP Mission's outreach events will respond favorably to the preaching of the gospel.

NEWS, VIEWS, & REVIEWS

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH RECEIVED INTO THE OPC

Allen Tomlinson

On December 12, 2014, the Presbytery of New York and New England received into its membership the First Congregational Church of Merrimack, New Hampshire. The name of the congregation is being changed to “First Church of Merrimack,” with a subtitle on its stationary and sign, “An Orthodox Presbyterian Church.” The church was founded in 1771 as a Reformed congregational church and called its first pastor, who was to remain until his death in 1821—a fifty year ministry! During the twentieth century, the congregation was led into liberalism. But when the Rev. Bruce Gordon, a PCA minister, was called as pastor in 1967, the Lord graciously turned the church back to the Scriptures. During his ministry, many were converted to the genuine gospel.

In 1988 the Rev. Allen Tomlinson was called as pastor. He was a minister in the Conservative Congregational Christian Conference, but had come to a position in which he could subscribe to the Westminster Confession of Faith. In 1997 he was received into the Presbytery of New York and New England with approval to minister “out of bounds” by remaining as pastor at the Merrimack church.

Over the course of time, as a result of preaching and teaching, first the elders and then the vast majority of the members became convinced of the need for the congregation to unite with a group of like-minded congregations. In May 2014, the congregation voted by an overwhelming majority to apply for membership in the OPC. In October 2014, the presbytery accepted their application and appointed a commission to complete all that was necessary to bring the church into membership.

December 12 was truly a day of great rejoicing for the congregation, as six ministers, as well as one ruling elder and one licentiate of the presbytery, led in a service



At the service to receive First Church: front row: First Church ruling elders Rick Elliott, Chris Jennings, Gary Francoeur, Ken Streeter; middle row: ministers James La Belle, Allen Tomlinson; back row: ministers Gerry Malkus, David Booth, Dave Holmlund, Steve Migotsky, Mark Marquis, and elder Peter Bacon; missing: licentiate Nathan Tomlinson

of reception. Rev. Mark Marquis preached from Psalm 133, “The Fellowship of the Church.”

First Church of Merrimack has had two buildings during the course of its history. The first one was replaced in 1837 by the present building. There are currently 189 members, including 39 covenant children. Pastor Tomlinson has continued as pastor. In 2013 the congregation celebrated 25 years of ministry with Allen and Ann Tomlinson. Merrimack is a community of around 26,000 people.

UPDATE

CHURCHES

- On October 15, the Presbytery of New Jersey approved a plan to dissolve Emmanuel OPC in Whippany, N.J.; the congregation last met for worship on October 26.

MINISTERS

- The Presbytery of the Central U.S. has accepted the resignation of Timothy L. Black as pastor of Caney OPC in Caney,

Kans. (which no longer has the resources to sustain him as pastor), effective January 1.

- The Presbytery of New Jersey has dissolved the pastoral relationship between Howard Currie and Emmanuel OPC in Whippany, N.J., effective October 26 (when the congregation last met for worship).

- Christopher D. Hartshorn was installed as an evangelist by the Presbytery of Southern California and Nevada on June 1 to serve as organizing pastor of Anaheim Hills Presbyterian Church in Anaheim Hills, Calif.

- On July 17, Steven P. Marusich was transferred by the Presbytery of New York and New England to the Central Indiana Presbytery of the PCA; he was installed as pastor of Trinity Presbyterian Church (PCA) in Brownsburg, Ind., on September 12.

- M. Justin Rosser was ordained as a minister and installed as (associate) pastor of Matthews OPC in Matthews, N.C., at a special meeting of the Presbytery of the Southeast on January 16.

LETTERS

DOWN SYNDROME

Editor:

I want to thank you for Pat Clawson's informative article, "Everyone Needs a Mark." My husband, George, and I can relate to all that she wrote because in August 1970 we were blessed with our Jennifer—a Down Syndrome child.

Early on, Mary Cummings introduced me to a friend of hers who had a child with Down Syndrome. From her I learned that in acceptance there is peace—only the peace that comes from Jesus.

Our Jenni is now forty-four, and we've come a long way from our fearful beginnings. A group of us mothers organized an infant motivational program. Then the public schools accepted our children. We parents said, "Our children can learn. It will only take them longer." Many of them are reading at a third grade level.

The answer to seeing her siblings go off to college and get married came ten years ago, when Jenni was invited to move into a lovely group home, only eight miles from our home. She goes to a workshop daily and enjoys a full life with her peers.

Jenni has learned many answers to catechism questions. And when she calls home, she always asks to speak to her "minister, pastor, and father"—as in "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." I continually correct her, "Jenni, he's your dad."

"I know he's my dad," she replies, "but he's my minister, pastor, and father." Some things we just cannot change.

Thank you again for this encouraging article. I am also thankful that *New Horizons* has addressed the topics of Alzheimer's and physical abuse.

Ruth Morton
Warminster, Pa.

Correction

In the February issue, p. 20, former OP minister Robert Letham should have been identified as a minister in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in England and Wales.

REVIEWS

Playing before the Lord: The Life and Work of Joseph Haydn, by Calvin R. Stapert. Eerdmans, 2014. Paperback, 304 pages, list price \$24.00. Reviewed by OP minister Alan D. Strange.

The chief music critic of the *New York Times* recently ranked the top three composers as Bach, Beethoven, and Mozart, in that order. Franz Joseph Haydn did not make the list of the top ten, though he was probably the most renowned composer of his day and was intimately connected to these top three. Beethoven was Haydn's student, Bach's son C.P.E. Bach was an important influence on Haydn, and Haydn was an older contemporary of, and influence on, Mozart. Haydn wrote much music, perhaps rivaled in quantity only by Bach, pioneered the classical style in which Mozart excelled, and was the father of the symphony that Beethoven revolutionized in his third symphony (the *Eroica*), ushering in the Romantic era.

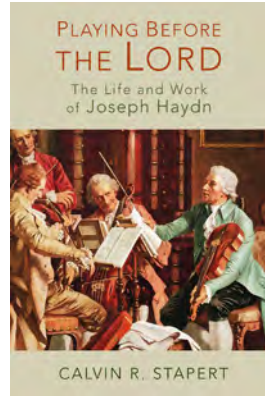
Haydn came from a lower-class, non-musical background and enjoyed a truly a rags-to-riches musical career. He contributed to virtually every musical form and was especially renowned for his development of the symphony (writing 104), the string quartet, and the piano sonata and trio. While he lacked the sheer inventiveness of Bach, the sparkle of Mozart, and the profundity of Beethoven, Haydn has left us with an impressive body of sacred and secular music. I especially recommend his oratorios *Creation* and *Seven Last Words of Christ*.

In his fascinating volume on Haydn, Calvin Stapert, professor emeritus of music at Calvin College, offers us a look at the life and work of a composer that he regards as underrated. In his own time, and afterwards, Haydn was more renowned than Bach. He was far more stable and respected than Mozart (and lived much longer), and had a peace and joy in life that the tormented Beethoven never found. There is a brilliant subtlety to his

music that many miss; I agree with Stapert that Haydn ought to be more highly regarded than he is. But I would not put him in the highest rank of composers.

Stapert's title, *Playing before the Lord*, indicates his view that Haydn was a Christian composer who did what he did by God's strength and for God's glory. He was conventionally Catholic and appears to have been sincere in the faith of his day. I am not convinced, however, that he had an evangelical faith, which Bach arguably did as a faithful Lutheran. Haydn seemed to have a personal peace that has eluded many great artists, and his sacred music seems to be the fruit

of some sort of Christian conviction. That having been said, Stapert attempts to cast



JAZZ PIANIST

[Continued from page 5]

arranging pieces, as well as practicing.

But she has "a lot of joy and support" from her family.

Sabbath observance can also be a problem in an entertainment career; York has simply had to turn down most Sunday gigs. It's easy to do that now, but it was hard during the seminary years, when finances were tight.

"We just had to trust the Lord that we'd have enough to meet our monthly expenses," she said.

The joys of being a Christian musician, however, are manifold.

Playing a hymn or spiritual provides an opportunity to have faith-related conversations with audience members as she explains the song's background.

"I just pray before I perform that the music would be to the glory of God—that regardless of how I'm feeling, the Lord would be honored in my work." □

The author is a member of Grace OPC in Columbus, Ohio. Pamela York's albums, concert schedule, and other information are available at pamelayork.com.

Haydn as more of a committed Christian than I believe the evidence adduced in this book warrants.

Although Stapert overrates Haydn both as a composer and as a Christian, this is nonetheless a superb book. I would highly recommend it to anyone interested in learning more about Haydn's life and music. In particular, Stapert gives us a musical analysis, especially detailed in some cases (e.g., his analysis of certain symphonies), that makes this book an apt companion for listening to Haydn. We are given a well-written account of his life, along with this detailed musical analysis, making this book a delight to anyone wishing to learn about Haydn, one of our great composers.

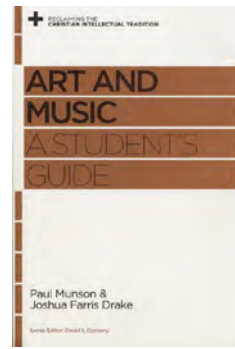
***Art and Music: A Student's Guide*, by Paul Munson and Joshua Farris Drake. Reclaiming the Christian Intellectual Tradition. Crossway Books, 2014. Paperback, 112 pages, list price \$11.99. Reviewed by pastor and professor Alan D. Strange.**

In the must-get series Reclaiming the Christian Intellectual Tradition (edited by David Dockery) is *Art and Music*, by Paul Munson and Joshua Farris Drake. The authors, both professors of music at

Grove City College, “begin with *beauty* because it is what makes art, art” (p. 15). Some philosophers may quibble over the meaning of *beauty*, but “ordinary people have always known that the reason we draw and sing is to please viewers with beautiful drawings and hearers with beautiful songs” (p. 16). The classical view of beauty is that it is objective, manifesting perfect form, proportion, and symmetry. “In such a worldview beauty becomes the very purpose of life, and aesthetics provides the basis for ethics” (p. 18). The masterpieces of classical antiquity were made in the service of idols and were themselves idols. This aestheticism dominates “when form is made absolute, when—like the media-bewitched teen starving herself before the mirror—we devote our lives to the pursuit of some created formal standard” and see that “the result is not beautiful at all, but wicked and ugly” (p. 18).

There are various critiques of this classicism apart from the biblical one. One of them is romanticism, which concerns itself not only with order and symmetry, but the sublime, “that which fills us with awe” (p. 19). A reaction of more recent decades has been postmodernism, in which any objective standard of beauty has been displaced by an utterly subjective conception of it. Thus, people have embraced the late nineteenth-century adage, “Beauty is in the eye of the beholder”—not as a worldview, “but as a truism” (p. 20).

The answer to the aestheticism of classicism and the skepticism of postmodernism is the Christian view of beauty. Beauty is “the forms through which we recognize the nature and ways of God” (p. 25). Over against postmodernism, Christianity would assert that beauty is objective (God is objectively lovely, even if all refuse to acknowledge it). Over against classicism, it would assert that beauty is “*transcendentally* objective” (p. 26). In chapter 2 (on enjoying art and music), four reasons are given, including that “artists and musicians expound general revelation in much the same way that preachers expound general revelation” and that “art and music



help us avoid being desensitized” (pp. 37–45). Certainly Mozart and Schubert (to take just two examples) were magnificent expounders of general revelation. And one thinks of Lenin's determination not to listen to Brahms as it weakened his resolve to pursue the Communist revolution.

In chapter 3, dealing with the question of how we judge art and music, our authors chiefly focus on C. S. Lewis's *An Experiment in Criticism* (1961). His concern, of course, is literature, but the authors rightly note that what he says applies also to the rest of the humanities. The mark of true art (and thus of real beauty) is whether a work is something to be received (as opposed to “something merely to be used”). Chapters 4 and 5 deftly apply everything established in the first three chapters. It should be noted that in the section on art, questions involving the second commandment are acknowledged, but not treated (see the footnote on p. 56). In an era in which even Reformed Christians have embraced an aesthetic relativism akin to postmodernism (probably our chief problem), this volume reminds us that there are transcendental values without which art is truly impossible—standards that are always presupposed, though often denied, by all engaging in the pursuit of beauty.

***This Our Joyful Song*, featuring the Nittany Valley Children's Choir, directed by Lou Ann Shafer. CD, \$15.00, available at nittanyvalleychildrenschoir.org. Reviewed by OP minister Alan D. Strange.**

Lou Ann Shafer, music editor for the OPC/URC Psalter-Hymnal project, has released a delightful disc of sacred and secular songs performed by the Nittany Valley Children's Choir. Mrs. Shafer founded the community choir, based in State College, Pennsylvania, in 1997. The choir currently serves over 120 children, ages 4–18, in three levels, two of which appear on this album: the Blue Choir and the Concordia Singers. The former is a non-auditioned choir for children 7–18, while the latter consists of advanced

ARTIST

[Continued from page 8]

presbytery and general assembly meetings, he sketches his fellow commissioners.

He doesn't believe it's necessary to embed a cross in every painting, as one of his college professors did, or to paint “Christian” themes.

“Doing the best you can do at reinterpreting what you see is sufficient,” he said. “Your faith will express itself naturally, whatever your calling.” □

The author is a member of Grace OPC in Columbus, Ohio. To see Mahon's paintings, go to mmahon.com. He is available to deliver church seminars on Christianity and art. Photo © Mike Mahon.

singers and has won numerous awards, including the Silver Medal at the 2012 World Choir Games in Cincinnati.

Mrs. Shafer holds the M.M. degree from Oberlin College Conservatory in Ohio and, in addition to giving private lessons in voice and piano, has conducted widely and composed and published church choral music. Her husband, Timothy Shafer, the musicologist for the Psalter-Hymnal, and professor of piano at Penn State University (who has also won multiple awards), is the pianist on this lovely recording. There are other instrumentalists on selected numbers (strings, winds, and percussion), all of whom play well, but the piano accompaniment is especially sensitive and tasteful. A John Rutter piece (track 15) is performed with the Nittany Valley Symphony, and there are also various vocal soloists, including the Shafer's daughter Sarah, a wonderful soprano trained at the Curtis Institute of Music (Philadelphia), who performs widely, including with major opera companies.

It's hard to select favorites, as all the music is performed with attention to nuance and beauty of expression. The sacred music is reverent and joyful, and the secular music is sometimes moving and at other times whimsical (including Finnish, French, Hungarian, English, and Irish Folk Songs). There is something for all! I particularly enjoyed track 5 ("The Snow"), a haunting Edward Elgar tune; track 13, a beautiful hymn by Mendelssohn (with Sarah Shafer!); and track 21, featuring a lyric tenor with a lilting legato. There are also lovely texts by Christina Rossetti, Emily Brontë, John Keats, Charles Dickens, and others. The voices of these children, fresh yet disciplined, joyfully singing well-written music of different styles, offer many happy hours of listening.

***Schaeffer on the Christian Life: Countercultural Spirituality*, by William Edgar. Crossway, 2013. Paperback, 206 pages, list price \$17.99. Reviewed by OP minister Larry E. Wilson.**

It is all too easy to judge figures from the past as if they should have known what we now know (with 20/20 hindsight).

This is no less true of Francis Schaeffer, who figures—in a checkered way—in our own church's history. His was not the last word on any subject. But William Edgar, in *Schaeffer on the Christian Life*, shows that God used Schaeffer in his time and that he did say many things that are still helpful today.

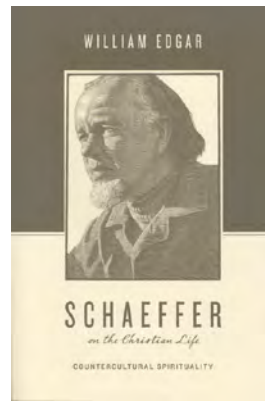
Edgar was converted by Schaeffer and experienced his ministry at L'Abri (as he relates in this book), and also studied (and teaches) at Westminster Theological Seminary. This enables Edgar to sort out Schaeffer's complex relationships with Machen, Van Til, McIntyre, and others. He is also able to clarify (and sometimes correct) Schaeffer's unique lingo, so that its essentially Reformed substance is more apparent.

In his endorsement, Os Guinness rightly calls this "an objective but affectionate portrait." Edgar sought to portray Schaeffer not only with gratitude and love, but also "warts and all." This book is well written and down-to-earth enough for the average person to enjoy and profit from.

Schaeffer on the Christian Life consists of three main parts. Part 1, "The Man and His Times," recounts the genesis and growth of L'Abri. It surveys Schaeffer's overlapping history with our own, which—to put it mildly—is a bit knotty. That knotty history turned out, however, to play a significant role. It led to a spiritual crisis. Schaeffer became convicted that he was judgmental and unloving, and that he lacked "reality" in his walk with the Lord and his people.

Schaeffer's repentance gave rise to the emphases explained in Part 2, "True Spirituality." Edgar discusses sermons and lectures that Schaeffer gave (some of which were later published as the *True Spirituality*), calling attention to the *present* supernatural working of Christ in a believer's life. Schaeffer believed that this was at the heart of everything that he did at L'Abri and beyond.

In Part 3, "Trusting God for All of Life," Edgar shows how Schaeffer worked out his "countercultural spirituality" with



respect to prayer, guidance, affliction, church, and society. Particularly in the last two areas, Schaeffer might disappoint us. But Edgar does not swerve from recounting Schaeffer's teaching and activities. He faces and evaluates such disappointments with integrity and charity.

This volume joins the ranks of many books on

Francis Schaeffer. But as far as I know, this is the only one that hones in on Schaeffer's message of "countercultural spirituality." And that is a message that we need now as much as ever. Many, perceiving a sterile, functional deism in their Reformed churches, become attracted to "charismatic" approaches to the Christian life. Edgar makes clear that Schaeffer's approach to the Christian life was nothing like that. Perceptive readers will instead recognize Schaeffer's "true spirituality" as sincere Reformed piety, which is the antidote both to the practical unbelief and to the "super-spirituality" into which God's people too readily lapse.

***Get Real: Sharing Your Everyday Faith Every Day*, by John S. Leonard. New Growth Press, 2013. Paperback, 192 pages, list price \$17.99. Reviewed by OP regional home missionary Larry Oldaker.**

Leonard contrasts the aggressive, canned, impersonal evangelistic approach that many have been taught or experienced with a nonthreatening, personal conversation about spiritual things. He states, "Sharing your faith doesn't impose itself on others, leaving them feeling resentful and used. It invites people to step beyond a superficial friendship where no one really cares about listening, and to head toward a deep spiritual relationship."

Writing the book about grace and not about guilt, Leonard describes grace as God's free gift from the beginning of our spiritual journey to its end. Using references from Luke 18, Leonard shows that "let's try harder" is the natural approach to religion. But to share the gospel of grace,

Mid-America Seminary Interns

Churches are invited to apply for a seminary intern through the OPC's Committee on Christian Education. Please also contact Mid-America Reformed Seminary if you are interested in having a seminary student. Contact Rev. Mark Vander Hart, Mid-America Reformed Seminary, 229 Seminary Drive, Dyer, IN 46311-1069; mvanderhart@midamerica.edu; tel. 219-864-2400, ext. 408; fax 219-864-2410.

we must first experience it. "The Christian life is lived—from beginning to end—by grace."

From Luke 7, Leonard shows how Jesus interacted with all kinds of people. He reminds us that Jesus saves us by getting dirty from our sin and suffering for us. He wants us to see the cost of grace to God and the benefit of grace to us. We need to believe in the grace of God offered in the gospel before we can share it with others. So the question is, do you really know God's grace?

Using real-life illustrations and short chapters, Leonard moves us through this easy-to-read book by taking up various topics. He emphasizes that believers should be talking with people in everyday situations. Leonard's concern is that evangelism should be friendly, not just using friendships as a means to the end of evangelizing people. We are encouraged to take time to use "every circumstance and question in their lives as a window into what it means to follow Christ."

Leonard reminds us that belief in God's sovereignty means that we rely on God to bring people into our lives through regular prayer for others. In the chapter entitled "Listen More Than You Speak," Leonard encourages us not to look for people to talk to, but to look for people to listen to. This involves being truly interested in people you meet. "The gospel



begins with the person you're speaking to. As they speak about the immediate problems they're facing or questions they have, we should be listening and praying, asking our Lord to help us gather together everything we have heard, read, or understood from the Scriptures in order to respond to their problems or questions."

The goal of this book is to make evangelism more natural. In the end, the motive for evangelism is to love people enough to listen to them and then converse with them about God's rich grace.

There are some weaknesses in this book. Leonard appears to soften the call to repentance in favor of only owning and confessing sin. Many of the themes of the book are repeated in the various chapters. This emphasizes Leonard's intended message, but indicates a lack of development. "Party Evangelism" is the unfortunate title of one chapter; I would prefer to see a term like "fellowship" or "covenantal" used.

All in all, though, the book encourages us to share the gospel more naturally, exhibiting love for sinners as Christ has loved us.



Free Movable Partition System

Pilgrim OPC in Bangor, Maine, is seeking a home for a movable partition system no longer being used. It cost over \$20,000 twenty years ago, and is now available for free to a good church home. The system consists of 20 rigid panels (in "like new" condition) that are 3 ft. 6 in. wide and nearly 7 ft. high, that hang from a metal track. The panels ride effortlessly along the track. Each section of track is about 15 ft. long. 112 ft. of track. Six T-joints for side tracks. Panels are 4 in. thick for effective sound insulation. Can be moved in one trip by a pickup truck with trailer. For more information, contact Ted Pearson at pearsonandsons@gmail.com.

Snow on the Tulips, by Liz Tolsma. Thomas Nelson, 2013. Paperback, 336 pages, list price \$15.99. Reviewed by *New Horizons* editorial assistant Patricia E. Clawson.

One page into this historical Christian novel, I was hooked. The story begins in February 1945 during the Nazi occupation of Friesland, in the Netherlands. A dozen Dutch resistance fighters were lined up before a Gestapo firing squad and executed. One miraculously survived.

This is the story of Gerrit, the severely injured resistance fighter, and Cornelia, a woman overcome by fear after the tragic loss of her loved one. Cornelia's younger brother, who is in hiding from the Nazis, discovers Gerrit and brings him to Cornelia's home for her to nurse.

Besides telling a terrific story, this fast-paced book challenges Christians to

Positions Available

Pastor: Pleasant Mountain Presbyterian Church (Bridgton, Maine), a mission work of Second Parish OPC in Portland, Maine, is seeking a seasoned minister who is able to work bi-vocationally or on a limited income. He should be theologically sound and demonstrate strength, competence, and maturity in servant leadership, pastoral care, preaching, and the spiritual development of people, as well as a zeal for outreach into the community. For more information, contact Pastor Danny Patterson at 207-772-0848 or patterson.1@opc.org.



consider the choices made during war. One person's faith drives him to fight for his country despite the dangers, while another tells the truth no matter what the consequences. Gerrit works for the resistance to protect loved ones and hasten the end the

war, while Cornelia, like a tulip covered with snow, wants to hide in her home until the Allied troops free them.

The book raises questions about when it is best to wait for God to act and when to become God's instrument of action. The warfare in this book is spiritual rather than political, yet it is written to give the reader a realistic sense of the dangers of living in an occupied land. Careful research and the weaving of Dutch, Frisian, and German vocabulary into the text helps to authenticate this well-written story. *Snow on the Tulips* was one of three finalists for the Carol Award, given for the best Christian fiction.

This book is especially compelling because its pivotal moments are based on what happened to the author's family during World War II. She is the daughter of retired OP pastor Neil Tolsma.

This book is the first of a three-part historical series, published by Thomas Nelson. *Daisies Last Forever*, released in 2014, is about the Nazi's final days in Prussia. Published in February 2015, *Remember the Lilies* is about a missionary interned by the Japanese in the Philippines. I look forward to reading these next two books, which should continue Tolsma's

efforts to give readers well-told stories that challenge our faith.

She has also written a novella, "Under His Wings," which was published in a

New York Times' Best Seller, *A Log Cabin Christmas*. She and her husband are members of an Orthodox Presbyterian church in Wisconsin.

CAN YOUR CHURCH USE A SHORT-TERM MISSIONS TEAM THIS SUMMER?

David Nakhla

OP churches and church plants! Since we have fewer overseas options this year for those who wish to participate in short-term missions, what if you were to create a short-term missions opportunity here at home—at your church?

Is there a ministry, VBS, community outreach program, or church refurbishment project that you could undertake if you had the help of volunteers from other OP churches or presbyteries?

We are told to use our gifts in serving one another (1 Peter 4:10)! If you request a team to help out at your church, you will be creating an opportunity for those who desire to use their gifts in short-term service this summer.

Consider the example of Providence Presbyterian Church in West Lebanon, New Hampshire. Using www.opcstm.org and the S.T.O.R.M. Report, they made known their need for help in getting their church building fixed up, and OPC members from across the country responded to the call!

Pastor Tim Herndon reports, "The saints of Providence Presbyterian were so blessed by the warm fellowship and generous service of those who came to work with us! Our little diamond in the rough of a building now stands out in our neigh-



A short-term volunteer helping out at Providence OPC in West Lebanon, N.H.

borhood as the nicely kept church building—with the lights on and activity going on inside and out!"

OP churches and church plants in Florida, Michigan, Ohio, New York, Texas, and Wisconsin were also blessed to receive short-term missions teams in 2014.

Might your church be the next to accomplish a project with the help of your OPC brothers and sisters? Might you be a blessing to those who come by giving them the gift of an opportunity to serve?

Contact us to help you recruit a team at OPCShortTermMissions@opc.org or www.opcstm.org.