

NEW HORIZONS

— in the ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH —

3 Waiting upon the Lord in
Karamoja //
by David A. Okken

MAY 2016

6 One Body in Christ //
by Benjamin K. Hopp



FOREIGN
MISSIONS
TODAY

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in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church

Editor: Danny E. Olinger
Managing Editor: James W. Scott
Editorial Assistant: Patricia E. Clawson
Cover Designer: Christopher Tobias
Proofreader: Sarah J. Pederson
Editorial Board: The Committee on Christian Education's Subcommittee on Serial Publications

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Pictured here are those present at the meeting of the Presbytery of Southern California (March 4-5). Licentiates and men under care are kneeling with Chaplain Tim Power, under the watchful eye of the moderator, Doug Watson. Standing beside Doug is Joel Ellis (bow tie) of Reformation Bible Church, whose congregation in the suburbs of Phoenix, Ariz., has petitioned to join the Presbytery. Peter Moelker (back row with tie) was examined and received into the Presbytery from the Reformed Church in New Zealand as the pastor-elect at Sovereign Grace OPC in Redlands, Calif.



WAITING UPON THE LORD IN KARAMOJA



DAVID A. OKKEN // “Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand” (James 5:7–8).

The call to follow Christ is a call to a life of waiting. We see it in these words of James and in so many other places in Scripture.

These past months, in my times of devotional reading, I have been reminded of how much the theme of waiting pervades the Psalms. I have often run into words like these words of David: “Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD!” (Ps. 27:14).

This has encouraged me, particularly as our team in Karamoja has been and continues to be in something of a waiting phase. Last year ended with us having to bid farewell to much-loved friends and teammates. After that, we waited for our new pastor, along with his family. David Robbins and his family arrived in the middle of February! And now we continue to wait upon the Lord to provide a new missionary doctor to take up labors at the Clinic.

In many ways, our ministries are ministries of waiting. Often they do not bear the fruit we hope to see in the time in which we hope to see it. We preach.

We teach. We scatter the seed of the word in evangelism. We wait for the Lord to bless.

We work to disciple men who we hope will one day be elders and pastors in the church. As Paul instructed Timothy, we seek to “reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching” (2 Tim. 4:2). Progress and spiritual growth can go slowly. Indeed, sometimes it feels like it has halted completely.

James describes the farmer who waits patiently for the precious fruit of his labors. Living in a land full of subsistence farmers, whose crops rarely last until the next harvest, we understand the longing for that precious fruit. Similarly, as ministers of the gospel, we long to see fruit from our labors. In Karamoja, we often wonder if not we, but the next generation(s), will at last get to see a firmly established Reformed church that is self-supporting, self-propagating, and self-governing. What precious fruit that will be! So we wait. Indeed, we are called to ministries and lives of waiting for the Lord.

Waiting upon Our Lord to Return from Heaven

It is appropriate that we use the farming metaphor to speak of the Spirit blessing our ministries with conversions, sanctification, numerical growth in our churches, the planting of new ones, and so forth. Indeed, our Lord’s parable of the sower would have us praying for the seed of the word to fall upon good soil and produce good fruit in the lives of those to whom we minister (Matt. 13:23).

But, returning to James’s words, when he employs the farming metaphor and calls us to wait for the Lord, he is directing our thoughts to something beyond the fruit of our labors, whether that fruit is born in our lifetime or even in subsequent generations. The harvest that James has in mind is that world-ending event of “the coming of the Lord.” Of course, Jesus also speaks of the end of the age as “the harvest” (Matt. 13:39).

Jesus is coming again! It was that promise which James offered for the

encouragement of a suffering church that was facing “trials of various kinds” (James 1:2). Yes, the saints were to be encouraged by knowing that such trials would bring sanctification in this life (1:3–4). But greater still was the hope that their Lord would soon appear and that the trials of this life would be no more. “Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand” (James 5:8). For the believer, waiting for the Lord is always ultimately “waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13).

We always need to remind ourselves of his coming. We must remember that it is near. It is near to us as those who are living in the last days (James 5:3). It is also near in the sense that it is at the center of Christian faith. So we must always keep it near, at the center of our faith. Peter instructed the believers, “Set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:13).



David Okken teaching on the Mission compound

We must meditate often on the hope of Christ appearing in glory and the fact that “when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is” (1 John 3:2). Then will be revealed to us that glory of which “the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing” (Rom. 8:18).

For those who received James’s letter, this was to be the great source of encouragement amidst trials of all kinds! It was true for the righteous who were being oppressed by those who were

wealthy and corrupt (James 5:4–6). And it is surely true when we are called to minister in difficult circumstances where progress is slow.

We may go out to the village to share God’s Word and find people interested only in their gambling card games and in sipping bags of gin. We must still deliver that word, even if only a few are willing to come and listen. We proclaim it, knowing that one day, maybe this day, we shall proclaim it for the last time. “And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory” (Mark 13:26).

Waiting While Laboring Fervently

Will belief in our Lord’s imminent return encourage laziness? Shall we sit on our hands and wait for Jesus to come? Of course, there will always be those who distort and misapply precious biblical truths. In Thessalonica, there were those who were probably using the Lord’s return to excuse their refusal to work. Paul had to warn that



David Okken teaching out in the bush

neither should they eat (2 Thess. 3:10).

Understood and applied properly, however, the expectation of Christ's return will have the opposite effect. Paul commended that same church for their reputation as those who had "turned to God from idols *to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven*" (1 Thess. 1:9-10). The Christian life is a life of waiting, while fervently serving the Lord. It is as we are "waiting for our blessed hope" that we live as people "who are zealous for good works" (Titus 2:13-14). For Peter, fixing your hope fully upon Christ's return means "preparing your minds for action" (1 Peter 1:13).

Being without a missionary doctor has provided our Mission with a great opportunity to serve the Lord while waiting for his provision. Only the Lord knows if and when a new doctor will come. In the meantime, we are not sitting and waiting. It has been wonderful to see our teammates step up as needed. Missionary associate Christopher Verdick is doing a great job as our temporary Clinic administrator, with missionary associate Hannah Van Gorkom assisting him. Of course, it helps that Dr. Jim Knox did such good work training our staff during his years with us. So quality medical care continues to be delivered. The gospel is preached. The work goes on while we await the Lord's provision of a new doctor.

Waiting upon the Lord involves meditating upon our Savior's return and all of the glories that will then be ours. It is to live by faith. It is to look, with Abraham, "to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God" (Heb. 11:10). Only as we do that can we find the strength we need, even the powers of the age to come at work in us, enabling us to serve the Lord each day. God promised through Isaiah that "they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not

faint" (Isa. 40:31).

Waiting upon the Lord to Bless Our Labors

Longing for Christ's return should never lead to a defeatist attitude in our gospel ministries. It might seem contradictory to live in expectation of Christ's return while laboring with a long-term perspective. If our Lord may return in our generation, why bother sowing seeds for the coming ones? Admittedly, it is a paradox. Yet, it is a paradox from our Lord.

Even if it is difficult for me to wrap my mind around that mystery, I still find it edifying to meditate on it. Paul wrote to Timothy the somewhat strange words, "It is the hard-working farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops." And then he wrote, "Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything" (2 Tim. 2:6-7).

The Lord calls us to long for the great harvest at the end of the world while longing for harvests in our ministries today and in the ministries of those who come after us. We trust that some of the many seeds faithfully sown by Pastor Al Tricarico in Karamoja will

now be watered by the ministry of Pastor David Robbins.

What was true in the Samaritan village in Jesus' day continues to be true today. That is, we live in the day of the great harvest (John 4:36, 39). For every day, every year, and indeed every generation that the kingdom of glory tarrys, Christ builds his kingdom in this world. As we preach the word, in season and out of season, the cry "Come, Lord Jesus!" should also be a prayer for Christ to come by the Spirit and bless our proclamation, so that his kingdom may grow. "Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands upon us; yes, establish the work of our hands!" (Ps. 90:17).

So let us wait upon the Lord together. Please pray with us that our God would bless our labors in Karamoja. Pray, believing that he will do great things. Pray that the young children hearing the gospel every day at Karamoja Education Outreach (KEO), our preschool, would grow up to be strong Christians who will lead the next generation in walking in the ways of the Lord. As we preach and teach in the church, out in the villages, at the Clinic, or wherever we may be, pray for a great harvest of souls. Pray that Christian men will mature and grow strong spiritually, so that one day, perhaps soon, they will be able to serve as elders and pastors.

And pray for us, that we might "be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58). To that end, pray that our hearts might be established as we remember that the coming of the Lord is at hand. Indeed, so may it be for us all. As was David, so may we be strong and our hearts encouraged as we wait for the Lord (Ps. 27:14). Wherever King Jesus has placed us, let us faithfully serve him, ever looking up to heaven, believing that from there he shall soon return. □

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



David Okken (left) and David Robbins

ONE BODY IN CHRIST



BENJAMIN K. HOPP // You never know who is going to show up at church. The church in Port-au-Prince, Haiti (Reformed Presbyterian Church in Delmas), has a regular stream of visitors. Back in 2014, I received an e-mail from an Orthodox Presbyterian pastor in Ohio. He wanted to inform me that two Haitian men who were

studying in the United States had become members of his local OP congregation. Since they were returning to Haiti after completing their studies, he wanted to connect them with the mission work in Haiti.

One Sunday, not long after this email exchange, our family was worshipping at the Port-au-Prince church. We had arrived early, after the hour-long drive into the city. As people arrived and gathered for Sunday school, we greeted folks and asked about their week. On this particular morning, I greeted a man whom I did not recognize. He introduced himself as Bernard—one of the two men who were members of the OP congregation in Ohio. He had arrived back in his home country and had found the church.

The Scriptures remind us that we, as members of the church of Jesus Christ, are one body. This means that it is important for the church to be connected both internally and externally. We should love our brothers and sisters. We should seek to serve them and love them.

It is also important for the universal, visible church to be connected. This is even more true when the Orthodox

Presbyterian Church sends out missionaries to plant churches of like faith and practice in foreign lands. God has providentially worked to connect the churches of the OPC in the United States and Canada with believers in Haiti in significant ways.

Many people come on short-term mission teams to help the OPC Haiti Mission. They forge an important connection between their churches back home and the churches in Haiti. They share their love for Christ while using their talents at vacation Bible school programs, at pastoral training seminars, or on construction projects in Haiti. They bring encouragement to the churches by showing that they are part of a greater body of believers. And when they return home following their time in Haiti, they carry the prayers of the Haitian believers back to their churches and share their experiences of what the Lord is doing in Haiti.

Once in a while, a visitor arrives who can contribute in a particularly special way. This was the case with Daniel. He speaks the language, knows the culture, and has a deep connection to the OPC. Daniel was born in Haiti, but he left for the United States

with his parents in 1971. He grew up in a believing home and continued to attend church. Providentially, God brought him in 1998 to an OP church in Manchester, New Hampshire, which he joined in 2000. In 2004, he was ordained as a deacon.

It was following the devastating Haitian earthquake in 2010 that we met Daniel. The church in Manchester, along with family and friends, had collected immediate relief for people, and Daniel, through family connections, was able to travel to Haiti and distribute it. He commented, “I was blessed to serve there.” But God also wanted to use this brother in other ways to help connect the OP churches back home with believers in Haiti.

Language is important in missions. In Haiti, the two official languages are French and Haitian Creole. Much of the official correspondence is in French, and students start learning in French after the first couple of grades. Haitian Creole is their native tongue. This is what you hear spoken on the street, in the market, and among friends chatting about their day. Daniel speaks both languages.

While Haiti has the Bible available

in both official languages, there is only a limited amount of Reformed literature available in either French or Haitian Creole. The Mission is hard at work translating and proofing books and pamphlets. We are also in the process of producing training materials for elders and deacons in Haitian Creole. Daniel has agreed to work with us on these materials. His practical experience as an OP deacon and his language skills, along with his cultural understanding, will be a great benefit to this project as we labor to translate and print Reformed materials. It is our prayer that this connection between the OPC back home and the missionaries in Haiti will bear much fruit.

So you might be asking yourself, What else can my church do to connect with the church in Haiti? We pray and we give. These are significant, and the Mission thanks you for your prayer support and for your giving. Another important way to connect is to encourage and facilitate a trip by your pastor or elder to Haiti. Since the OPC began working in Haiti back in 2002, one of our main priorities has been the training of church leaders. This training is currently going on, both at the Port-au-Prince congregation and on the island of La Gonâve.

There is a great need for solid biblical doctrine in Haiti. It is for this reason that we open up our training seminars to men from other churches as well. And they come. It is exciting to see them learn and work hard at applying the doctrine they hear to their own church environment. We are grateful to see them, with their Bibles open, utilizing the break times to discuss the teaching. Your pastor or elder can help us by traveling to Haiti and teaching these church leaders.

So what happened with Bernard? How has the connection between the OP churches in the U.S. and the fledgling church in Haiti been made? Bernard came to us because you welcomed him while he was a stranger in a foreign land. He had left his home country to pursue his education and needed the spiritual encouragement of a body of Christ. And it was you, the church of Jesus, who welcomed him into your presence.

The exciting outcome of your hospitality was that Bernard grew in his



Bernard between missionaries Benjamin Hopp (left) and Octavius Delfils at the church in Port-au-Prince

knowledge of the Bible and the Reformed faith. Late last year, he made a profession of faith, along with nine others, at the Port-au-Prince church. He is now a member of the Presbyterian and Reformed church in Haiti. He faithfully attends not just the worship services in Port-au-Prince, but also the other times of Bible instruction. Bernard is often one of the first to answer the questions in Sunday school. He acquired this knowledge from the time spent among you, feeding on the same Word and partaking of the same spiritual food.

Maybe one day you will hear about God raising up Bernard as an elder or deacon in this growing congregation. We are praying that God will raise up men whom the missionaries on the ground can train and to whom the church can cheerfully submit as their spiritual leaders. By welcoming Bernard into your midst—and by sending him back to Haiti—you have been instrumental in building the church in Haiti! This is God's providential work in building connections within the body of Christ. "For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:13). □

The author is an OP missionary in Haiti.



A training seminar for Haitian church leaders on La Gonâve

HURT, FORGIVENESS, AND HEALING IN THE CHURCH: ADMISSION OF SIN AS THE GATEWAY TO FORGIVENESS



CRAIG LAURIE // “The glory that you have given me I have given to them, ... that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me” (John 17:22–23). On the last night before he died, Christ prayed for his disciples and those who would come after them.

Jesus’ prayer is the model of what he has created the church to be, and what the world is to conclude when viewing the church. In this article, I offer a few simple thoughts about what we can do to more closely approach our Savior’s desire for us as members of his body.

It is surely no accident that the apostle Paul, speaking as the inspired author of the Pastoral Epistles in the New Testament, spends considerable time discussing controversy within the church. There was plenty of it to discuss! In addition, all of the Gospels pointedly dwell on the infighting and rivalry among Jesus’ disciples. We modern Presbyterians may often despair at the discord within our circles, but Scripture

makes it clear that this is not a uniquely modern problem.

As long as there has been a church composed of sinners saved by grace, there have been controversies and disagreements. The Orthodox Presbyterian Church was born amidst controversy and disagreement, and while God has blessed us with sufficient grace that we have endured, the journey has not always been peaceful, and even today the OPC is neither as peaceful as we should desire nor as marked by unity and love as our Savior intended.

Controversy within the church takes many forms, and it has many effects in the life of the church. Many of us are aware of the issues that have recently caused division within our

denomination and other Reformed churches: women in office, the age of the earth, various eschatological views, and the relationship between justification, grace, works, and the law. Because these controversies involve frail people of flesh and blood, all of them have the potential to cause hurt within the body of Christ.

The Deepest Hurts

However, I have observed that more often it is disagreement about more personal issues at the congregational level that have the potential to hurt people in an intimate way, sometimes causing them distress for many years. While issues such as the age of the earth are important, it is issues such

as how to school one's children, how to shape the worship of the congregation, and how to care for our youth as they mature (the majority of them with the accompanying need and desire to marry) that have the greatest potential for deep personal hurt and subsequent estrangement within the body of Christ.

Christ in his prayer for us says that we are to be one. Any pastor who has been on the job for more than a few weeks can tell you how far short of that ideal we fall.

I have been a member of the OPC nearly all my life. I am the son of an elder who has served the church for almost sixty years. I have had the privilege to know several of our pastors personally for many years. I have seen much demonstration of God's grace in the lives of his people during those many years, most of all in my own life, but I have also seen a great deal of personal damage wrought by division within the church.

Everyone's experience is no doubt different, but it has been my observation that over the course of a lifetime, both the greatest joys and the greatest hurts enter our lives through the church. In some ways, this seems completely wrong, because within the church we are dealing with our fellow believers, and we are right to expect that our fellow Christians will have "no greater love" for us.

However, it is also true that the church is a very intimate association of sinners who take their faith very seriously, and who spend years in each other's company. One of our most senior pastors fondly says, "The OPC is the best church in the world, if you can stand it." That is a funny line, but there is truth in it. With great commitment comes great potential for many things, including controversy and resultant damage to people.

In God's eternal and good providence, I have found myself several times in a position within Christ's church that has been very painful for me and for my family. I am by no means unique in this regard; indeed, I am in good company.

My point is not that I am a special case, but that difficult and hurtful things happen within the church.

When they happen, we naturally turn to God for guidance, whether by prayer, reading his word, partaking of the means of grace, or the support of our fellow Christians, particularly our elders. All of these means have been of great assistance to me, and I am grateful for the way that God has used all of them in my life, but I have still struggled.

Lately I have come to believe several parts of God's Word more firmly, and they have been of great value to me in being able to lay to rest some of the hurt that I have carried with me for what seems too long. I would like to share those things with you.

What Higher Moral Ground?

First, God has reminded me that any higher moral ground that I may have occupied, relative to people who have hurt me, is so infinitely low, relative to my position in relation to God, that I have absolutely no room for pride—nor really any cause to dwell on the fact that I am "right." While I may have more light in some areas of my life than my fellow believers (and no doubt less light in other areas), I fall so short of the glory of God that I should dwell on my own shortcomings, asking God to change me.

Put another way, the difference between the best and the worst of us is practically indiscernible, relative to the degree to which we all fall short of the standards in God's Word, and it is upon that reality we should dwell. If one sincerely believes that all one's righteousness is truly "like a polluted garment" (Isa. 64:6), then one cannot spend much time feeling righteously offended.

Note that this is not to say that offense does not occur, or that such things should be treated lightly. Offense is real and often very hurtful. However, offense is experienced very differently when one's spiritual gaze is directed upward rather than at one's fellow Christians.

Honest Soul-Searching

Second, I have been helped by honest soul-searching about my own sin. I have asked myself how the worst things I have done, said, or thought compare to the painful things that my fellow Christians have done to me. Needless to say, I have been humbled and stricken by my gaze into the mirror. While my sins may not have hurt those who have hurt me, they have always hurt someone, and, more importantly, they have displeased God. The difference between our "smallest" and our "greatest" sins in the sight of God is negligible. Sin is "any want of conformity ...," and all of our sins deserve judgment. Both mine and yours.

I have often carried my hurts with me, trying to forget them, but failing. I have often prayed that those who have hurt me would perhaps repent, because that would help me forgive them, which I know I should do. God has gently reminded me of the endless times when I have been forgiven by him and by my fellow Christians, usually long before God has worked repentance in my heart. He has shown me that I have no grounds upon which I—who have, like all Christians, been forgiven a huge amount of evil—can withhold forgiveness from one of my brethren. That is not to say that it would not be a comfort to me if such repentance should occur, but I cannot make that a condition of forgiveness.

These are simple things, but they are central to the gospel, and they are hard things to hang on to. Perhaps by writing them down, I can more ably remember them! I fear that I will not keep the clarity that God has given me at this time, but I hope that I will remember a good deal of what God has shown to me. I also hope that my experience can help some of my readers to take the necessary steps to mend as much as possible the tears in what God intended to be a seamless and perfect garment of fellowship—which it will be one day by his grace. □

The author is a member of First OPC in Portland, Ore.

EXAMINING OUR SOURCES OF AUTHORITY

// RAYMOND E. CALL III



Missionaries Ray and Michele Call with children (top row) AnnaGrace, Jeremiah, Rebecca; (middle row) Daniel, John, Christina; and Peter

Shaky Sources of Authority

“Here in Uruguay, the Mormon missionaries from the U.S. are really part of the CIA.” This represents the gist of what at least two men have told me in the roughly seventeen months I’ve been in Uruguay. Setting aside the question regarding the truth value of the claim, we can take it as an example of a more general principle: people have all kinds of wild beliefs, many of which have no connection with an authoritative source. This is true of people in the U.S. and around the world. As in other places, Uruguay has no shortage of those who have strong beliefs, the foundations of which are built upon sand.

As part of our new church plant in the capital city of Montevideo, Rev. Mark Richline and I have been going out into the community to ask people a series of questions about God, the church, and related themes. Doing that has given us insights into the culture as well as opportunities to interact with people and share the gospel. One common thread we have seen is that people adhere to many beliefs, which at the end of the day are simply based on their own experience and opinions.

In response to the claim regarding Mormon missionaries, I asked the man how he knew that, and he could not answer me. Another individual I know has what seems like a fairly developed spiritual belief system. He has preached to me for great lengths of time, claiming that light and darkness, good and evil,

are equally necessary. He believes in a coming worldwide crisis, which will include disasters and other calamities. When I ask him where he gets these beliefs, he cannot answer me. I suspect they come from a variety of sources.

Several others I have encountered believe in Reiki: a form of spiritual healing that arose out of Japanese Buddhism (see <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reiki>). Most support for Reiki here has come in the form of personal thoughts and experiences, failing to produce compelling arguments for its effectiveness.

Apart from the Spirit working in the life of a person, he or she will believe almost anything other than what God has revealed in his Word. The Lord teaches us that unbelievers cannot understand spiritual things: “The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Cor. 2:14). Knowing this will help us understand why it is that non-Christians hold to such a variety of beliefs, many of which strike us as wild and outlandish. Because they are dead in their transgressions and sins (Eph. 2:1), it will be impossible for them to believe the authoritative truths we are sharing with them as Christians. They need the Lord to open their eyes (Acts 26:18), so that they will trade in their hodgepodge of beliefs based on a shaky foundation for secure beliefs based on the firm foundation of God’s revealed Word.

Another common thread we have seen is that people desire a god of their own making. All too often people will pick and choose what they want to be



Ray Call speaking at church

true of God, rather than what actually is true. Their god then becomes a projection of their own wishes, designed to meet their perceived needs.

One of my favorite places to go in Montevideo is the Rambla, a coastal highway running along the shore of the *Rio de la Plata*. Pastor Mark and I once approached a group of young soccer players who appeared to be around seventeen years old. One of the young men expressed a common theme by saying, "I believe in God, but not in the church." While we were happy to hear he believes in God, we were not sure he understands or worships the same God as we do. How can one worship and love God while at the same time blatantly rejecting the very institution that Christ established for his glory, our edification, and the evangelization

of the world? Like this young man, many others believe that the church has little to no relevance today. We long to see the Lord open the eyes of those who walk in darkness and establish his church in Uruguay.

The exclusivity of salvation in Christ alone can be a stumbling block to some. One man became agitated upon hearing our claim that no one can be saved apart from Jesus. Perhaps he thought that God would not be so narrow. He chose to believe in a god who would accept sinners on his own terms, rather than on terms that God has actually revealed. Left to themselves, people will worship almost anything other than the God who has revealed himself in Scripture. That is why it is so important for missionaries to share the truth of God's Word in love. Many are "harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd," and we must have compassion on them, as our Lord did on the crowds in Jerusalem (Matt. 9:36).

The Solid Source of Authority

As Christians, we have been given special revelation from God, which is contained in the Scriptures (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21). The Lord has provided us with authoritative truth that is both objective and reliable. This truth informs our worldview and gives us insight into the nature of reality, especially the knowledge of God. While we may sometimes struggle to interpret and apply this revelation faithfully, we begin with the bedrock foundation of the Word of God.

We are his ambassadors, participating in a ministry of reconciliation in which God is challenging preconceived notions about who he is and how he must be approached. To that end, we are pressing on in our church plant in the neighborhood of La Blanqueada. In the last few months, the Lord has provided several new folks who are regularly coming to our meetings. Besides a young woman from Brazil, who has been with us from the beginning, we now have three university students from Venezuela and a single Uruguayan woman and her



Christian fellowship around a meal

two adult children.

The Richlines are on furlough in the U.S., and the Rev. Markus Jeromin and his family have joined us as missionary associates for 2016. We continue to develop our relationship with the other Presbyterian church in Montevideo, as well as with the ones in Mercedes and Rivera, praying that the Lord will one day form a presbytery and then a denomination. Please pray for the Lord's blessings on our weekly meetings, as well as our personal evangelism, distribution of flyers, English conversation classes, and VBS in June. We give thanks to the Lord and ask him to build his church in Uruguay!

The author is a PCA minister laboring with the OPC Uruguay Mission under a cooperative agreement between the Committee on Foreign Missions (OPC) and the Mission to the World (PCA). For more information on the work in Uruguay, the Call Missionary Blog may be found at <http://callmissionaries.org>.

What's New

// Appointments

Rev. and Mrs. John G. (Alice) Steenhof (Reformed Churches of New Zealand) have been appointed to serve as missionary associates to Mbale, Uganda, for six months, beginning in April 2016.

// Comings/Goings

Rev. and Mrs. David J. (Rashel) Robbins (missionary evangelist to Nakaale, Karamoja) and their four children arrived in Uganda on February 17.

Rev. and Mrs. Benjamin K. (Heather) Hopp (Haiti) and their four children returned to the U.S. at the end of March to begin a yearlong furlough.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

OPC SUMMER CAMPS AND CONFERENCES



The OPC Family Camp in Gowen, Michigan

ALASKA—Family Camp

(Grace OPC, Wasilla, Alaska)

No camp this year.

Scott Johnson, johnson.3@opc.org

(no website)

CALIFORNIA—Blue Ridge Bible Conference

(Presbytery of Southern California)

PineCrest Christian Conference Center, Twin Peaks, CA

Family/all ages, June 20–24

www.blueridgebibleconference.org

CALIFORNIA—Sierra Christian Conference

(OP churches in Northern California)

Sierra Christian Conference Association, Groveland, CA

Memorial Weekend Family Camp, May 27–30

For information, contact Brad DeBoer at 209-577-4341

or bradandjanetdeboer@yahoo.com

(no website)

CALIFORNIA—Family Bible Camp

(Presbytery of Northern California and Nevada)

Redwood Christian Park, Boulder Creek, CA

Family/all ages, August 1–5

www.pncnopc.org/calendar

FLORIDA—Reformed Youth Conference

(Presbytery of the South)

RYC High/Middle School Youth Camp, June 20–25

Youth entering 6th grade (or 11 by August 31) through
completing 12th grade

Lakewood Retreat Center, Brooksville, FL

www.lsopc.org/ryc

MAINE, NEW HAMPSHIRE—Deerwander Bible Conference

(Presbytery of New York and New England)

Junior High (entering 6th–8th), August 16–20

Windsor Hills Camp, Windsor Hills, NH

Senior High (entering 9th–12th), August 13–20

Chop Point Camp, Woolwich, ME

www.deerwander.org

MICHIGAN—OPC Family Camp

(Presbytery of Michigan and Ontario)

Lincoln Lake Camp, Gowen, MI

Family/all ages, August 22–26

www.harvestopc.org (select “WALK,” then “Family Camp”)

www.facebook.com/OPCFamilyCamp

OHIO—Youth Camp

(Presbytery of Ohio)

4-H Camp Piedmont, Piedmont, OH

Junior Summer Camp (ages 9–12), July 11–16

Senior Summer Camp (completed grades 7–12), July 11–16

opcOhioyouth.wordpress.com

OREGON—Family Camp

(First OPC, Portland, OR)

Camp Morrow, Wamic, OR

Family/all ages, August 17–20

www.firstopcportland.org/camp.php

PENNSYLVANIA—Conestoga Bible Conference

(OP churches in Pennsylvania and nearby states)

Promised Land Camp, Conestoga, PA

Summer Bible Camps

Grades 6–9 and 10–12, July 25–30

www.conestogabibleconference.org

PENNSYLVANIA—French Creek Bible Conference

(OPC affiliated)

French Creek State Park, Elverson, PA

Grades 4–6, August 8–13

Grades 7–8, July 30–August 6

Grades 9–10, July 18–25

Grades 11–12, July 11–18

Post-High, July 8–11

Labor Day Family, September 2–5

www.frenchcreek.org

SOUTH DAKOTA—OPC-PCA Bible Camp

(Presbytery of the Dakotas)

Camp Judson, Keystone, SD

Grades 4–6, 7–9, 10–12 (completed), June 25–July 1

www.opc-pca-biblecamp.com

TEXAS—Summer Camp

(Presbytery of the Southwest)

Alto Frio Baptist Encampment, Leakey, TX

Youth entering grades 4–12, June 20–25

www.opcsouthwest.org/summer-youth-camp

VIRGINIA—Machen Retreat and Conference Center

(Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic)

Machen Retreat and Conference Center, McDowell, VA

OPC Worldwide Outreach Conference, June 24–25

Science Camp, July 11–16

Stronghold Camp, August 8–13

Children, 5th to 12th grades

Labor Day/Family Conference, September 2–5

machen.org

WISCONSIN—Camp Westminster

(Presbytery of the Midwest)

Green Lake Conference Center, Green Lake, WI

All members, friends, all ages, August 1–5

www.pmwopc.org (click on “Calendar and Activities”)

WOMEN’S (AND MEN’S) RETREATS

For women’s retreats and Bible conferences that are held at various times during the year (not just the summer) in Southern California, New England, New Jersey, Ohio, and Virginia, see www.opc.org/cce/camps.html.

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

ABCs of PRESBYTERIANISM Authority in the Church (5)

Larry Wilson

Our Lord Jesus Christ forbids church officers to lord it over the flock. Their authority is always under his authority. Even so, it is real authority. Our Lord Jesus commands believers to obey their leaders and submit to them (Heb. 13:17). This is why the OPC’s Form of Government says:

Nevertheless, church government is a valid and authentic jurisdiction to which Christians are commanded to submit themselves. Therefore the decisions of church officers when properly rendered and if in accord with the Word of God “are to be received with reverence and submission; not only for their agreement with the Word, but also for the power whereby they are made, as being an ordinance of God appointed thereunto in his Word” (Confession of Faith, Chapter XXXI, Section 2). (III.5)

In other words, we are to receive such decisions with reverence and submission, not only because we agree that they are scriptural, but also because the Lord endows them with his own authority.

This is why, when we become communicant members of the church, we vow to submit in the Lord to the government of the church and to heed its discipline. Edmund Clowney explains that:

Authority in the church is Christ’s authority. It is he who gives the keys of the Kingdom and who validates in heaven what is determined on earth in his name. (*Living in Christ’s Church*, p. 154)

Submission to church government, then, is always “in the Lord.” First of all, we submit to the Lord. And then we show that we submit to the Lord by submitting to his agents. Of course, if we are genuinely persuaded in our consciences that their decisions require us to sin, then “we must obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29). But if we merely differ in opinion on some judgment call, then we must submit in the Lord. Stephen D. Doe says:

This commitment springs from God’s grace, and it requires us to trust—really trust—Christ, the Head of the church. But through believing submission, Christ richly blesses both us and the church. (*New Horizons*, May 2004)

☆ Congratulations

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

- **Harrison Chase**, *Grace OPC, Vienna, VA*
- **Tiana G. Davies**, *Harvest OPC, Wyoming, MI*

● Out of the Mouth . . .

When starting to learn the Lord’s Prayer, our two-year-old said, “But deliver us from the mailman.”

—Rachelle Bennett
Fawn Grove, Pa.

“WE BELIEVE
THAT YOU
WILL.”

// MIKE MYERS



Young people being received into communicant membership at Heritage Presbyterian Church in Royston, Ga.; Pastor Mike Myers at left

I was fresh out of seminary, sitting in one of my first meetings with the provisional session of an OPC mission work in northeastern Georgia. Like much of that Georgia summer in 2013, it was muggy and rainy. Lake Hartwell was rising, the fire ants were thriving, and questions were swirling in my mind. Will this little church plant take root? How will it grow? Can I possibly minister effectively to these people? What on earth am I doing here?

As the meeting drew to an end, my dear brother, regional home missionary Lacy Andrews, prayed. He did not know then, and he may never know, unless he reads this article, that his prayer has proved to be an immeasurable source of encouragement for me since that time. He gave thanks to our God for the mission work, and then, without a trace of hesitation or doubt in his voice, he said, “Please cause it to grow; we believe that you will.”

That was one of the first challenges to me and my then tenuous faith as a church planter. His petition and example of faith urged me to lay the doubts and uncertainty in my own heart to rest. “We believe that you will.” I said amen after that prayer, and I am grateful to say that I have since been privileged to witness God’s amen to it as well.

The Lord who leads his people in triumph in Christ in every place has cared for our church plant as only our heavenly Father can. We have seen many significant changes since Heritage Presbyterian Church was formed in April 2011. Since then we have worshipped in three different locations, had many children born into the church, and witnessed covenant children profess their faith. A number of new households have joined, and many others have passed through our doors. We have worshipped our God and proclaimed the gospel of life in Jesus Christ to many. We have tasted the bitterness of death, and by his grace have rejoiced in the promise of life. Clearly, reflecting on the past gives us many reasons for thanksgiving.

But we are also looking to the future.

Our Plan for the Future

During our session meeting in February, we approved a plan to guide us toward organization as a particular congregation in the OPC. Our plan is a simple one, balancing intentionality and flexibility. As I write this, I look forward to March 23, when we will conclude a course I have been teaching on biblical leadership and Westminster theology, which has been open to all the men of the church. Then, from March 27 to April 17, members of Heritage will have the opportunity to nominate men for the offices of elder and deacon. During that time, I plan to preach a three-part series on the rule of Jesus Christ in his church. Those who accept the nominations will then begin a period of more intensive and extensive training than the leadership course provided.

Herein lies the need for flexibility, since it is difficult to know how much time we will want to spend training and equipping the future shepherds and servants in this part of Christ’s church. Lord willing, when that is complete, our provisional session will examine and certify the men we judge to possess the necessary qualifications for office. Only then will they stand for election by the congregation.

Although a lot of work remains ahead of us, setting out into this new phase of our church’s development is a tremendous step. We give thanks to God that he has brought us to this point, and we continue to look to him to supply us with every need as we move forward.

Please pray that the Lord would guide our way forward in righteousness and peace. Ask him to protect us from division, strife, and pride. As you pray, be encouraged, because you will be praying for the continued work of the kingdom of God, especially that the Lord would see his church “furnished with all gospel officers” (Larger Catechism, 191). Finally, pray with confidence that we and all the churches of Jesus Christ will grow to his glory—and then believe that he will.



Pastor Stevenson preaching at Providence OPC in Tulsa, Okla.

people. Despite our relatively smaller size, Providence is blessed with musicians: a cellist, two oboists who also play the piano, and a harpist who is yet another pianist.

Our facilities have also changed. Worship services began in members' homes. Then, for about a year, Providence held its worship services in the chapel of Holland Hall School. But Providence had access to it only for two hours each week, making it difficult to expand our ministries.

Since then, Providence has moved to a small store-

front, which was previously used by another church until they outgrew it. While this new place is significantly smaller, the folks at Providence have access to it all week long—and for the same rent as the chapel! This has allowed Providence to begin a Sunday school program consisting of two classes for children and one for adults. The change in facilities has also allowed us to begin having a second Lord's Day worship service.

We meet each Wednesday for a number of activities: a book study currently using *The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment* by Jeremiah Burroughs, a shared meal, a prayer meeting, and a hymn sing in which we practice the hymns for the coming Lord's Day. As a body, we are memorizing a question and answer from the Westminster Shorter Catechism each week—including our covenant children! As of the time of writing this, we have made it through question 95.

On May 15, 2015, Providence OPC became an organized congregation of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Two men were ordained and installed as ruling elders, and Rev. Stevenson was installed as the pastor. It was a joyous occasion for all involved. Nevertheless, we were quickly reminded that our work is just beginning. While particularization was a wonderful and noble goal to reach, it is not the end. We cannot and will not be complacent or think that somehow we have now arrived. We are still the church militant. The lost still need the gospel. The sheep in Christ's church still need the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, applying the grace purchased by Christ for them. Thus, we have made a concerted effort to pray fervently, both individually and corporately, for Christ's kingdom to advance here in Tulsa.

Praise God for:

- Providing local officers
- Providing a good meeting place
- Good fellowship in the congregation

Pray for:

- Continued spiritual growth
- Opportunities to reach the lost

IN GOD'S PROVIDENCE

Jim Stevenson

On April 8, 2012, a small group gathered in a home in the south Tulsa area for their first worship service after the Presbytery of the Central U.S. approved their petition to be a daughter church of Westminster OPC in Bartlesville, Oklahoma. The new group, known as Providence OPC, was committed to establishing a solidly Reformed work in the Tulsa area. They desired simplicity and reverence in worship, purity of Reformed doctrine, and preaching that exalted the Lord Jesus Christ and provided instruction in how to live in obedience to him. They wanted to be a church committed to the ordinary means of grace by which Christ builds his kingdom.

In July of that same year, the congregation issued a call to Mr. Jim Stevenson, a recent graduate of Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. He had been ordained as a ruling elder in 2001 and had served two congregations in that capacity. He and his family moved to Tulsa in September 2012. Mr. Stevenson was ordained and installed as the organizing pastor of Providence OPC on November 2, 2012.

Many things have remained the same for Providence OPC. She remains resolute in her commitment to God's Word as the standard by which we live and worship him. Nevertheless, much has changed as well. The church experienced some initial growth as a few families united with her. However, some of those families later moved, due to employment changes. Attendance each Lord's Day is usually between forty and fifty

Home Missions Today

For up-to-date Home Missions news and prayer updates, e-mail HomeMissionsToday@opc.org.
New editions: May 4, 18.

STORING UP TREASURE IN HEAVEN

// CALVIN D. KELLER

In Matthew 6:19–21, Jesus says to his disciples, “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

We all know the dangers of materialism that can snatch our joy and diminish our faith. The apostle Paul tells us that through the sin of materialism (i.e., the desire to be rich) “some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs” (1 Tim. 6:10). It’s important to note, however, that when Jesus exhorts his disciples in regard to seeking wealth, he does not simply say, “Don’t do it.” Rather, he says, “Seek the better treasure!” Jesus teaches what Thomas Chalmers described as “the expulsive power of a new affection.” The answer to materialism, according to Jesus, is not simply deprivation and self-denial, but to catch a glimpse of the eternal riches of heaven. The desire for heavenly things will drive out worldly materialism. Like the pilgrims in Hebrews 11, we need to seek a better country and a better reward. Heavenly riches can never be idolatrous because those riches are bound up with the enjoyment of God himself.

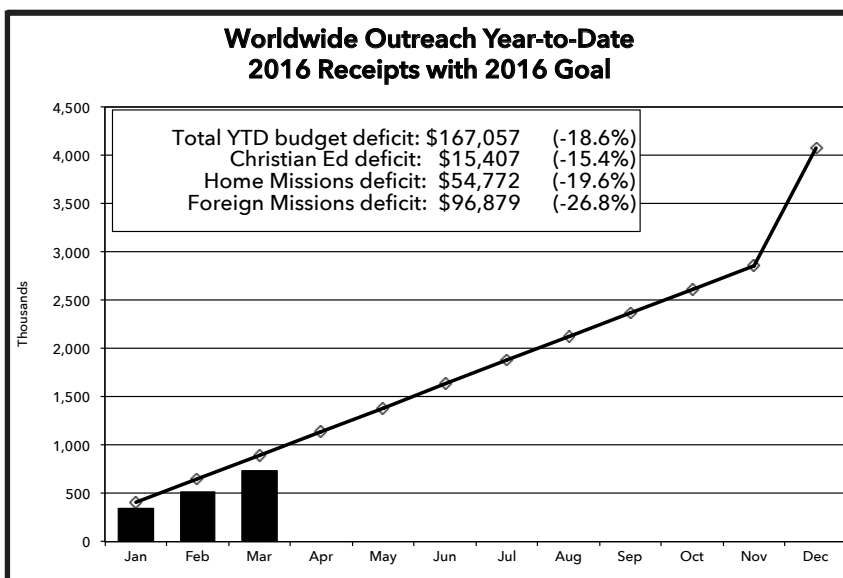
Our heavenly inheritance, as believers, is something that has already been secured for us through the finished work of Christ. We have this living hope “through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Peter 1:3). Yet in Matthew 6:19–20, Jesus uses a Greek verb that describes actively seeking to build up this treasure—storing up goods in a treasury or storehouse. What does he mean by that? And how do we do it?

The answer to this question involves the whole of the Christian life. We are to live our faith in a way that shows that we desire the things of heaven more than the things of this life. We are to seek those rewards that are heavenly and bound up with God. We are to “seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness” (Matt. 6:33). We are to “seek the things above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God,” and to “set [our] minds on things that are above” (Col. 3:2).

One way that we do this is by using the material goods of this life well. In 1 Timothy 6, after warning of the dangers of materialism and exhorting us to be content with our lot in this world, Paul gives an exhortation to rich believers, using the same language that Jesus uses in Matthew 6. Paul writes, “As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus *storing up* treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life” (1 Tim. 6:17–19).

To share what we have with those in need and to invest in the kingdom of God on earth with our material goods are ways in which we “store up” treasure in heaven. Are you storing up treasure for yourself to take hold of that which is truly life? Instead of being focused solely on a comfortable retirement plan on earth, Paul encourages us to think about investing in the kingdom of God. That is a far better investment, with much greater rewards.

The author is the pastor of Cornerstone Presbyterian Church in Chattanooga, Tenn.



1. **Ray and Michele Call**, Montevideo, Uruguay. Pray for Ray as he preaches and teaches the Word at the new church plant. / **Mark and Karissa Soud**, Birmingham, Ala. Pray that the Lord would make Redeemer Presbyterian Church a blessing to the community. / **Charlene Tipton**, database administrator.
2. **Tim and Deborah Herndon**, West Lebanon, N.H. Praise God for new visitors and for steady finances at Providence OPC. / Missionary associates **Markus and Sharon Jeromin**, Uruguay. Pray for a bold witness as they interact with unbelievers. / **Doug Watson**, part-time staff accountant.
3. **Mark and Jeni Richline**, Montevideo, Uruguay (on furlough). Pray that their furlough will refresh and strengthen them for future service. / Home Missions general secretary **John Shaw**. / *New Horizons* managing editor **Jim Scott**.
4. **Josh and Kristen McKamy**, Chambersburg, Pa. Pray that God would bless Covenant OPC's outreach efforts by adding three new families this year. / Affiliated missionaries **Jerry and Marilyn Farnik**, Prague, Czech Republic. Thank the Lord for providing them with ministry opportunities. / Navy chaplain **John (and Linda) Carter**.
5. **Ben and Melanie Westerveld**, Quebec, Canada. Pray for the translation and publication of Reformed literature in French. / **Jim and Tricia Stevenson**, Tulsa, Okla. Pray for growth in numbers and in love for one another at Providence OPC. / Pray for the preparation for the Marriage, Sexuality, and Faithful Witness **pre-Assembly conference** on June 8.
6. Pray for **David Crum**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of Southern California, as he visits mission works and established churches. / Missionary associate **Jennifer Nelson**, Quebec, Canada. Pray for her study of French. / **Kathy Bube**, Loan Fund administrator.
7. Pray for the health and well-being of retired missionaries **Betty Andrews, Cal and Edie Cummings, Greet Rietkerk**, and **Young and May Lou Son**. / **Joshua and Jessica Lyon**, Carson, Calif. Pray that the new Sunday school curriculum will be a blessing to the children of Grace OPC. / Committee on Coordination: **Jan Gregson**, assistant to the finance director.
8. **Kim and Barbara Kuhfuss**, Eau Claire, Wis. Pray for the discipleship and ministry of Providence Reformed



Tim and Deborah Herndon

9. **Mr. and Mrs. M.**, Asia. Pray that more workers would be sent to carry out the work of ministry in Asia. / **Paul and Sarah Mourreale**, St. Louis, Mo. Pray for spiritual maturity and growth in grace at Gateway OPC. / Army chaplain **David (and Jenna) DeRienzo**.
10. **Chris and Megan Hartshorn**, Anaheim Hills, Calif. Pray for weekly visitors, boldness to share and invite, and conversions at Anaheim Hills Presbyterian Church. / Missionary associates **Mr. and Mrs. C.**, Asia. Pray that their students will come to faith in Asia. / **Matthew (and Elin) Prather**, yearlong intern at Harvest OPC in San Marcos, Calif.
11. Missionary associates **M. D., D. V.**, and **S. Z.**, Asia. Pray that their students will have open hearts. / Home Missions staff administrator **Sean Gregg**. / Pray for stated clerk **Ross Graham** as he works to print and distribute the agenda for the General Assembly that will begin on June 8.
12. **Jim and Bonnie Hoekstra**, Andover, Minn. Pray for effective follow-up to Immanuel OPC's conference on suffering. / Tentmaker missionary **T. L. L.**, Asia. Pray for her relationships with students developed during the school year. / **Mark Stumpff**, office assistant.
13. Pray for the labors of Foreign Missions general secretary **Mark Bube**. / **Mika and Christina Edmondson**, Grand Rapids, Mich. Pray that God would grant New City Fellowship grace to love and wisdom to serve her neighbors well. / **Charles Williams**, yearlong intern at Redeemer Presbyterian Church in Ada, Mich.
14. **Andrew and Billie Moody**, San Antonio, Tex. Pray for the Lord to raise up men to serve San Antonio Reformed Church as elders and deacons. / Foreign Missions administrative assistant **Linda Posthuma** and secretary **Katrina Zartman**. / **Janet Birkmann**, Diaconal Ministries administrative assistant.
15. Pray for Foreign Missions associate general secretary **Douglas Clawson**, in Haiti to assist with the training of church leaders. / **John and Wenny Ro**, Chicago, Ill. (downtown). Pray that God would bring new people to Gospel Life Presbyterian Church through its outreach activities. / **Brian Guinto**, yearlong intern at Grace Presbyterian Church in Columbus, Ohio.
16. **Phil Strong**, Lander, Wyo. Pray that the Spirit of God would attend the preaching of the Word at Grace Reformed Fellowship. / **Heero and Anya Hacquebord**, L'viv, Ukraine. Pray that more people eager to know the

Lord will attend worship services. / **Tim (and Jeni) Son**, yearlong intern at First Presbyterian Church in Ipswich, Mass.

17. Ben and Heather Hopp, Haiti (on furlough). Pray that Ben will give a clear vision for missions to the churches he visits. / **Ron and Carol Beabout**, Gaithersburg, Md. Pray that the Lord would add five families to Trinity Reformed Church this year. / **Lowell (and Mae) Ivey**, yearlong intern at Covenant Community Church in Taylors, S.C.

18. Pray for **Steve Doe**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic, as he follows up on contacts and visits Bible study groups. / Associate missionaries **Octavius and Marie Delfils**, Haiti. Pray that the Lord would provide men for leadership in the church. / **Wayne (and Suzanne) Veenstra**, yearlong intern at Harvest OPC in Wyoming, Mich.

19. Pray for affiliated missionary **Linda Karner**, Japan, as she provides guidance to her students. / **Jeremy Logan**, Mt. Vernon, Ohio. Pray that God would bless Knox Presbyterian Church's weekly Bible studies and prayer meetings. / *New Horizons* editorial assistant **Pat Clawson** and proofreader **Sarah Pederson**.

20. Robert and Christy Arendale, Houston, Tex. Praise God for his continued blessing on Cornerstone OPC. / Affiliated missionaries **Craig and Ree Coulbourne**, Urayasu, Japan. Pray for those providing leadership in the local church. / Short-term missions coordinator **David Nakhla**. Pray for the teams and individuals preparing for short-term missions projects this summer.

21. Charles and Connie Jackson, Mbale, Uganda. Pray that God would guide and equip them for their ministry in Mbale. / **Mike and Katy Myers**, Royston, Ga. Pray for direction and wisdom as Heritage Presbyterian Church considers nominations for office and moves toward organization. / **Daniel Adams**, yearlong intern at Calvary OPC in Glenside, Pa.



Charles and Connie Jackson

22. Jay and Andrea Bennett, Neon, Ky. Pray for the Lord to organize Neon Reformed Presbyterian Church into a particular congregation by 2020. / **Eric and Dianna Tuininga**, Mbale, Uganda. Pray for continued spiritual growth in the churches with which they work. / **Benjamin (and Emily) Gordon**, yearlong intern at Trinity OPC in Hatboro, Pa.

23. Pray for new missionary associates **John and Alice Steenhof**, Mbale, Uganda, as they begin their labors with the Uganda Mission. / **Tom and Martha Albaugh**, Pittsburgh, Pa. Pray that more visitors will come to

Redeemer OPC Mission. / **David Haney**, director of finance and planned giving for the Committee on Coordination.

24. Christopher and Ann Malamisuro, Cincinnati, Ohio. Pray that the Lord would bless Good Shepherd OPC's spring picnic and summer VBS outreach activities. / **Bob and Martha Wright**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for literacy training to the end that people will be able to read the Scriptures. / **Andy (and Anna) Smith**, yearlong intern at Bethel Presbyterian Church in Wheaton, Ill.

25. Pray for the labors of missionary associates **Leah Hopp**, Nakaale, Uganda, and **Sarah Jantzen**, Mbale, Uganda. / **Brian and Sara Chang**, Cottonwood, Ariz. Pray for new opportunities for Verde Valley Reformed Chapel to make known the name of Christ. / **Alan Strange** and **Derrick Vander Meulen**, coeditors of the proposed Psalter-Hymnal.

26. Jonathan and Kristin Moersch, Capistrano Beach, Calif. Pray that members of Trinity Presbyterian Church will continue to grow in love and service toward God and neighbor. / **David and Sunshine Okken**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for David as he proclaims the gospel to the lost in Karamoja. / *New Horizons* cover designer **Chris Tobias**.

27. Missionary associates **Jesse and Hannah Van Gorkom**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for their efforts to witness for Christ. / **Bill and Sessie Welzien**, Key West, Fla. Pray that God would add more locals to Keys Presbyterian Church. / Pray for Christian Education general secretary **Danny Olinger** as he serves as director of the Ministerial Training Institute of the OPC.

28. Jim and Eve Cassidy, Austin, Tex. Pray that the Lord would bless South Austin Presbyterian Church's radio ministry. / **David and Rashel Robbins**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for David as he presents the gospel to those who come to the clinic for treatment. / Navy chaplain **Tim (and Janine) Power**.

29. Missionary associates **Christopher and Chloe Verdick**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for Christopher in his responsibilities as administrator of the medical clinic. / Home Missions associate general secretary **Al Tricarico**. / **Greg Reynolds**, editor of *Ordained Servant*, the online magazine for OPC church officers.

30. Eric and Donna Hausler, Naples, Fla. Pray that the Lord would bring more year-round families to Christ the King Presbyterian Church. / Pray for the labors of missionary associates **Fiona Smith**, **Rachel Turner**, and **Angela Voskuil**, Nakaale, Uganda. / *Ordained Servant* proofreader **Diane Olinger**.

31. Brian and Dorothy Wingard, South Africa. Pray for their witness to the students at Mukhanyo Theological College. / **Brad and Cinnamon Peppo**, Springfield, Ohio. Pray that God would give wisdom to Living Water OPC as they seek to reach out to their community. / **Darryl (and Anita) Kretschmer**, yearlong intern at Lakeview OPC in Rockport, Maine.

NEWS, VIEWS, & REVIEWS

TITUS 2 SEMINAR

Emily VanDixhoorn

On February 27, Grace Presbyterian Church in Vienna, Virginia, hosted its annual Titus 2 seminar. This year Emily VanDixhoorn spoke, basing her remarks on Ed Welch's book, *Side-by-Side: Walking with Others in Wisdom and Love*. Fitting for the side-by-side topic, twins Joanna and Janelle Grove coordinated the half-day event.

About ninety women from local OP churches participated, as well as women from other denominations. We enjoyed fellowship, listening to talks, journaling, and discussion, followed by lunch.

Grace Presbyterian Church welcomes women to the fall retreat, scheduled for November 11–12. To be added to our email list, please contact Berta Badenoch at bertabadenoch@hotmail.com.



Ladies of all ages at Grace Church's Titus 2 seminar

IN MEMORIAM ALI KNUDSEN

James W. Scott

Ali Mulder Knudsen was born on October 7, 1931, and raised in the Netherlands, where she and her family endured the brutal Nazi occupation during World War II (1940–1945).

After the war, she met Robert D. Knudsen, an American pursuing doctoral work at the Free University of Amsterdam. They married on February 13, 1951, and moved to the United States, where Bob became an OP minister and a professor at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia.

The Knudsens had four boys: Donald, Timothy (who died of a brain tumor while a teenager), Richard, and Steven. After raising her children, Ali became the office secretary for the Committee on Christian Education, serving under general secretaries Roger Schmurr (1980–1988) and Thomas Tyson (1989–1995). When her



Ali Knudsen at her retirement

husband retired in 1995, she did also, but continued to serve as the proofreader of *New Horizons* until 2006.

A native speaker of Dutch, Ali learned English so well that she could copyedit and proofread English writing. She also taught Dutch and did translation work. She was known for her thrift, efficiency, commitment to the Lord's work, and dedication to her family.

In her final years, Ali battled Alzheimer's disease and died on March 25, 2016, at the age of 85.

IN MEMORIAM PENNY PAPPAS

Helen Anne "Penny" Pappas, 93, entered her eternal rest on March 20, 2016, after exuberantly serving the Lord and his church since she became a Christian at age 13. Born Helen Smith on June 10, 1922, she graduated from Macalester College with a primary education degree, which aided her future service to the Lord.

She married serviceman John Pappas on December 24, 1942. During their fifty-seven years together, Penny taught at

Willow Grove Christian School, and then was asked by the Committee on Christian Education to help write Sunday school materials for primary and junior grades for Great Commission Publications. On behalf of GCP, Penny trained Sunday school teachers throughout the Northeast. Theologically astute, she taught Bible studies and Sunday school classes—even for high schoolers at Trinity OPC in Hatboro, Pennsylvania, at the age of seventy!

With diverse gifts, Penny played the piano at her high school graduation, was a Phil-Mont Christian Academy principal, catered at weddings, ran a boarding house for troubled young people, worked in real estate, remodeled a church basement, and baked goodies for Lakeview OPC in Rockport, Maine, where she was a member in her later years.

She is survived by her four children—Jon (Arlene), Merrie (John) Bettler, Stephanie (Dennis) Gentilin, and Mark (Laurie)—thirteen grandchildren, and fifteen great-grandchildren.



Penny Pappas in 2011

UPDATE

MINISTERS

- **John W. Belden** was installed as pastor of Pilgrim Presbyterian Church in Metamora, Mich., on March 18.
- On February 19, **Robert N. Canode III** was ordained as a minister and installed as a pastor of Providence Presbyterian Church in Pflugerville, Tex.
- On December 14, 2015, the Presbytery of New Jersey was notified that retired minister **Claude D. DePrine III** had been received into Evangel Presbytery of the PCA on November 8, 2014.
- On March 22, the Presbytery of the Northwest dissolved the ministerial relationship between **Paul O. Johnson** and Covenant OPC in Kennewick, Wash. (and their daughter church, Covenant OPC in Colville, Wash.), effective May 1, because the Colville congregation is no longer able to support a full-time pastor.
- **Michael A. Kooy**, formerly a PCA pastor, was installed on February 20 as associate pastor of Little Farms Chapel in Coopersville, Mich., to serve as the organizing pastor of Providence Presbyterian Church in Manistee, Mich.
- **Cecil R. “Cris” Simpson III** was installed on October 11, 2015, as associate pastor of Cornerstone OPC in Ambler, Pa., where he had been serving as a teacher.

MILESTONES

- **Muriel Grace (Lambourne) Kline**, 93, widow of OP minister and professor Meredith G. Kline, died on February 10.
- **Ali Mulder Knudsen**, 85, who worked for the Committee on Christian Education from 1980 to 2006, died on March 25 after a long struggle with Alzheimer’s.
- **Helen Anne “Penny” Pappas**, 93, who was long active in Christian education, notably for Great Commission Publications, died on March 20 after a period of declining health.
- **Bryan J. Weaver**, 60, a chaplain in the U.S. Navy, died on April 2, after fighting brain cancer for over two years.

LETTERS

SEX AND MARRIAGE

Editor:

The articles and book reviews in the March issue on sex and marriage could not have been timelier.

A quick way to make the writers’ point is to urge reflection on the question “What is sex for?” Both nature (i.e., God’s created reality) and Holy Scripture testify that in the animal kingdom sex differences, desire, and activity are first of all for purposes of procreation and—for those made in God’s image—years of child rearing by married parents, and family formation and solidarity. Throughout history, societies at their best have recognized these realities.

Since the Fall, sinners have pursued sexual satisfaction apart from its divinely intended purpose in various ways—fornication (especially unmarried cohabitation), adultery, homosexual liaisons, incest, and many other evil and destructive deviations. We’ve now arrived at the place where a person’s sexual gratification—physical and emotional—trumps everything else, even for too many Christians.

The vaunted “sexual revolution,” far from being a mid-twentieth-century invention, is almost as old as the human race. What’s different about the last hundred years or so across the West is a cascading loss of ancient moral and social restraints on sexual activity. Behavior that nearly every culture used to forbid, discourage, or hide, we not only tolerate but even shamelessly require everybody to celebrate. The widespread embrace of “same-sex marriage” is only our latest leap toward the abyss. Absent true spiritual renewal and reformation, it certainly won’t be the last. Lord have mercy.

Don Poundstone
Portland, Ore.

BIG SALVATION

Editor:

In his article in the April issue, William B. Kessler says, “Jesus’ resurrection has cosmic significance. As Adam’s sin

affected the entire universe, introducing the principle of death, so Jesus’ resurrection affects the universe, restoring and advancing the principle of life, even eternal life.” He also states that “the resurrection is *big* in its scope,” and he goes on to elaborate on how “the resurrection is the accomplishment of *big* salvation.”

Just *how big* is the scope of the resurrection, and *how big* is Jesus’ salvation? Doesn’t his resurrection affect the *entire* universe, just as Adam’s sin does? If we say that *all* die in Adam, but only *some* live in Christ, aren’t we thinking *too small* about God’s purpose and plan? It’s impossible to think too big (Eph. 3:20)!

Diane Castro
Beverly, Mass.

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Editor:

I wanted to thank you for including the article on public school as an option in the February issue of *New Horizons*. As one who grew up in a homeschool-only home, being taught to fear and disdain the public schools (and any Christians who may choose them), I find it refreshing to hear stories from godly people who have chosen public schools with great results. God has been teaching me in recent years to love my brother, rather than stand in judgment over him. God truly is bigger than the tiny boxes we often like to put him in!

Daniel Schanzenbach
Round Hill, Va.

Editor:

I would like to comment on Mr. Turner’s letter to the editor in the April issue against public education. First of all, educating our children is a decision parents must pray about. Second, as an educator, wife, mother, and OPC member for 39 years, I’d like to let you know that public education is not always filled with godless indoctrination. I and many other Christians work in public schools. We often consider it a ministry. Many of us work with children who have special needs, whom public schools are able to serve.

A while ago, when a student in my class was sharing her Awana awards, it

was wonderful to see the other children show interest and want to learn more about the Christian club. There are many Christian families in the school I work in. Yes, there is sin in public schools, just as in Christian schools, churches, and homes. It is a good thing public education is available as an option. Thankfully our Father in heaven is in control of all things!

Faith Hybert
Wheaton, Ill.

THE AGE OF THE EARTH

Editor:

In the April issue of *New Horizons*, a highly favorable review was presented of a book edited by Richard Phillips defending the young earth view of creation. He thinks this book should be required reading for our high school students attending public schools.

I believe such a review was ill advised, given that the OPC has published a position paper allowing flexibility of views on this subject. As a nuclear physicist and an OP church member, I subscribe to an old earth perspective. Cosmologists have determined the universe to be just under 14 billion years old, based on several independent methods of measurement. Such a dating does no violence to Scripture.

We risk significant damage to the gospel by going on record as stating that the universe is less than 10,000 years old. When the falsity of this claim becomes fully manifest, we will be seen as foolish and the gospel message will be damaged.

We should stay neutral on this subject, as our denominational position statement maintains.

Charles Cain
Arlington, Texas

Editor's note: As stated in our masthead, the views put forward by our writers (including reviewers) "are not necessarily those of the editors or official positions of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church." Our writers may express a wide variety of views, on this and other controversial issues, provided they are not inconsistent with the system of doctrine set forth in the confessional standards of the OPC.

REVIEWS

***Openness Unhindered: Further Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert on Sexual Identity and Union with Christ*, by Rosaria Champagne Butterfield. Crown & Covenant, 2015. Paperback, 206 pages, list price \$13.00. Reviewed by Prof. David VanDrunen.**

As its subtitle indicates, this volume is a companion of sorts to the author's striking 2012 memoir, *Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert*, in which she chronicled her conversion to Reformed Christianity from her former life as a lesbian. While the earlier book was primarily biography interspersed with theological reflection, this new work is more theological reflection interspersed with biography. It is a valuable resource, whose message and tone the church would do well to absorb.

After introducing some important themes and recounting aspects of her life's story in the preface and opening chapter, Butterfield moves in chapter 2 to a key idea, both in her book and in larger societal debates about sexuality: *identity*. She argues that believers should not find their identity in their own experience or actions, but in who God is and what he has done. We are united to Christ, she highlights, and thus justified and sanctified.

This discussion of identity bears fruit especially in chapters 4 and 5, in which she argues against the very concept of "sexual orientation" and opposes use of the term "gay Christian" to describe believers who feel same-sex attractions but strive to resist them. These are controversial assertions, with which many thoughtful Christians disagree, but I believe that she makes a compelling case on both issues. Christians should, at least, contemplate her argument that such concepts and terms do no favors to anyone: they tend to deceive Christians who are struggling with same-sex attractions into defining their identity in sexual terms, rather than in Christ, and to deceive Christians without same-sex

attractions into downplaying the serious character of their heterosexual sins. In chapter 6, Butterfield offers additional insights into the use of these contested concepts and terms by describing her collegial interaction with a friend who describes herself as a "gay Christian."

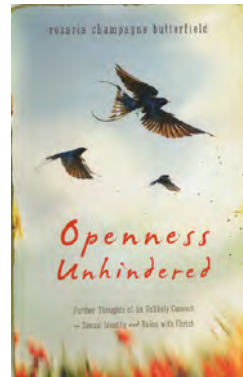
In the midst of this discussion of identity, chapter 3 offers important reflections on repentance as the antidote to shame and temptation. While Butterfield's description of the relationship between grace and repentance (and of the nature of Christ's temptations) is not quite as clear as it could be, her main point is crucial: Christians must never let confidence in God's grace be a substitute for repentance, and must commit themselves to *confessing* sin and not just *admitting* it.

The final chapter, on community, goes far beyond the matters of sexuality that are the book's main concern. But in many respects it brings the volume to a fitting close, for Butterfield points to mutual encouragement and hospitality as chief means by which God equips his people to resist temptation—sexual or otherwise—and to grow in grace.

One of the best things about this volume is its underlying tone and attitude. It wholeheartedly promotes holiness and godly sexuality, but without the rancor, vitriol, and self-righteousness that too often poison conservative Christians' contributions to societal debates on sex and marriage. Butterfield's self-critical and generous spirit is far from the least of this book's virtues.

***Riots, Revolutions, and the Scottish Covenanters: The Work of Alexander Henderson*, by L. Charles Jackson. Reformation Heritage Books, 2015. Hardback, 354 pages, list price \$30.00. Reviewed by Prof. Alan Strange.**

Charles Jackson, in this version of his doctoral dissertation under John Coffey at Leicester, has given us a fine treatment of Alexander Henderson (1583–1646), perhaps best known to us as a member of





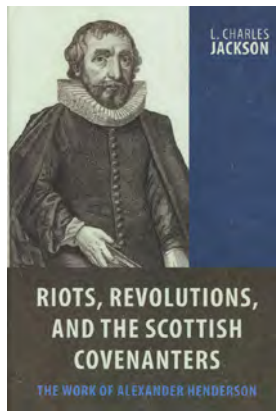
Short-Term Missions Teams

Follow the short-term missions teams this summer at OPCSTM.org and on the OPC Short-Term Missions Facebook page.

the Scottish delegation at the Westminster Assembly. Henderson was the main mover in the 1638 National Covenant in Scotland and thus a fountainhead of the covenanting movement. The success that he enjoyed early on in that movement, in which he and his fellows stood against Arminianism, episcopacy, and Erastianism (in short, the Laudian impositions of Charles I) and for the idea that nations can now enter into covenant with God as did Israel of old, was not matched at the Westminster Assembly. Henderson has received scant treatment in recent years, with Jackson's book being the first scholarly work on him since 1836.

Although the English agreed to a joint version of the civil covenant (the Solemn League and Covenant), the covenanting movement never got off the ground in England and subsequently failed to receive widespread support in Scotland (especially after the Restoration under Charles II in 1660). Henderson was dismayed that the dissenting brethren were able so long to derail the Westminster Assembly, as he saw it, over ecclesiological matters, when he believed that such had been solved in Scotland and on the Continent.

Jackson not only updates Henderson for us, using primary sources previously neglected or misread, but also advances the discussion about him on several important fronts. He considers Henderson as a covenanter, preacher, presbyter, and pamphleteer. For his theory of covenanting, Henderson looked back particularly to Knox in seeking to ground his resistance theory in the Bible (as opposed to Buchanan, who grounded his theory less directly in the Bible). Henderson



achieved particularly notoriety as a preacher, and promoted covenanter views of church and state also as a churchman and pamphlet writer. Jackson shows how Henderson viewed his work broadly in an eschatological fashion, seeing Presbyterian polity as the culmination of Reformed theology.

While Jackson argues that the notion of the national covenant is not merely political but

theological, this reviewer would like to have seen more theological engagement of that issue, so important for covenanters, specifically the warrant for a national covenant in the new covenant era, when God no longer deals with the nations in the same way that he did with Israel in the theocracy. That having been said, this is a careful history that refuses to decontextualize Henderson in order to serve current concerns, but insists that we take the proper measure of him in his own time and place.

Henderson died a rather disappointed man, not able to bring about the uniformity of faith and practice that he longed for. Jackson's book serves as an encouragement to labor hard for the kingdom, but also as a cautionary tale: our hard work does not insure a particular outcome, and we must continue to praise God even when things occur in our ministry that look to us like failure.

The Message of the General Epistles in the History of Redemption: Wisdom from James, Peter, John, and Jude, by Brandon D. Crowe. P&R, 2015. Paperback, 232 pages, list price \$16.99. Reviewed by Pastor George C. Hammond.

"Do you understand what you are reading?" "How can I, unless someone guides

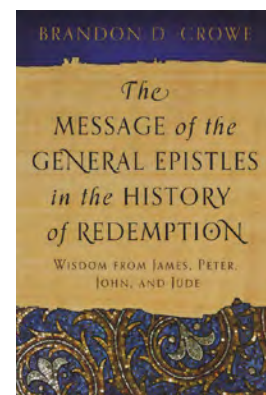
me?" So went the exchange between Philip and the Ethiopian official in Acts 8.

The letters of James, Peter, John, and Jude are brief enough to be easily read in one sitting, but they are often avoided because they contain things that are "hard to understand" (to turn Peter's ironic statement regarding Paul's writings back upon him!). What can it mean when James says, "You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone" (2:24); when Peter says, "Baptism ... now saves you" (1 Peter 3:21); when John says, "No one born of God sins" (1 John 3:9); and when Jude cites extracanonical writings (v. 9)?

Brandon Crowe's nontechnical and readable book employs four methods of study: topical, exegetical, redemptive-historical, and systematic. It is divided topically by chapter into four sections ("Sallywags," "Scoffers," "Schisms," and "Wisdom"), each dealing with themes within these letters. Although these themes track more or less with specific letters, Crowe's treatment has some "cross-pollination" from the other letters in each section, and thus these epistles are treated as a corpus.

Crowe briefly introduces each letter, explaining its historical and cultural milieu, knowledge of which is indispensable for sound exegesis. Crowe also sets the epistles in their redemptive-historical context. He uses a Luke 24-inspired hermeneutic to expand upon how the letters' citations of the Old Testament bear witness to Christ.

This is capped off by a systematic treatment of the topics that are raised in each of the letters, such as election, justification and sanctification, baptism, and eschatology. If evangelism is "what man is to believe concerning God," and discipleship



is "what duty God requires of man," these epistles (and thus this book) are focused on discipleship.

Benefiting from this book will be

anyone who has stayed away from these letters because of their difficulty. The book would be particularly beneficial to those without formal theological training who are called upon to teach one of these epistles.

Although Crowe focuses on the individual letters in turn, each one is referenced throughout the book, so that the reader's understanding of each letter will be enhanced by reading the book *in toto*. In an age of snippet information and Internet "research," which in my experience has done tremendous harm to the faith of the saints, this book begs to be read in its entirety and deserves to be.

***When Democracy Comes to Church*, by Norman De Jong. Redeemer Books, 2015. Paperback, 69 pages, \$10.00 at Redeemer Books (6527 Leisure Creek Dr., S.E., Caledonia, MI 49316; 616-862-2821); \$14.95 on Amazon.com. Reviewed by OP pastor Robert M. Van Manen.**

Norman De Jong, an OP minister and former college and seminary professor, has published a new study guide entitled *When Democracy Comes to Church*. His previous writings, including *Education in the Truth, Christianity vs. Democracy, God's Wedding Band: Reflections on the Creation-Evolution Debate*, and *Lies, Lies, and More Lies: Waging War with Satan*, have served the educational and church world with much-needed insights. In addition, he has published nine inductive Bible studies.

De Jong states that this study guide "provides a powerful antidote for all churches who are trying to resist the allure of radical feminism and the human rights agenda." Additionally, he writes, "Democracy is not a form of government, but an ideal of sinful humans who desire the right to make their own laws, control their own lives, and refuse to be ruled by anyone who wants to lord it over them. A true democrat will insist on making his/her own laws and rules. This becomes devilish when he/she rebels against the

LORD, the Creator of the universe, and the source of divine law."

De Jong begins the study guide by looking at some current issues in the church today, namely feminism and homosexuality. His analysis is that these issues in the church are a result of churches being run as democracies rather than by the truth of God's Word.

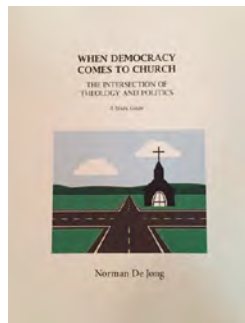
The

guide continues with chapters dealing with the history of the United States, the actual form of government in the United States, and how the educational system over the years has taught a false view of man. The final chapters include an analysis of the both the Democratic and

Republican

parties' official platforms.

This study guide consists of fourteen chapters followed by study questions. It is ideal for a semester in a church education program, a small group Bible study, or personal use. Our congregation made use of the materials, and they proved to be a source of lively discussion and extremely beneficial in helping to understand the current political and church climate. While not everyone in your church will agree with everything he



Marriage, Sexuality, and Faithful Witness:

A Conference for Church Officers

Sponsor: the Committee on Christian Education

Glasgow Presbyterian Church (PCA), Bear, Del.

Wednesday, June 8, 2016, 12:30 to 4:30 p.m.

Speakers:

Carl R. Trueman, Westminster Theological Seminary

Randy Beck, University of Georgia Law School

Tim Geiger, Harvest USA

Panel Discussion:

Joining the speakers will be **Jennifer A. Marshall** from the Heritage Foundation.

Conference fee: \$20 (\$30 for families)

Free for all GA Commissioners

writes, De Jong does provoke a discussion on topics not always thought about in today's society.

This work continues De Jong's practice of identifying a problem, seeing its ramifications in society, and offering a biblical solution. Given the present state of the world, the nation, and the church, this work is timely and worth the discussions it will create.

Positions Available

Associate Pastor: Redeemer Presbyterian Church (OPC) in Ada, Mich., is seeking to call an associate pastor. He will be particularly gifted in the private ministry of the Word (teaching and counseling). He will be committed to a biblical counseling model and have clear, courageous, biblical convictions. His ministry will be exercised primarily in individual discipleship and small group contexts, with opportunities to preach about twice a month, primarily in the evening service. Interested applicants may request a role description by contacting Pastor John Currie at jourrie@redeemer-opc.org.

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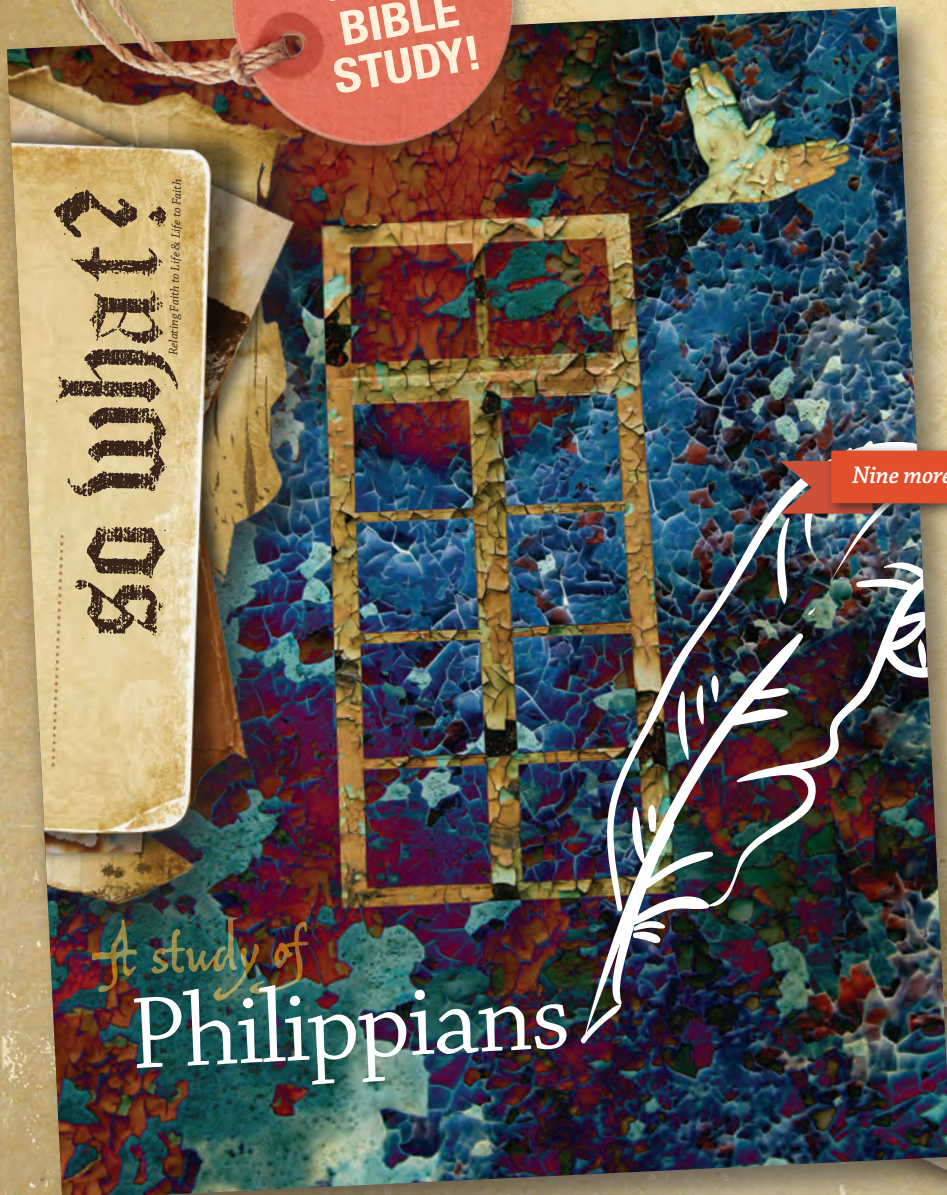
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