

NEW HORIZONS

in the ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

8 Adoption: Glorious
Inheritance //
by Joel D. Fick

JANUARY 2014

23 Review: James Bratt's
Abraham Kuyper //
by J. Muether



The Lord's—and Our— Path to Rachel

by Mark and Jennifer Sallade // **3**

CONTENTS

FEATURES

- 3** The Lord's—and Our—Path to Rachel
By Mark and Jennifer Sallade
- 6** Twice Adopted by Love
By Patricia E. Clawson
- 8** Adoption: Glorious Inheritance
By Joel D. Fick
- 16** Saints or Sinners?
By Norman De Jong

DEPARTMENTS

- 10** Foreign Missions
The Reformed faith in an Asian country
- 12** Christian Education
*First-time internships • ABCs of Presbyterianism
• Out of the mouth ...*
- 14** Home Missions
Eau Claire, Wis. • Hillsdale, Mich.
- 19** Prayer Calendar
- 21** News, Views, Reviews

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in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church

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The fourteenth annual Ladies' Retreat at the Machen Retreat and Conference Center in Highland County, Virginia, was held October 11-12, 2013. Meredith Proctor spoke on "Women's Fellowships—Christ's Way." Thirty-two ladies attended from nine different churches in four different presbyteries from as far away as New York.



THE LORD'S—AND OUR— PATH TO RACHEL



MARK AND JENNIFER SALLADE // **We are planners. At the Sallade home, we think and we plan. Then we think and plan some more. We have five-year plans, ten-year plans, family goals, and multiple possible future budgets, all carefully crafted to take into account any possible contingency.**

So the Sallade family thought.

A Man Plans His Ways—Fall 2011

The family-growth aspect of our plan was (Lord willing, of course!) to have two biological children, two or three years apart, and then adopt a child. It seemed foolproof. The Lord blessed us with a beautiful, biological daughter, Anna Kate. We loved and cherished her. But three years after she was born, there we were, waiting. As so many others have experienced, we waited and prayed, waited and prayed. The Lord was not delivering according to the plan. And with every month, time was slipping away.

Hope turned to disappointment; disappointment became desperation. Friends all around us were planning, praying, and welcoming their third, fourth, and fifth children. We knew it wasn't true, but at times it felt as though the Lord was passing us by, withholding this good thing we desired. Finally, in the fall of 2011, the Lord changed our tear-filled bedside prayers. Instead of asking the Lord to give us the desire

of our heart, we asked the Lord to delight our hearts in him and whatever he had in store.

The Lord Directs His Steps—Winter 2011–Summer 2012

Adoption became a major topic of conversation in our home. We knew the process could be lengthy, so we began gathering information. But after a preliminary meeting at a local agency, we left unsure and unsettled. One of us (Mark) was anxious about some aspects of domestic adoption, but he didn't want to disappoint the other (Jenn), whose excitement was growing by the minute. Neither of us could fit the surprisingly high cost of adoption into our budget. This obstacle felt like a door shut in our faces. The Lord was not opening the door to another biological child, and we could not afford the cover charge at the door of adoption. Many adoptive families shared testimonies of the Lord's provision through churches, grants, and fund-raisers. Our budget didn't have a line item for God simply providing, and we were uncomfortable with a plan we

couldn't afford.

Then the Lord brought into our path a Chinese woman who shed some light on China's one-child policy and the country's many orphans. Our interest was piqued. An Internet search led us to a local Christian adoption agency specializing in China adoptions. In December, we walked into the agency with a list of questions. While we didn't leave with all of the answers, we gained an overwhelming desire to move forward. The road ahead would have challenges, but we remembered the many (different) challenges of welcoming a biological newborn into the world! Adopting from China's special-needs program became our heart's desire!

After praying and talking with family over Christmas, in January 2012 we submitted our application to Living Hope Adoption Agency and the paper chase began. Certified copies of our marriage license, birth certificates, background checks, fingerprints, blood work, and tax documents were just some of the papers we gathered. Friends wrote recommendations, and a social

worker interviewed us four times to complete our home study. We completed online coursework and read the Chinese policy on adoption.

In those days, it continued to sting that we were still unable to conceive another biological child, yet we came to thank the Lord that this child would not come from our genes. She wouldn't be exactly who she is, if she did! Our little one never showed in Jenn's belly, but she was taking up more and more space in our hearts. Together with Anna Kate, we prayed that God would watch over our child, bring her home soon, and, most importantly, that she would know God's love. Family and friends joined us in prayer. One couple from church boldly asked the Lord to put a Christian in her life.

Thoughts of our child's birth and whereabouts were always on our minds. She had likely already been born and been abandoned in secret by her birth parents, probably in a public place where a crying baby would be noticed and taken to an orphanage. Was our child in a well-staffed city orphanage or a poor rural orphanage with many mouths and little food? All of those things that make the first year of a baby's life the hardest for her parents—selfless care, midnight feedings, constant holding, calming and comforting—were the very things our child may have been missing. We may never understand why our child's life had to begin this way, but there are a few truths we clung to. God loved our child, and he was caring for her right



Taking custody of Rachel at the civil affairs office (with one of her nannies)

where she was.

More Planning Our Ways—Fall 2012

We started the adoption process prepared to pay the expense ourselves, a daunting prospect for a pastor's family. So we made plans. We slashed our budget, sold big items, took on jobs, and rented out our master bedroom. God blessed our efforts, and our weak faith

was strengthened to see him pour out support from many unsought sources: friends and family, anonymous donors, our church, grants, and even small amounts of fund-raising.

Saving for adoption depleted our savings for a second car, but God knew that. Friends from church gave us their old one. A neighbor's tree fell on our shed during Hurricane Sandy, but God knew that too. A brother from Calvary helped to repair it. Experiencing the Lord's provision and blessing in this way has been one of the most humbling experiences of our lives. Our faith has grown and our eyes have seen just a little more of how big our God is.

Direct Our Steps, O Lord!—Winter 2012-Spring 2013

Big decisions were on the horizon. Early one morning, about a year into the process, the phone rang



Homecoming: Rachel and Anna Kate meeting face-to-face

with a possible referral of twin boys. We felt compassion, but were unprepared for their overwhelming needs.

In November we received a call about another child, a sweet two-year-old boy. He was pictured in a bright, clean orphanage and described as happy, healthy, and friendly. We shared the news with family members who were in town for Thanksgiving and began to picture this little one around our home and in our life. All that was left was to send his file for a medical review at the local children's hospital. We expected soon to call him our son.

But it was not to be. The specialist came back with shocking news. She was certain this child would not survive the flight home, let alone the surgery he needed once he arrived. While we were thankful for a clear answer, it was heart-breaking. We grasped for the words to pray. What should we even ask? We called on the Lord to teach us *how* to pray and returned to that prayer we recite each Lord's Day, "Our Father, who art in heaven." Our Savior's prayer took on new meaning as we realized the best we could pray was, "Your will be done."

After we had to decline several more files, the phone rang again. Late one night in January, we poured over the file of a one-year-old boy with a repaired cleft lip and palate. Mark was smitten, but Jenn wasn't sure. We decided to sleep and talk in the morning. But thoughts of this little boy kept Jenn awake crying for the time he had spent without a family, for the surgery he went through all alone, for all of the fun baby things he had missed. The next day we spoke with our medical specialist. She was concerned that he might have a serious neurological disorder, and after much discussion and prayer we said no.

Saying no to adopting a child plays with your mind and heart. How could we say no to an orphan, a child desperately in need of a home? How did we know the Lord wasn't directing our steps in *this* path? The truth is, we didn't. But we prayed and trusted that when the time came, the path would be clear and God's will would be done.

We were so thankful for resources like medical specialists to help us make a decision, but we knew that ultimately we needed to lift our eyes to the Lord. From him our help comes, and in his perfect timing. We braced ourselves for what could have been a very long wait.

To our surprise, only a few weeks later we received another, unexpected match—this one our first girl! Three years old, she was cute as a button with a minor special need—we could hardly believe it! We were out of town with family, so we ducked away time and again to talk and pray. After a flurry of phone calls with our medical specialist, on Easter Sunday, March 31, 2013, we submitted our Letter of Intent, our official request to adopt Wang, Qi Hong—our own Rachel Elizabeth!

Our home overflowed with joy and thankfulness! But at the same time, stomachs were in knots and sleep was lost as we waited on China to approve our request to adopt Rachel. It seemed as though the Lord was giving us a precious, second daughter and our fearful, childish hearts demanded, "Ours!" So we prayed. "May we be ready for you to give or take as you see fit, and may the Good Shepherd watch over his little lamb."

Which Way? This Way!—Summer 2013

Summer was a whirlwind! Our Letter of Acceptance came in record time, only twenty days. We were even able to send Rachel a care package in time for her third birthday. Subsequent papers were processed in a timely manner and we received our travel approval in July. Two weeks later, we were on a plane to China. When the Lord showed us the path, he made us move!

On July 29, we joined a dozen other families in the local Chinese Civil Affairs Office, hearts racing, palms sweating, voices shaking, and diaper bags stuffed. We had spent our morning praying and reading God's Word, nervously walking the streets around our hotel, trying to prepare ourselves to meet our Rachel that afternoon. Over

the past two years, we had read an exorbitant number of books, blogs, and articles. Oh, we had planned. But how would the Lord continue to direct our steps?

We still couldn't picture exactly how God was going to graft Rachel into our family and especially how the first few hours, days, and weeks would go. Would she reject us, shut down, cry and mourn, rage and scream? Would she be fine at first, then fall apart? Would she be clingy and helpless or strong and stoic? Would the language barrier have us frustrated or would it be no big deal? Thankfully, in those moments the Lord reminded us how smoothly he had paved our way. Our faith was weak and our abilities were meager, but the Lord continued to guide us, one day at a time. We knew we could go to meet Rachel—with all of our excitement, nervousness, joy, and peace—because the Lord, *our* Shepherd, was with us and with her.

And the Lord most certainly blessed. We will never forget our first glimpse of Rachel. Through a partially cracked door, into a side room, there she was, hair in pigtails, eyes darting around this strange, bustling building. In the first moments of our meeting, Rachel was shy and ran back to her nanny. But at the offer of cereal, she slowly warmed up, and when the time came, she gladly left in our arms. Back at our hotel, we gave her new toys, played, took a walk, and sat down around our coffee table for our first dinner with our new daughter. Later that night, we enjoyed Face Time with Anna Kate and Grandma, who were just waking up back in Pennsylvania. As soon as Rachel saw Anna Kate, she ran off to find the photo book we had sent her. She pointed to Anna Kate's picture and said, "Jie jie!" (big sister!). It was overwhelming.

The first couple of days came with some high highs and low lows. Rachel easily sat with us, let us hold her, looked in our eyes, smiled, and laughed. She also threw major tantrums and cried, pointing to the door. But we were glad for opportunities to comfort her as she

[Continued on page 18]

TWICE ADOPTED BY LOVE



PATRICIA E. CLAWSON // Perhaps more than most of us, Stephen Slack and Mark Richline understand what it means to be an adopted child of God. That's because both were adopted as infants by godly families in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Now their own families belong to the OPC.

These are their stories.

Just Another Slack

Growing up, Stephen Slack, 26, often forgot that he was adopted, even though he is African American and his family is Caucasian. “The cool part was even though this is so, I still most of the time don't even remember I'm adopted,” said Stephen.

When he was at River of Life Presbyterian Church (OPC) in Phillipsburg, New Jersey, where his father, William Slack, was (and still is) the pastor, Stephen was just treated as the son of their minister, which was fine with him. If he acted up, which wasn't often, they would call him out. “My local church was awesome in helping to raise me,” remembers Stephen. “The church was just as loving and accepting as my family. Most of all, they always encouraged me—constantly!”

Stephen, now a personal trainer, husband, and father, was five weeks old when he was adopted. His nineteen-year-old birth mother knew it would be a struggle to raise a child after the

seventeen-year-old father left, so she placed him for adoption. She also requested that her baby go to a Christian household. At the same time, William Slack and his wife, Tina, had three children and considered taking in foster children. “My father knew my mother's heart for children and that she would struggle with giving her foster kids away, so he urged her to consider adoption instead,” said Stephen. “My very first recollections are of nothing less than full acceptance and being just another Slack.”

This fact later gave him a special understanding of his spiritual adoption as God's son. “Due to the fact that I would forget I was adopted most of the time, this gave me insight into the fact that God's love for his adopted children is just as potent—to the point of no recognizable difference between adopted and natural children. It's pretty amazing how close Christ's sacrifice made us to God—to the point of being a member of his family!”

Growing up in the church, Stephen was taught the truths of the Bible from

a very young age. He advises adoptive parents to “be honest from the beginning and raise the child as God encourages and raises his children.” He also encourages church members to treat adopted kids like any other children. “Treat them as if they were not adopted, but this doesn't mean you don't tell them, because truth and love are inseparable.”

Stephen's understanding of both earthly and heavenly adoptions helps him as a parent: “I want to be there for my kids because I realize certain situations could have put them in need for adoption. In other words, I try to enjoy each moment with them because they are a gift, not a right.”

Adopted Child of God

If you ask Mark Richline, our OPC missionary to Uruguay, who he is, he'll tell you he's “an adopted child of God.” He has been engrafted not only into the body of Christ, but also into the Richline family.

His story begins with his birth mother, who became pregnant by a

married man while in her twenties. A member of a Reformed church, she repented and never considered having an abortion, but her parents and church rejected her. Hours before giving birth, her pastor said her sin condemned her. After Mark's birth, she visited him weekly in foster care and wrestled in prayer. Convinced that the Lord was calling her to surrender Mark, she placed him with Bethany Christian Services and promised God never to search for Mark unless God opened the way.

Meanwhile, Charles and Norma Richline had been unable to have children. As members of Calvary Community Church (OPC) in Harmony, New Jersey, they were advised by their pastor, Lewis Grotenhuis, to apply for adoption through Bethany Christian Services. They adopted Mark when he was three months old and later his sister, Denise.

Knowing he was adopted, Mark was secure in his parent's love, although sometimes he needed reassurance that he was a permanent part of the family. Once when he was eight, he spoke with his father about his adoption. His doubts were erased when his dad looked him in the eye and said, "Son, you are mine. You belong to me. If anyone

comes looking for you to take you away from me, I will run away with you and they won't find us." At the age of ten, Mark told his mother he always wanted to live with them and never leave home. She smiled and explained that they knew he was "on loan" from the Lord, and that their labor of love was to prepare him to leave home and serve the Lord.

Mark's second adopted family was his church. "My church was a safe place for me because I knew I was loved," said Mark. "Looking back, I appreciated how no one either looked down on me or treated me special simply because I was adopted."

Unbeknownst to Mark, his birth mother and father, with the blessings of her parents and the church, eventually married, had another son, and lived only forty-five minutes from where he grew up. But for twenty-four years, his mother quietly celebrated Mark's birthday, and cried over and prayed for him.

Then one morning in October 1992, she felt convicted that she should write a letter to Mark. Mark was completing his service as a missionary associate in Japan when his parents called to say that his birth mother had sent him a letter via Bethany Christian Services.

"I was absolutely blown away by their news," said Mark. He postponed answering until he could talk face-to-face with his parents. "I would not risk crushing my parents to begin a relationship with my birth mother," said Mark. He was amazed when his parents encouraged him to meet her.

God's Providential Grace

The night he called his birth mother, he dialed the number, let it ring twice, then slammed the phone down, unsure of what to say. "I stopped to pray and told the Lord that this would be much easier if I knew she was a Christian," said Mark. Then he dialed again. "I later learned that at that very moment she was standing with her hands raised in prayer, asking the Lord to let the phone ring from me. Suddenly it rang and she answered. I said, 'Hello Mrs. Saltenberger. My name is Mark, and I'm your son.' She responded to me with, 'Praise the Lord!' From that moment, we were reunited by the grace of God."

Mark's birth mom, Joyce Saltenberger, describes her amazement at God's providential grace. "Answered prayer beyond measure by a heavenly Father who knew fully well, that as I signed the adoption papers, upon inspiration from him, that he would bring us together again, not only in the body, but also fully in the Spirit. It doesn't get better than that."

Since then, they have spent hours together on visits, on the phone, and in e-mails. He preached at his birth father's funeral and officiated at his blood brother's wedding. "I continue to be amazed at how gracious both my parents and my birth parents have been to me and to each other over these past twenty years," said Mark.

Mark was twenty-six when he began seeing his spiritual adoption in light of his earthly adoption. He was adopted into a peaceful home, declared by the courts to be a Richline, received a new name, gained brothers and sisters, and knew his father disciplined him to shape him. "I soaked myself in the reality of the God of the universe placing me in his family, declaring to me, 'You belong to me now. All I am is yours. All I possess belongs to you.'"

May we, like Stephen and Mark, also marvel at our adoption in Christ. □

The author is the editorial assistant for New Horizons.



The Slack family

ADOPTION: GLORIOUS INHERITANCE



JOEL D. FICK // Our daughter's fussing started this summer just as we reached the summit of the Siskiyou mountain range that divides California from Oregon. Home was on the other side of the country in north-central Florida, far from the lofty mountains of north-central California.

But a family reunion still farther north in north-central Oregon had us driving along Interstate 5 from Los Angeles to Portland on this seemingly endless northern trajectory. We had been driving for some fifteen hours, and we were all tired. We were at that particular stretch of highway known to be among the more treacherous routes in the entire interstate system because of its sharp descent of 2,300 feet in the span of about seven miles. By the time we had descended into Medford, Darya's fussing had turned to intermittent bouts of full-on screaming, and there were still many miles to go.

Our adopted daughter Darya (now five years old) has Down syndrome, and this steep decline was wreaking havoc on her already narrow ear canals. Meanwhile, Darya's three older brothers, Sam, Ben, and Nate, were doing their best to calm their sister down by singing some of her favorite songs.

As I took stock of the situation that had been unfolding behind me, I thought to myself, "This trip would be so much easier without Darya." And

it was true—it really would have been easier. The boys were getting older, and were now self-sufficient in so many ways.

Easier, but Emptier

But as I thought about it more, God granted me grace to see the beauty of what was really unfolding behind me. A little girl, who had never had anyone to love her or care for her when she was hurting, now had a chorus of brothers seeking to calm her in her pain. This little outcast, in the eyes of the world, had been given a new name, which said she was no longer an outcast, but that she belonged to our family.

When we had stopped for dinner in Roseburg, I had no sooner unbuckled her car seat when Darya jumped into my arms, relieved that her distress was finally over and wanting nothing more than the reassurance of being held by Daddy. My heart melted. In that moment, I was reminded not only of the benefits of adoption for Darya, but more profoundly of the benefits for me. I would later say to my wife, "This trip

would have been so much easier without Darya, but it would have been so much emptier as well."

The Cost of Adoption

The present article is intended to be a follow-up to an article I wrote for *New Horizons* in January 2011. That article was entitled "Adoption: Costly Redemption." In it, I chronicled the events, thinking, and theology that led to our decision to adopt Darya.

I considered the analogy between our adoption of children and God's adoption of us, taking the title from those two phrases in Ephesians 1:4–7, "In love he predestined us *for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ*" and "In him *we have redemption through his blood.*"

My basic premise was that adoption is redemption and therefore is costly—as the psalmist says, "For the ransom of their life is costly" (Ps. 49:8). I sought to demonstrate how this premise courses through the teaching of Scripture.

For example, Israel's redemption from slavery is called her adoption (Rom. 9:4; cf. Ex. 4:22–23), and God's

command for Israel to care for the fatherless was grounded in this redemption (Deut. 10:18–19; 24:17–22; Ps. 68:5). Likewise, the church’s redemption from her bondage to sin and the law is her adoption (Eph. 1:5–7; Gal. 4:4–5). The final, consummate blessing for which we wait is called nothing less than our “*adoption* as sons, the *redemption* of our bodies” (Rom. 8:23).

I also found this premise reflected in our standards. The Shorter Catechism teaches us that adoption is one of the primary benefits of our effectual calling, which is nothing less than the way in which “the Spirit applieth to us *the redemption* purchased by Christ” (Q/A 30).

The Benefit and Blessing of Adoption

So far so good, but that only tells part of the story, and that part is focused on the costliness of adoption. But there is another emphasis in Scripture (and in our Shorter Catechism, for that matter), which is not on the *costliness* of adoption, but on its *benefit and blessing*. That benefit and blessing is the heart of this article.

Once again, I have drawn my title (“Adoption: Glorious Inheritance”) from another passage in Ephesians. In Ephesians 1:16–22, Paul tells the Ephesian Christians of his prayers for them. He prays “that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, *what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints*, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe” (vv. 17–19).

It is the phrase “what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints” that has caught my attention.

An inheritance is something that we immediately associate with the relationship between children and their parents. This is all part of the wonderful benefit of being one of God’s adopted

children.

The emphasis in our Shorter Catechism is almost exclusively on the benefit and blessing of adoption. Question 34 asks, “What is adoption?” The answer given is, “Adoption is an act of God’s free grace, whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges, of the sons of God.”

Among those privileges of having God’s name put upon us is the privilege of an inheritance. The Scripture says that because we have “the Spirit of adoption,” we are “heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ” (Rom. 8:15–17).

This inheritance is spoken of in Scripture as a “kingdom” inheritance (James 2:5; Eph. 5:5). That kingdom inheritance was prefigured in the promised land of Canaan (Num. 34), and will be realized consummately in our eternal life in the promised land of heaven (Heb. 9:15; 11:8–10).

The Spirit himself is “the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory” (Eph. 1:14).

God as Our Inheritance

But more than that, the witness of Scripture is not simply that heaven is our inheritance, but also that the King, God himself, is our inheritance.

The land was a holy land only because it was the place where God dwelt in the midst of his people. It was God’s presence that made the inheritance of such great value. This was evidenced by the fact that God himself was to be Abraham’s “great reward” (Gen. 15:1) and by the fact that the Levites had no portion in the land because God himself was to be their portion (Num. 18:20; Deut. 10:9; 18:2).

This comes out in the intimate song of the psalmist, who says, “The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot. The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance” (Ps. 16:5–6; see also Ps. 73:25–26; Lam. 3:24). Such is the glorious inheritance that belongs to the adopted children of the King: we receive not just the kingdom, but the

King himself.

God’s Inheritance of Us

But Paul may well have more in mind in his prayer for the Ephesian saints. In the ESV, Paul’s prayer is that the saints may know “what are *the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints*” (1:18). If this translation is correct (and I think it is), the point seems to be that God himself also receives an inheritance.

Now, it’s perhaps easy for us to see how we receive an inheritance, but it’s less easy to see how it might be that God does. And yet that seems to be the clear teaching of Scripture. So, for instance, Deuteronomy 4:20 says that God redeemed his people from Egypt “to be a people of his own inheritance.”

And this is hardly an isolated instance. It is a repeated emphasis in Scripture (consider also Deut. 9:26, 29; 2 Sam. 21:3; 1 Kings 8:51, 53; 2 Kings 21:14; Pss. 28:9; 33:12; 68:9; 78:62, 71; 94:14; 106:5, 40; Isa. 19:25; 47:6; 63:17; Jer. 10:16; 51:19). And it is also clear that God intended for the nations to be part of the inheritance that he gives to his Son in the resurrection (Ps. 2:7–8; cf. Acts 13:32–34).

Now of course we should be clear that since no one gives to God anything “that he might be repaid” (Rom. 11:35), God does not receive this inheritance in the same way that we do. Rather, we should simply acknowledge that God gives this inheritance of his people to himself, and yet he finds benefit and takes pleasure in the inheritance of his people.

It is wonderful to consider that God takes worms like you and me and through his Son delights in us as gifts and trophies of his grace. Perhaps the benefit he receives is in some small measure analogous to the delight I take in my daughter’s love. In this marvelous grace of adoption, the benefit is a glorious inheritance in which we receive him and he for Christ’s sake receives us. □

The author is the pastor of Redemption OPC in Gainesville, Fla.

PROSPECTS FOR THE REFORMED FAITH

// A MISSIONARY IN ASIA



Prayer during worship at the place where the missionary family attends each week

At the beginning of 2012, my family and I moved to a new city to help a local church seeking to be more Reformed and Presbyterian. My main partner here has been a man whom I hope to see complete his ordination trials and be ordained as a minister of the gospel in March. The following is the bulk of an interview that I conducted with him recently and translated into English with some editing.

1. How and when did you become a Christian, and how did you come to embrace the Reformed faith?

I was an exchange student in Russia in 1991. That was my first time abroad, and at that time I learned about many new things, including Christianity. My classmate shared the gospel with me, and a Canadian missionary led me to Christ. I was baptized on Easter Sunday in 1993. God really changed my heart, and I started to read the Bible and share the gospel everywhere. In 1995, I graduated from college and began to work for my country's state company in Moscow. But one year later, God called me back to my country, and I started a small-group Bible study. A Reformed Baptist pastor came to my hometown and helped us start a church in 1997. In 1999, he ordained me and three other men as elders in our church. In 2005, the Rev. Paul Wang, who was living in Grand Rapids, Michigan, at the time and is now a pastor in the PCA, came to share the Reformed faith with us. First, he told us about the doctrines of grace and gave us his translation of the Westminster Standards. This document surprised me. One year later, the Rev. Luke Lu, now an OP minister, came to help us understand systematic theology. He especially helped us to understand covenant theology and covenant family baptism clearly. Then you moved with your family to our city and are currently helping us put the Reformed faith into practice.

2. Do you have any guess as to how many Christians in your country would say that they are Reformed Christians?

More and more Christians are interested in the Reformed faith. Learning Reformed theology is popular among the churches now. I would guess there are at least 100,000 Reformed Christians here. But more than a million Christians are studying the Reformed faith now. [*This is a high estimate, but it would seem to me not completely outrageous.* —Missionary]

3. Why do you feel that the Reformed faith and Presbyterianism are important to, and can help, the church in your country?

One reason is that the Reformed faith can help us to focus on the sovereignty of God and to live by his grace and his providence. Second, the Reformed faith can help our church here become more submissive. Every member needs to learn to submit to God's law and the constitution of the church. Third, Reformed Presbyterianism can help the church here govern herself in an orderly way. And if the government of the church strongly upholds Presbyterianism, the church could have a big impact on our communities and even on our whole nation by being an example of an orderly community.

4. What are some of the challenges to establishing a Reformed and Presbyterian church in your country? What are some challenges that you personally have had to face?

One problem that we have had to face is that of balancing our doctrine and our life. Currently the church is progressively reforming her doctrine, and the Westminster Catechisms and systematic theology are constantly being taught, but many believers, especially church leaders, are not God-centered in their lives, and therefore their lives are not sufficiently Reformed. Infant baptism has begun to be practiced in many places, but, with rare exceptions, family worship and Christian education in the home have not really begun to be practiced according to the Lord's instructions.

A second problem is that hypercritical attitudes within Reformed churches are common. As soon as believers in many churches began to understand Reformed theology, they

also started to criticize others and debate who was “truly Reformed” or make comparisons to determine who was purely Reformed. Questions such as “Should only the Psalms be sung in worship?” or “Should believers spend the whole day in church worshipping on Sunday?” or “Can nonmembers partake of the Lord’s Supper?” became central, and believers began judging each other over these matters.

Third, governance by a plurality of elders in the church is a troublesome problem in our culture. Our culture does not really have an example of a system of governance by multiple, equal leaders. The example of the secular government is of centralized state power. Everyone likes to look up to one leader with the hope that he or she will lead them out of adversity. Cooperation is a difficult problem in the church. Some churches here are governed by elders, and have even established presbyteries, yet, practically speaking, most are still governed by a bishop and have a system of centralized power.

As for personal challenges, it is challenging to try to train up a new generation of leaders to govern the church. It is not so difficult to teach good doctrine and see people gradually discover the truth, but to mentor the spiritual life of a new generation of elders and deacons is quite challenging and requires “exercise” in practical living. It is important to figure out how to set up a complete course of training and a mentoring system.

It is a challenge to govern my own family. As a church, we practice infant baptism and have begun to have Christian education of the family, but my wife and I ourselves need to be more Reformed as a couple for the life and development of our children.

It is a challenge to govern myself. My own spiritual life, knowledge of God, reading, meditating, prayer—each of these aspects of my life needs continual renewal by the grace of God. Another significant challenge is maintaining sufficient fellowship with other elders.

5. What is your vision for the Reformed church in the northeastern region of your country? In what way do you hope the Lord will use you to see this vision materialize?

I really like to talk about vision, but, quite honestly, in the process of implementing reform in the church over the past three years, I have personally felt a little discouraged. Therefore, in the short term, I only hope to see elders and deacons raised up for my own local church session and things being done there decently and in order. I hope that the three small mission works that I currently serve can become a good Reformed witness, with a sufficient number of qualified elders, and that a presbytery can be formed in the area soon.

In the long term, I hope that the churches in the northeastern region can continually see reform and have patience, interaction, and interconnectedness with one another. Maybe by 2017 [*the 500th anniversary of the beginning of the Protestant Reformation—Mssionary*] presbyteries can emerge, which, in connection with other regional churches, may form a general assembly. After a Reformed presbytery has been established

in the northeastern region, I hope that a missions committee will be organized in order to evangelize more areas and people groups. I also hope to see the northeastern region have its own Reformed seminary to train future pastors and elders.

6. What kind of help is most needed from Reformed and Presbyterian churches outside of your country by the churches in your country seeking to be Reformed?

First of all, prayer. I hope that all foreign Reformed churches can periodically organize small-group prayer meetings for our country, especially for the leadership of the church. To achieve this, we could periodically write prayer letters to establish a sense of spiritual connectedness between churches.

Secondly, mentorship. Our elders and pastors need more connection with experienced elders and pastors. Possible ways to provide practical help are establishing relationships through the Internet, periodically coming to our country to meet and fellowship with young pastors face-to-face, and setting up mechanisms for accountability. Providing biblical counseling for pastors online could help reduce the stress of our pastors as well.

Thirdly, support for Christian education. The church needs to establish more theological training centers. This support could be obtained through sending instructors to our country or by using Internet tools such as Skype to teach classes. Biblical commentaries are also greatly needed. Currently we can obtain a number of books about systematic theology, but good “book by book” Bible study materials are not as readily available. I hope that foreign Reformed churches can help our future seminary by sending one or two supervisors to our country to counsel theological students in their studies and lives. We could also really use some volunteers to come and help organize VBS programs for both believing and unbelieving children to study the Bible.

What's New

// Appointments

The missionary associate appointment of **Mr. Jesse L. Van Gorkom** (Alderwood Community Church, Lynnwood, Wash.) in Nakaale, Uganda, has been extended for two years, beginning in January 2014.

// Comings/Goings

Rev. and Mrs. Stewart E. (Laurie) Lauer, having concluded a seven-month furlough, are planning to return to their labors in Numazu, Japan, in January.

Rev. and Mrs. Frank J. (Deborah) Marsh (pastor, Covenant Presbyterian Church, OPC, New Berlin, Wis.) completed their five-month term as missionary associates in Asia at the end of December. They plan to return to the U.S. on January 16.

FIRST-TIME INTERNSHIPS

// PATRICIA E. CLAWSON



Mentoring pastor Kevin Van Der Linden (left) and summer intern Joseph Johnson at Reformation Fellowship in Roseville, Calif.

Do you ever wonder if your church should have a pastoral intern? Consider the blessings to four Orthodox Presbyterian churches that had their first intern last year.

Summer Internships

Covenant OPC in Kennewick, Washington, always wanted an intern, but lacked the resources. Interns from sister churches filled their pulpit, and Pastor Mark Collingridge often met with seminarian Adam Phillips to discuss theology and pastoral issues. When the session decided to have their first summer intern, Phillips was the natural choice.

“Our session knows and values the part the local church plays in mentoring the next generation of ministers,” said Collingridge. “The congregation was eager to support the opportunity. They were amazed to see the development of a young man from the beginning of the internship to the end of it.”

As the mentoring pastor, Collingridge benefited from the internship. “It was encouraging for me to mentor another man and help in preparing him for the gospel ministry,” he said. “Pastoral ministry is largely about giving of oneself in service to the congregation. Sometimes giving can drain a man. Giving to an intern was a different kind of drain—a good one.”

The internship displayed God’s faithfulness in raising up future pastors. “It takes patience to allow a man to grow and develop in the context of public worship and to go through that process for the sake of those congregations Adam will eventually serve,” Collingridge said. “It’s good for churches to see what the Lord is doing beyond and outside our mostly small congregations. It is a financial commitment, but a worthy one. It is a time commitment, but a necessary one.”

A memorial fund helped Reformation Fellowship in Roseville, California, finance their first summer intern, Joseph Johnson, a seminarian and member of their congregation.

Pastor Kevin Van Der Linden was uncertain about mentoring Johnson, but overcame his hesitancy because he wanted to see Johnson develop. “Trying to be of help to him and help him think through preaching and other questions, proved helpful and refining for me in my own work,” said Van Der Linden. “I think that, next to the intern, the supervising pastor learns the most. For example, I had to think about how I craft a sermon with greater clarity when it came time to convey praise, critique, and concrete ideas about how to pastorally shape and present the material.”

His congregation supported their intern. “They were glad to receive the Word from him,” said Van Der Linden. “Our youth especially appreciated having Joe teach and spend time with them. Joe was a blessing to all of us.”

Van Der Linden learned the cost and blessings of mentoring an intern. “Having an intern is an act of giving. Do not have an intern if you’re thinking it will provide a break for the pastor or provide ‘cheap help,’” he said. “The main benefit is the joy of serving the intern and praying that you are investing in the next generation of men whom Jesus is raising up to serve his church in the ministry of the Word.”

Two years after becoming an organized congregation, Redemption OPC in Gainesville, Florida, was at a point where they could afford to finance a summer intern with help from their presbytery, funds from the Committee on Christian Education, and an anonymous gift that paid for housing. The session had desired to train young men for the ministry so when Pastor Joel Fick learned that seminarian Jordan Rossi had been approved by the Christian Education Committee for an internship, they offered it to him.

“The congregation was very good about being supportive of [the intern’s] growth in terms of giving him good feedback and trying to be an encouragement to him,” said Fick. Jordan and his wife “had meals for a week upon arriving, were showered with love, and generally welcomed with open arms.”

Fick recommends the same welcoming spirit for any

intern's wife: "Make sure to invest not only in the intern himself, but also in his wife. It's really a package deal, and will be for whatever church they end up serving in the future."

Mentoring pastors should give their congregation the big picture about internships, said Fick: "Seek to inculcate in your church a sense that we are part of God's work in developing and helping these men meet their potential and have their calling tested."

Yearlong Internship

When local seminarian Micah Shinn providentially dropped into the lap of Cedar Presbyterian Church in Hudsonville, Michigan, the congregation jumped on it, said Pastor Stephen Igo. First Shinn served as a volunteer intern. The church soon realized that he would benefit from a yearlong internship. To fund this first paid internship, the session received the OPC's matching funds for interns and asked the congregation to give three months of "love gifts," and then asked for \$6,000 in additional gifts. The congregation gave \$9,000. "The OPC stimulated our generosity," said Igo.

Igo and the congregation befriended the intern. Although the pastor preaches less with an intern, he spends that time helping the intern learn the duties of the ministry, said Igo. The internship "is a great way to learn and return. We as ministers learn so much. That'll die with us or we pass it on to the next generation," said Igo. The intern "learned from us, but his zeal and youthful energy are infectious and spread to the congregation. The morale is so high."

Igo encourages other congregations to have an intern. "Be open to the idea, and when the opportunity opens itself, do it!" he said. Who knows? Perhaps more interns will be like Micah Shinn, who not only grew in his gifts for ministry, but also met his future wife as well.

Internship Applications

If your church would like to have an intern, or if you are a seminarian seeking an internship, please apply by **February 28, 2014**. The Committee on Christian Education anticipates offering churches with summer interns \$1,000 to \$1,100 a month in matching funds, while those with yearlong interns may receive \$1,250 to \$1,300 a month. Churches are required at least to match that amount.

Next March, the CCE's Subcommittee on Ministerial Training will review the applications and recommend approval for funding to the churches and for men to serve as interns. Churches that haven't requested a particular man will receive a packet of approved intern applications, from which they can interview and select an intern.

For more information and application forms, go to the OPC website, www.OPC.org, and then click on "Christian Education," "Ministerial Training," and "Internship Program." If you have any questions, please contact Danny Olinger, the internship director, at olinger.1@opc.org or 215-830-0900, ext. *828.

ABCs of PRESBYTERIANISM Who Runs This Church?

Larry Wilson

For a while, I was the general secretary of the Committee on Christian Education. As I visited churches, again and again people would ask me, "What's it like to work at the OPC headquarters?" My stock reply was, "I wouldn't know. I only work at the OPC administrative offices. Our headquarters are at the right hand of God the Father Almighty!"

Our Lord Jesus has "all authority in heaven and on earth" (Matt. 28:18). God's Word insists, "Christ is the head of the church, his body" (Eph. 5:23; cf. Col. 1:18). There is one king—the only mediator between God and man—King Jesus. *He* is the one who runs the church. Edmund Clowney said it well:

It is Christ's church. Christ is the bridegroom, the church is his bride; Christ is the head, the church is his body; Christ is the king, the church is his kingdom; Christ is the shepherd, the church is his flock. Apart from Christ the church makes no sense. We cannot start with a building or a roll or members—we have to start with Christ. Without a shepherd the sheep are scattered. It is the call of the shepherd ... that gathers the sheep into a flock (John 10). When Jesus said, "I will build my church" (Matt. 16:18) he was speaking of men and women, boys and girls to be set upon the foundation of his apostles. Christ builds in living stones; the church is not only his possession, it is his creation. (*Living in Christ's Church* [Great Commission Publications, 1986], p. 44)

We cannot be reminded too often of this truth! Alas, our sin is such that our expectations all too often sink down to feeling as if years ago Jesus set things in motion but then left it up to us to run the church according to his directions. But that is practical deism! It is functional *unbelief*! No! In his Word, God insists that our Lord Jesus is personally building his church. He himself is supernaturally gathering and perfecting his flock. The Lord is our Shepherd!

● Out of the Mouth . . .

Our grandson, Logan (age 5), has his mom read the Bible to him every night before going to bed. Logan then prays before being tucked in. One night, not long ago, it was time to pray. Said Logan, "Mommy, I'm too tired to pray tonight. Can I just send Jesus a card?"

—Gary Metzger
Bethlehem, PA

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

THE LORD'S PROVISION IN EAU CLAIRE, WISCONSIN

// JOHN S. SHAW



The initial group that met in an Eau Claire theater; Pastor Kim Kuhfuss (with his wife, Barb) in front

The Presbytery of the Midwest received Covenant Presbyterian Church in Roberts, Wisconsin, as a new congregation in 2005. This congregation, comprised largely of young families, took a surprising journey into the OPC; most of the families came from charismatic backgrounds. Rev. Kim Kuhfuss capably led them along this journey.

Kim received theological training at North Central University, an Assemblies of God school in the heart of Minneapolis. He served twenty-nine years as a pastor, sixteen of those years in the Assemblies of God, before his ordination as a minister in the OPC. During this time, he served several different congregations and planted a couple of new churches in the upper Midwest. The Lord blessed his ministry of evangelism, discipleship, and teaching.

Several Assemblies of God families joined with Pastor Kuhfuss to plant a new, independent church in Roberts during the early 1990s. At the same time, Kim began to study the Reformed faith. Through his studies, including a careful reading of the complete works of John Owen, Kim became convinced of the Reformed faith.

These new convictions brought a time of transition in his life and ministry. As he investigated various Reformed and Presbyterian denominations and prayed, he decided to pursue pastoral ministry in the OPC. To his surprise and joy, most of the congregation came to share his convictions and followed him; thus Covenant Presbyterian Church was formed.

Over the next several years, the Lord blessed this congregation with new families and many children. (Sometimes children appeared to outnumber adults.) Three families drove between sixty and ninety minutes to worship every Sunday. The session began a more localized Bible study with those families in 2008 and eventually set their sights on the city of Eau Claire, a metropolitan area of approximately 115,000 people with a branch campus of the University of Wisconsin.

This group met for worship under the oversight of the Covenant Presbyterian session for two years, with several members of the presbytery coming to preach during that time. The Lord did not appear to prosper those efforts, so the services were stopped in 2010. Yet the Lord never ceases to surprise his people. Almost immediately, new contacts from the Eau Claire area showed up for worship at Covenant Presbyterian (now meeting in Hammond, Wisconsin).

With new encouragement and more families travelling great distances every Sunday, the session decided to reopen the work in 2013. At Pastor Kuhfuss's request, they released him earlier this year to become the new full-time church planter in Eau Claire. The congregation jumped in with both feet to see whether the Lord might establish a new Orthodox Presbyterian work.

The Lord has already blessed their commitment. The Rev. Shane Lems was installed in October as the new pastor of Covenant Presbyterian in Hammond, and the people have warmly embraced their new shepherd. Meanwhile, Kim and his wife, Barb, bought a home in Eau Claire and moved there in June. (They even hosted the first worship services in their living room.) The Lord soon provided a suitable meeting location in a local movie theater that provides a public face for Providence Reformed Church (OPC) of Eau Claire.

Providence Reformed Church began in July with thirty people who moved from the mother church, and already the Lord has brought fifteen new people to them. The group includes two students from the University of Wisconsin branch campus and also a Cru (formerly Campus Crusade) staff person. They are planning to pursue ongoing outreach on the university campus.

Rev. Kuhfuss and the group are committed to outreach and evangelism. They have utilized various means of passive evangelism (website, online ads, newspaper ads, mailers, business cards, etc.), but they are planning for active, face-to-face outreach, as well. Most importantly, though, they have

committed to intentional times of prayer. Regular Saturday morning prayer meetings will soon begin, focused specifically on outreach and evangelism. They recognize that the Lord builds his church, and so they seek his face in these matters.

How might you pray for this work? First, give thanks for the commitment and sacrifice of the mother church, Covenant Presbyterian, which has given much to see a new work started in Eau Claire. Second, pray that the Lord would bless the commitment to outreach and prayer at Providence Reformed Church. Third, pray for energy and encouragement for Rev. Kuhfuss and his wife, Barb, as they face the many pressures of a church-planting family. Fourth and finally, pray for the Lord to build a community of worshippers in Eau Claire, that his name might be exalted in that place.

A NEW HOME FOR HILLSDALE OPC

John S. Shaw

Thirty years ago, a family with Orthodox Presbyterian roots moved to Hillsdale, Michigan, and hoped to be part of a new work. Through lack of interest, those plans lay dormant for twenty-four years. More recently, twenty-five Hillsdale College students prayed regularly for the Lord to bring a Presbyterian and Reformed work to the area. During that same time, three families with OPC or PCA backgrounds moved to the area. Those prayers, students, and families formed the foundation for a new work established by the Presbytery of Michigan and Ontario in September 2007. The next year, the presbytery called the Rev. Everett Henes to serve as the organizing pastor.

Up to that point, there was no confessional Presbyterian or Reformed witness within a ninety-minute drive of Hillsdale. But the Lord has graciously built Hillsdale OPC as a solid witness to his gospel in this critical area. This group has proved to be a strategic work within the OPC. Since 2008, approximately sixty-five students have regularly attended Hillsdale until graduation. More than half of those students now participate in OP congregations throughout the United States.

While the work enjoys the faithful participation of students, the long-term stability

of the church depends on local families. They have experienced some progress in that area, but meeting on campus for worship proved to be an obstacle. Local families regularly asked if this was just a church for students. That repeated question led to an active building search.

In the Lord's kind providence, he has provided a wonderful new building for Hillsdale. For local families, the former train depot offers a familiar location in the middle of town. For students, the new church building is an easy three-block walk from campus. For the church, their new location provides plenty of space for fellowship and classes, and also a worship space with room for growth.

The Lord has displayed his remarkable provision for the church throughout this process. Generous gifts from the parents of students and local families provided all the financial resources needed for the transition to a new space, including the purchase of furniture and a piano. The OPC Loan Fund supported the work by providing the necessary financing. A local painter even offered to paint the worship area at his own expense.

This young congregation enjoyed their first worship services in the new facility on November 17. They look forward to many years of fruitful gospel ministry, even celebrating the bittersweet opportunity to serve young students for four years before sending them off to service in other God-honoring congregations. Pray that the Lord would bless this congregation, even blessing them through the use of this building, as they participate in God's kingdom work.

Home Missions Today

For up-to-date Home Missions news and prayer updates, e-mail HomeMissionsToday@opc.org.
New editions: January 1, 15, 29.



Hillsdale OPC worshipping in their new facility

SAINTS OR SINNERS?



NORMAN DE JONG // Have you ever wondered why some pastors have a more positive relationship with their congregation than do others? Have you ever tried to analyze the factors that make one pastor deeply loved by his parishioners, while others seem only to engender doubt and disagreement?

Being a pastor in today's church can be a very trying experience. One need not travel far or live long to realize that many churches today, of all denominational stripes, are experiencing much disagreement and conflict.

For example, in our recent trip to Florida, we ended up worshipping with a PCUSA congregation one Sunday morning. The Sunday school class, led by one of the elders, was a poor example of what Bible study should look like. He led us through chapters 2–4 of Daniel in forty minutes and was totally skewed in his “lecture.” The worship service that followed had promises of being better. Their webpage gave the impression that this congregation was still committed to the historic Presbyterian creeds. As the congregation gathered for worship, some senior members circulated through the congregation and distributed a three-page handout detailing all the faults of this particular church. The document was signed by fifteen current and former elders. Their complaints were specific and very weighty. Even we visitors received copies. This church was

obviously in deep trouble.

With that introduction, one would expect the pastor and his staff to be either highly defensive or deeply apologetic. Neither reaction was evident. The ministry team conducted the worship service as though this was the most contented, blissful congregation ever assembled. All praise and glory to the worship leaders and the session. This was followed by a congregational meeting, conducted by the pastor, which lasted at most ten minutes, with nary a single complaint registered and not a question invited. The pastor had encouraged all us visitors to stay for the congregational meeting, so that we could “see how good Presbyterians conduct their business properly and in good order.”

The pastor was in deep trouble with his flock, but he never acknowledged it because he was a master manipulator. He treated his members as though they were dumb sheep. It was a classic demonstration of how not to conduct a congregational meeting. His days in that church may well be numbered. Or,

more probably, he will stay and many of the congregants will leave. He treated this body as his church and forgot that it was supposed to be God's church.

Hopefully, that kind of pastoral behavior never occurs in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Hopefully, every pastor in the OPC has deep compassion for his congregation and is willing to listen to their concerns. Hopefully, every session takes the task of shepherding the flock very seriously.

But problems do occur. Churches sometimes experience real division and conflict. The OPC is not immune to “worship wars” or “theological digressions” or “contemporary versus traditional” service debates. My concern, in this article, is not with such issues.

My concern is with the attitude that a pastor exhibits to his congregation on a weekly basis. I want to raise the issue of whether a pastor looks upon his congregation as saints or as sinners. I have always opened worship services with “the Lord's greeting to the saints who are gathered here to worship our God with us.” I do that because the

apostle Paul opens many of his epistles with such a greeting. Look at his letters to the Romans (1:7), to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Cor. 1:1), to the Ephesians (1:1), to the Philippians (1:1), and to the Colossians (1:2). Look at the opening of his first letter to the Corinthians: “To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints” (1:2). He does the same in his second epistle to them (1:1). He does this in spite of the fact that this church was characterized by multiple problems and deviant practices. He doesn’t approach them as would a prosecuting attorney, following the pattern of many of the Old Testament prophets. No, he calls them “saints.”

I suspect that some of my parishioners have stumbled over such greetings from their pastor. They might be saying, “I am not a saint. I sinned again this morning, and yesterday, and last week, and when I was younger. Does he know my teenagers? My pastor doesn’t know us very well.”

Others might be thinking along cultural lines, reflecting on the list of saints so designated by the Roman Catholic Church, or by the Eastern Orthodox, or by the Anglicans. Don’t you have to be dead at least five years before you can be elevated to sainthood? Don’t you have to be responsible for at least two verifiable miracles? Don’t you have to be of impeccable character? None of us qualifies on any of those grounds. What does the pastor mean?

Forget those man-made criteria! They have no basis in God’s Word. In the Bible, the saints are those who acknowledge that they are sinners, who repent of those sins, who have asked God to forgive those sins, and who have the assurance that those sins are gone. If you meet those criteria, you are saints, no matter how old or young you are. Your sins are gone. You are a new creature in Christ. Rejoice!

But getting back to Paul’s epistles, notice that a different pattern emerges in his letter to the Galatians. He does not address them as “saints,” but as “foolish Galatians,” implying that there are some serious problems that need

to be addressed. Paul then goes on to raise some of those issues and call them to repentance. Bluntly stated, he treats them as “sinners.”

The difference is subtle and yet profound. A “saint” is a forgiven sinner. A “sinner” is one who needs to repent, so that he or she can become a saint. Saints are those who are “in Christ,” who have admitted that they were dead in their trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1) and desperately needed a Savior. They have acknowledged their sinful condition, have pleaded with God for forgiveness, and now experience the “peace of God, which surpasses all understanding” (Phil. 4:7). Paul expresses that so beautifully in 2 Corinthians 5:17–18, where he writes, “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself.”

The Pastor’s Attitude

The pastor who looks upon his parishioners as saints does not neglect the law or calls for repentance. He knows that the law is our schoolmaster to drive us to Christ. He knows, too, that the law is a recipe for gratitude and thankful living. He often chooses Colossians 3:1–21 as an example of God’s law, teaching us to live our lives as ones who have been “raised with Christ.” He knows, too, that the devil is busy putting temptations in our paths and seducing us into sin. He recognizes original sin and total depravity. But he also recognizes that Christ’s righteousness has been imputed to the members who gather for worship on Sunday. Such a pastor is not naive. He knows that the great antithesis reaches into every heart.

The pastor who looks upon his parishioners as sinners creates a very different environment. He elicits a very different response. His favorite phrase is “thus says the Lord.” He doesn’t have to pound the pulpit when he confronts the sinners who sit before him. He doesn’t have to thunder denunciations upon his listeners. He doesn’t have to “thump his Bible” and demand obedience. All he has to do is to present the law as the

pathway to justification. He has to lay down challenges for justifiable behavior, so that the flock can become “right with God.” He would never admit it, but his theology smacks strongly of works-righteousness and justification by good works. The underlying message is not about grace and forgiveness and justification, but about earning salvation by living lives of sanctification. The message is “Obey!”

In some cases, the pastor may have become a victim of his session’s demands. The elders may have foisted such a pious-sounding works-righteousness on him. They may have considered the behavior of some parishioners, those who admittedly have unresolved sins, and concluded that the needs for justification could be best met by strict obedience. In the elders’ meeting, they may have stipulated the terms of admission to the Lord’s table as a series of obedient behaviors. They may have pronounced judgment without ever offering grace and mercy, as our Lord so often did. They may have looked upon the offending individual as a stubborn, rebellious sinner, rather than as a backsliding saint. That attitude may have shaped the behavior of the pastor. In response to the session’s deliberations, he now treats the whole congregation as sinners. He easily and too quickly confronts his members and details their sins. He demands repentance and obedience instead of offering grace and mercy and forgiveness.

Each one of us who is called to be a pastor has to ask himself this question: do I look upon the people in my congregation as sinners or as saints? There may be times when we need to adopt the tone and message of Peter in his sermon at Pentecost (Acts 2:23), but such situations will seldom confront us. It is much better to model Paul in his greetings, acknowledging those assembled before us as saints, washed in the blood of Jesus Christ. Their sins are gone! They are new persons in Christ! That is the glorious gospel we are privileged to preach. □

The author is a retired OP pastor.

RACHEL

[Continued from page 5]
grieved a major loss—her home for the past three years, her “family” at the orphanage, her bed, her language, everything.

While in China, we took the opportunity to visit Rachel’s orphanage. With Rachel on our laps, we made the two-hour trek, passing city after city of expanding high-rises. When we arrived, we were pleasantly surprised to learn that Rachel had been enrolled in their preschool program. Former nannies greeted Rachel at the door to her classroom with hugs, kisses, and candy. Rachel burst into tears while the other children gathered around and gave her hugs. It was evident that she had received remarkably tender, loving care.

One special aspect of this trip was that Jenn had a chance to talk to the preschool director. After chatting a while, the director asked Jenn a stunning question: “Are you a Christian?” Shocked, Jenn answered, “Yes,” and, hesitating a bit, asked the director the same question. She said yes! We hadn’t even dared to pray for such a blessing, because we thought it was impossible. We were so thankful for those who *were* bold enough to pray for such a miracle, and especially thankful to the Lord who had been tending his little lamb all along.

But that was not the day’s only surprise. The preschool director told us of a dear man at the orphanage who was a father-like friend to Rachel. Only moments later, he came running over, overflowing with broken English, telling us of his special relationship with Rachel. “There are nine hundred children at this orphanage,” he said, “but she is my favorite.” He recounted how he was there the day the police officer brought her to the facility. He shared stories of her daily visits to his office. When Rachel still wasn’t walking at age two, he gave



Rachel at her orphanage with a birthday package from the Sallades

her calcium supplements every day until she was up and going. He laughed about her temper tantrums and told us how clever she was. “I promised myself I wouldn’t cry,” he told us, thanking us profusely. We couldn’t hold back our tears as we thanked him—and the Lord.

Reflecting back on that day, we are overwhelmed at how well Rachel was loved and cared for. We had been praying (along with many others!) that our Good Shepherd would watch over his little lamb, Rachel. He not only watched over her, but, it seemed to us, picked her up and held her in his arms.

Trusting the Lord, Who Directs Our Steps

Isn’t it a privilege to look back in our lives and see God’s guiding hand? For all the details we arranged in this adoption process, the most important ones were those we could never have planned. Before adoption was even on our minds, a beautiful little girl was born in China whose parents could not care for her. While we worried about growing our family, the Lord was providing loving caretakers for Rachel, and the woman who first showed her our pictures was a Christian. For people who like to be in control, we are so glad that we were not in charge of this. The Lord supplied abundantly beyond what we ever could have asked or imagined.

We have been home now for sev-

eral months, and we have had our ups and downs. She has gone from unsolicited bear hugs, sweet kisses, snuggles, and belly laughs to fussing, crying, clinging, and tantrums. Anna Kate (who was very similar at age three!) and Rachel clicked right away, falling easily into sisterly love. They tickle, tell secrets, chase, pretend, and splash in the bathtub. Giggles abound, as do sisterly squabbles. They have a connection that gives us

chills. Watching Rachel find her home in our family is a joy, relief, and reminder of God’s continuing hand in our lives. When we begin to worry about how Rachel’s past will impact her future, we go to the Lord, knowing, “that he who began a good work in [her] will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus” (Phil. 1:6 NIV).

One truth we learned through all of this is that while the adoption process is unique in some ways, it is also quite ordinary. This is the wildest ride we’ve ever been on. Yet, in a real way, it is but a microcosm of the Christian life for every one of God’s people. Proverbs 16:9 says, “The mind of man plans his way, but the LORD directs his steps” (NASB). From the smallest of daily challenges to the largest of life’s trials, we have to trust the Lord. He has shown us in our Good Shepherd that he is working out his will with perfection. He loves us and is trustworthy. There is nothing safer for us to pray than “Your will be done.”

At long last, with much help from friends and family, we are back to “normal” life, and have begun to look again to the future. But by God’s grace, we do so with new eyes. What is next for the Sallades? We *do* have our plans. But we trust more than ever that the Lord will direct our steps. □

The authors are the pastor and pastor’s wife at Calvary OPC in Glenside, Pa.

JANUARY

1. **Ben and Melanie Westerveld**, Quebec, Canada. Pray for the Holy Spirit's work in the hearts of St-Marc's youth. / **Phil Strong**, Lander, Wyo., Grace Reformed Fellowship. / Army chaplains: **Earl (and Susan) Vanderhoff**, **Paul (and Mary) Berghaus**, and **Chris (and Virginia) Wisdom**.
2. **Daniel and Jill McManigal**, Seattle, Wash. Praise God for providing a more affordable worship facility for Hope OPC. / **Bob and Martha Wright**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray that the Mission's hibiscus-growing project will assist many needy Karimojong. / **Tony (and Mica) Garbarino**, yearlong intern at Covenant Presbyterian Church in San Jose, Calif.
3. Missionary associates **Leah Hopp** and **Jesse Van Gorkom**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for Jesse as he helps with maintenance on the Mission compound. / **Dick Gerber**, Home Mission's associate general secretary. / Air Force chaplain **C. Phillip (and Melanie) Hollstein III**.
4. **Tim and Joanne Beauchamp**, Bridgton, Maine. Pray that God's elect will be brought into Pleasant Mountain Presbyterian Church. / **Al and Laurie Tricarico**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for Al as he prepares lessons and trains those who will deliver them in local villages. / **Louis (and Lizette) Cloete**, yearlong intern at Redeemer OPC Mission in Pittsburgh, Pa.



Tim and Joanne Beauchamp
5. Pray for missionary associates **Erika Bulthuis** and **Taryn Dieckmann**, Nakaale, Uganda, as they maintain busy teaching schedules. / **Brandon and Laurie Wilkins**, Crystal Lake, Ill. Pray for wisdom in identifying future officers at Christ Covenant Presbyterian Church. / **Thomas (and Erin) Tkach**, yearlong intern at Calvary OPC in Glenside, Pa.
6. **Jeremiah and Elizabeth Montgomery**, State College, Pa. Pray for new members to integrate well into Resurrection OPC. / **James and Jenny Knox**, M.D. and R.N., Nakaale, Uganda. Pray that unsaved patients at the Clinic will respond to the gospel message. / **Jeff (and Dawn) Scott**, yearlong intern at Covenant Grace OPC in Roseburg, Ore.
7. Pray for Foreign Missions general secretary **Mark Bube** as he speaks at a conference in Texas. / **Ben and Sarah Miller**, Huntington, N.Y. Pray that God would bless Trinity Church's officer training class. / Short-term missions coordinator **David Nakhla**. Pray for the teams being scheduled to help build a wall around missionary Benjamin Hopp's compound in Haiti.
8. **Mike and Katy Myers**, Hartwell, Ga. Pray that God would bless Heritage Presbyterian Church with more families. / Foreign Missions administrative assistant **Linda Posthuma** and secretary **Abigail Cory**. / Pray that students will register for the Spring 2014 courses offered by the **Ministerial Training Institute of the OPC**.
9. Pray for **David and Sunshine Okken**, Nakaale, Uganda (on furlough), as they speak to OP congregations about their labors on the mission field. / **Robert and Christy Arendale**, Houston, Tex. Pray that returning visitors will join Cornerstone OPC. / **David (and Amanda) Franks**, yearlong intern at Covenant OPC in Orland Park, Ill.
10. **Jay and Andrea Bennett**, Neon, Ky. Pray that the Lord would bless Neon Reformed Presbyterian Church's outreach and evangelism efforts. / **Ethiopian Reformed Presbyterian Church**. Pray for **Tony Curto** as he ministers to the believers and church leaders in Ethiopia this week. / **Josh (and Kristen) McKamy**, yearlong intern at New Life OPC in Montoursville, Pa.
11. **Mr. and Mrs. F.**, Asia (on furlough). Pray for safe travel as Mr. F. continues his furlough speaking in the Presbytery of the South. / **Carlos and Diana Cruz**, San Juan, P.R. Pray for unity and fellowship among the people of Iglesia Presbiteriana Reformada. / **Kevin (and Marianne) Olivier**, yearlong intern at Pineville Presbyterian Church in Pineville, La.
12. **Jim and Tricia Stevenson**, Tulsa, Okla. Pray that the Lord would add to Providence OPC's number and raise up officers. / Pray for Foreign Missions associate general secretary **Douglas Clawson**, speaking at churches in Texas today. / **David Haney**, director of finance and planned giving for the Committee on Coordination.
13. **Eric and Dianna Tuininga**, Mbale, Uganda. Pray for the work of ministry being done through the men attending Knox Theological College. / **Bill and Sessie Welzien**, Key West, Fla. Pray that visitors to Keys Presbyterian Church will join in communicant fellowship. / **Broc (and Morgan) Seaman**, yearlong intern at Providence OPC in Temecula, Calif.
14. **Tom and Martha Albaugh**, Pittsburgh, Pa. Pray that those who attend Redeemer OP Mission's outreach events will hear the gospel. / **Mark and Christine Weber**, Mbale, Uganda. Pray for Christine as she home-schools their sons. / **Doug Watson**, staff accountant, and **Jan Gregson**, assistant to the director of finance.
15. Pray for missionary associates **Christopher and Chloe Verdick**, Nakaale, Uganda, in the U.S. anticipating the birth of their first child next month. / Pray for area

home missionary **Chris Walmer** as he assists church plants within the Presbytery of Central Pennsylvania. / **David (and Kathryn) Landow**, yearlong intern at Harvest OPC in Wilmington, Del.

- 16. Philip and Jenny Dharmawirya**, Philadelphia, Pa. (Indonesian). Pray for those taking membership classes at Emmanuel Chapel. / **Mark and Jeni Richline**, Montevideo, Uruguay. Pray that many will visit the church and hear the message of salvation. / **Rodney King**, chairman of the Subcommittee on Internet Ministries.
- 17.** Affiliated missionaries **Craig and Ree Coulbourne** and **Linda Karner**, Japan. Pray for effective outreach programs. / **Christopher and Ann Malamisuro**, Cincinnati, Ohio. Pray that Good Shepherd OPC's midweek prayer meetings will be well attended. / Pray for **Danny Olinger**, Christian Education general secretary, as he serves as intern director.
- 18. Christopher and Della Chelпка**, Tucson, Ariz. Praise God for bringing Covenant OPC to the point of being organized. / Pray for **Woody and Laurie Lauer**, Numazu, Japan, as they resume ministry on the field following a seven-month furlough. / **Andrew (and Elizabeth) Barshinger**, yearlong intern at Faith OPC in Elmer, N.J.
- 19. Kaz and Katie Yaegashi**, Yamagata, Japan. Pray for increased attendance at weekly Bible studies. / Home Missions general secretary **John Shaw**. / Yearlong interns: **Jeremy Logan** at Covenant Presbyterian Church in Mansfield, Ohio, and **Micah Shin** at Cedar Presbyterian Church in Hudsonville, Mich.
- 20. Chad and Katie Mullinix**, Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. Pray that the congregation of Holy Trinity Presbyterian Church will have a loving witness to unbelievers. / Pray for missionary associates **Adam and Sarah Thompson**, Sendai, Japan, as they reach out to their students. / **Jim Scott**, managing editor of *New Horizons*, and **Pat Clawson**, editorial assistant.
- 21. Cal and Edie Cummings**, Sendai, Japan. Pray for effective ministry to unbelievers at Nozomi ("Hope") Center. / **Brian and Sara Chang**, Cottonwood, Ariz. Ask the Lord to strengthen and establish Verde Valley Reformed Chapel. / **Kathy Bube**, Loan Fund administrator, and **Charlene Tipton**, office assistant for the Committee on Coordination.
- 22. Jonathan and Kristin Moersch**, Capistrano Beach, Calif. Pray that Trinity Presbyterian Church will have a faithful witness to their neighbors. / Pray for the needs of retired missionaries **Betty Andrews, Greet Rietkerk, Young and Mary Lou Son**, and **Fumi Uomoto**. / **Yevgeni Koh**, yearlong intern at Bonita OPC in Bonita, Calif.
- 23. Mr. and Mrs. M.**, Asia. Pray for their good health during the bitterly cold winter months. / **Stephen and Catalina Payson**, Mifflinburg, Pa. Pray that Providence OPC's members will see that the fields are white for harvest. / Pray for stated clerk **George Cottenden** as he updates the digital edition of the Minutes of the General Assembly.

- 24. Joseph and Carla Fowler**, Gastonia, N.C. Pray that the Lord would give visitors a desire to join Reformation OPC. / Pray for tentmaker missionary **T. L. L.**, Asia, in her responsibilities as coordinator of the university's English conversation department. / **Jeffrey (and Jennifer) Shames**, yearlong intern at Harvest OPC in Wyoming, Mich.
- 25.** Missionary associates **E. C., H. L., and M. W.**, Asia. Pray for their witness through the English Corner outreach in January and February. / **Joshua and Jessica Lyon**, Carson, Calif. Pray for the developing ministry at Grace OPC. / **Steven (and Sarah) Moulson**, yearlong intern at Trinity OPC in Hatboro, Pa.
- 26. Kim and Barbara Kuhfuss**, Eau Claire, Wis. Praise God for his blessings on Providence Reformed Church. / **Heero and Anya Hacquebord**, L'viv, Ukraine. Pray for Heero as he leads the young congregation in biblical worship. / **The Psalter-Hymnal Committee**.
- 27. Brian and Dorothy Wingard**, South Africa. Pray for their safe travel to the theological college where they labor. / **Eric and Donna Hausler**, Naples, Fla. Pray that news will spread about the Lord's work at Naples Presbyterian Church. / **Caleb (and Erika) Smith**, yearlong intern at Bethel Presbyterian Church in Wheaton, Ill.
- 28. Drew and Sonya Adcock**, Williamsport, Pa. Pray that God would confirm gifts for leadership in some men at Omega OPC. / **Benjamin and Heather Hopp**, Haiti. Pray for the fellowship and commitment of new believers attending worship services. / **Jeremy (and Maricruz) Boothby**, yearlong intern at Christ Covenant Presbyterian Church in Amarillo, Tex.
- 29.** Associate missionaries **Octavius and Marie Delfils**, Haiti. Pray that the false religion of Vodou will be silenced by the truths of the gospel. / **Todd and Julie Wagenmaker**, St. Louis, Mo. Thank God for sending mature families to Gateway OPC. / **Rick Tyson**, president of the Great Commission Publications board.
- 30.** Home Missions staff administrator **Sean Gregg**. / Affiliated missionaries **Jerry and Marilyn Farnik**, Prague, Czech Republic. Pray for open doors to make contacts and share the gospel. / **Sarah Pederson**, *New Horizons* proofreader.
- 31.** Missionary associates **Mary York**, Prague, Czech Republic, and **T. D.**, Asia. / **Mark and Michele Winder**, Collierville, Tenn. Pray that the Lord would add new families to Wolf River Presbyterian Church. / **Shane (and Rachelle) Bennett**, yearlong intern at Knox OPC in Silver Spring, Md.



Brian and Dorothy Wingard

NEWS, VIEWS, & REVIEWS



Chris and Grace Ann Cashen with their daughters Katie (left) and Anna

CASHEN ORDAINED AND INSTALLED IN HICKORY, N.C.

Hank L. Belfield

At a special meeting of the Presbytery of the Southeast, held on November 1, 2013, the presbytery ordained Christopher B. Cashen, a licentiate of the presbytery, as a minister of the gospel, and installed him to serve as the new pastor of Sovereign Grace Reformed Presbyterian Church in Hickory, North Carolina.

The ordination and installation service was well attended and was a blessing to all. Tony Curto, a professor at Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary and an OP missionary, preached the sermon from Ephesians 4:8–16. Peter Van Doodewaard, pastor of Covenant Community OPC in Greenville, South Carolina, gave the charge to Mr. Cashen, and Sid Dyer, a professor at Greenville Seminary, gave the charge to the congregation. An African minister with whom our missionaries have worked led the prayer during the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. And

Pete Hurst, associate pastor at Calvary Reformed Presbyterian Church (PCA) in Hampton, Virginia, led a portion of the Scripture reading during the service and also joined in the laying on of hands. Mr. Cashen gave the benediction at the end of the service. A time of food and fellowship followed.

The congregation rejoices in the ordination and installation of Chris Cashen and is looking forward to his service in the gospel ministry.

GCP'S NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

On October 28, the Board of Trustees of Great Commission Publications appointed the Rev. E. Marvin Padgett as Executive Director. Mr. Padgett has served as coordinator for campus ministry for the PCA's Mission to America, as editorial vice president of Good News Publishers–Crossway Books, and as vice president–editorial of P&R Publishing. He has also served on GCP's Board of Trustees since 1991, alternating with the Rev. Alan D. Strange (OPC) the last decade as president.



Marvin Padgett



The congregation of Redeemer OPC in Carlisle, Pa., on their tenth anniversary

SHANE LEMS INSTALLED AT HAMMOND, WIS.

Alan Martinson

On October 18, the Rev. Shane Lems was installed as pastor of Covenant Presbyterian Church in Hammond, Wisconsin. Pastors present were (from left to right in the photo) Shane Lems, Christian McShaffrey, James Hoekstra, Kim Kuhfuss, Ivan DeMaster, and Ryan Kron (RCUS). Rev. Hoekstra delivered the sermon, Rev. Kuhfuss gave the questions and charge to Pastor Lems, and Rev. DeMaster gave the charge to the congregation.

Pastor Lems graduated from Westminster Seminary California in 2007 and was a church planter for the United Reformed Churches in North America in Sunnyside, Washington. He and his wife, Lisa, have four children between the ages of two and eleven. While new to the OPC, Pastor Lems has previously written for *New Horizons* magazine and other publications. He can also be found blogging online at <http://reformedreader.wordpress.com>.

KUHFUSS INSTALLED IN EAU CLAIRE, WIS.

Alan Martinson

The Rev. Kim Kuhfuss was installed as a church planter in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, on November 1. At the installation service, Shane Lems delivered the sermon,



Assisting in the installation of Shane Lems (left) were Christian McShaffrey, James Hoekstra, Kim Kuhfuss, Ivan DeMaster, and Ryan Kron

James Hoekstra gave the questions, Brian De Jong gave the charge to Pastor Kuhfuss, and Christian McShaffrey gave the charge to the congregation.

Mr. Kuhfuss originally came into the OPC in 2005 as the pastor of Covenant Presbyterian Church in Roberts, Wisconsin (now in Hammond). The session of Covenant Presbyterian is overseeing the work in Eau Claire.

Pastor Kuhfuss and his wife, Barb, have recently moved to Eau Claire. They have five grown children and two grandchildren (with one more on the way).

FIFTY-FIVE YEARS IN LISBON

Ed Thompson

On November 3, Grace Presbyterian Church in Lisbon, New York, celebrated fifty-five years as an Orthodox Presbyterian church. The original group had withdrawn from the local UPCNA congregation in 1958, and was led into the OPC by its pastor, J. Peter Vosteen.

He and his wife were invited back to Lisbon for the occasion. He preached twice and exhorted the congregation to continue as a faithful church.

Written greetings were received from charter members out of the area and from



Front: Brian De Jong, James Hoekstra, Shane Lems; back: Christian McShaffrey, Kim Kuhfuss (being installed), Frank Liu



Lisbon organizing pastor J. Peter Vosteen with charter members Frances A. Putney, Helen G. Smith, and Homer Sanderson

the first OP pastor and his wife, Larry and Lois Sibley. During the luncheon, the ninetieth birthday of long-serving treasurer and charter member Frances A. Putney was also celebrated.

UPDATE

CHURCHES

- The Presbytery of Central Pennsylvania has dissolved **Grace Fellowship** in Mansfield, Pa., as of December 31, 2013.

MINISTERS

- The Presbytery of Michigan and Ontario has dissolved the pastoral relationship between the retiring **Timothy L. Bero** and Community OPC in Kalamazoo, Mich., effective September 21.

- **Christopher B. Cashen** was ordained as a minister and installed as pastor of Sovereign Grace Reformed Presbyterian Church in Hickory, N.C., on November 1.

- **Bryan P. Crotts**, formerly a minister in the ARPC, was installed as a teacher at Providence Presbyterian Church in Greensboro, N.C., on November 8.

- **Geoffrey M. Downey** was ordained as a minister and installed as associate pastor of Lake Sherwood OPC in Orlando, Fla., on November 15.

- The Presbytery of the Midwest noted the retirement of **Roger L. Gibbons** at its meeting of March 15, 2013; his pastoral relationship with Church of the Lakes in Brainerd, Minn., had been dissolved effective December 31, 2012.

- **D. Nathan Holloway**, formerly an evangelist of the Presbytery of the Southeast, serving as a U.S. Navy Reserve chaplain, was installed as pastor of Bethlehem Reformed Church in Freeman, S.D., on November 7.

- **Kim M. Kuhfuss**, formerly the pastor of Covenant Presbyterian Church in Hammond, Wis., was installed as an evangelist of that church on November 1, to serve as the church planter for Providence Reformed Church in Eau Claire, Wis.

- **Frank Liu** was ordained as a minister and installed as pastor of Mission OPC in St. Paul, Minn., on November 8.

- **Bradley M. Peppo** was ordained and installed as an evangelist at Covenant Presbyterian Church in Vandalia, Ohio, on November 8.

MILESTONES

- Ruling elder **Louis C. LaBriola**, 78, died suddenly in late October.

REVIEWS

Abraham Kuyper: Modern Calvinist, Christian Democrat, by James D. Bratt. Published by Eerdmans, 2013. Paperback, 499 pages, list price \$30.00. Reviewed by the historian of the OPC, John R. Muether.

James Bratt (professor of history at Calvin College) acknowledges the challenge that Abraham Kuyper (1837–1920) presents to a biographer: one must account for four careers (pastor, scholar, journalist, and politician), the founding of three institutions (the Anti-Revolutionary Party, the Free University of Amsterdam, and the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland), and a massive paper trail. Add to that a personality of equal proportion, which combined a deep fondness for the “kleine luyden” (little people) with a proud and overbearing ego that opponents described as Napoleonic. And yet, much of this story nearly did not happen: Kuyper suffered three breakdowns, he flirted with Keswick teachings before settling into his “hard-nosed Calvinism,” and he considered emigrating to Michigan or the Transvaal at heightened points of ecclesiastical conflict. Happily, Bratt proves equal to the task in this engaging narrative.

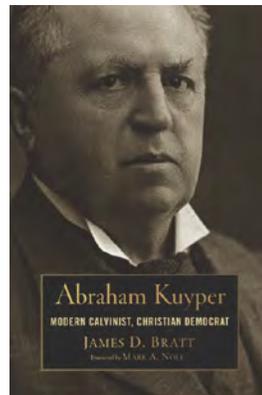
Possessed with a rare combination of intellectual and organizational gifts, Kuyper’s grand, architectonic vision for all spheres of society often demanded seemingly contradictory ideas to coexist

in creative tension (most famously in his relating of “common grace” to the “antithesis”). His initiatives varied from championing a religiously pluralistic school system to calling for universal health care in the Netherlands. Much as he labored to establish a cultural agenda and social policy on a consistently Calvinistic basis, ambiguities often lay in the details of his theories.

Particularly noteworthy are Bratt’s descriptions of the idiosyncrasies in Kuyper’s ecclesiology. While acknowledging the church as both institution and organism, Kuyper was impatient with the former, fearing that the “institutional apparatus” of the church threatened the flourishing of its mission as organism. Although the former member of Parliament announced (with establishment of the GKN in 1886) that he had “left the political stage for

good,” he grew disappointed with the failure of his church reforms to galvanize a large following, and he was casual even in his own church attendance. Thus “the church gave way to culture as the center of his attention,” and Kuyper’s return to politics culminated in his term as prime minister of the Netherlands, 1901–1905.

A century later, Kuyper’s life and work continue to attract a large following among both conservatives and liberals, especially in North America. Who rightly claims this legacy? Bratt cautions against any simple appropriation. By locating Kuyper’s theology and politics within the progressivism of late nineteenth-century Europe, he establishes proper distance between Kuyper and our age. As much as he was a Calvinistic voice speaking against the rise of theological modernism and unbelief, he was also a product of his age: Hegel’s Idealism deeply influenced him, and “Schleiermacher’s presence at the heart of Kuyper’s ecclesiology never disappeared.” He was also often a prophet ahead of his time (as in his perceptive reflections on what he called the “enigma of Islam”). Altogether, Kuyper had a remarkable life—one that Bratt describes well.



NEWS, VIEWS, & REVIEWS *Continued*

Galatians (Mentor Expository Commentary), by Terry L. Johnson. Published by Christian Focus Publications, 2012. Hardback, 304 pages, list price \$34.99. Reviewed by OP pastor Glen J. Clary.

In the last few decades, there has been a revival of *lectio continua* preaching, which is beginning to produce a harvest of expository commentaries. Terry Johnson's new commentary on Galatians is a fine example. This book is based on a series of sermons originally preached at Independent Presbyterian Church in Savannah, Georgia, where Johnson has ministered for the last twenty-five years.

These expositions are full of sound doctrine and practical application. They generally follow the order of the biblical text, moving systematically through the passage, verse by verse. The book also contains a bibliography, a subject index, and a Scripture index.

The author divides Galatians into two main parts: 1:1–5:12 and 5:13–6:18. Part one focuses on theological matters; part two, on practical application. Johnson devotes twenty-two chapters to part one and eighteen chapters to part two. Hence, the pace at which he moves through the text slows down in the second half of the book, where one finds sermons that focus on a single verse or even a single word. Paul's teaching on the fruit of the Spirit, for example, receives eight chapters.

Johnson identifies the chief subject of Galatians as the doctrine of justification, which he understands in a personal,

forensic, and imputational sense (p. 18). While his book is essentially a positive statement of Paul's message, it occasionally refutes theological errors in modern Pauline scholarship, such as those found in the *New Perspective on Paul* and in the *Federal Vision*. He writes:

There are theological challenges to the gospel today arising from the most surprising places. Among conservative Presbyterians there is the 'Federal Vision,' reformulating the doctrine of justification so as to accommodate a greater role for covenant obedience in salvation. Among evangelical scholars the 'New

Perspective' theologians (e.g. E. P. Sanders; N. T. Wright; J. D. G. Dunn) are also redefining the Pauline doctrine of justification so as to underscore its corporate dimension, namely membership in the covenant community as the key to a right relationship with God. (pp. 17–18)

Johnson argues that Paul's doctrine of gratuitous and forensic justification is not merely a matter of covenant membership and identity markers (ecclesiology) but of the salvation of sinners from the curse of the law (soteriology).

Most commentaries on Galatians fail to recognize the eschatological dimension of Paul's message, and I think this is a weakness of Johnson's commentary as well. In our view, Paul's eschatology, particularly his two-age construct, is the matrix of his theology and the lens through which the message of Galatians should be interpreted. Christ came in "the fullness of time" (Gal. 4:4), says Paul, to deliver us

from "the present evil age" (1:4). Johnson recognizes the eschatological dimension of Galatians 1:4, but he doesn't really connect it with what Paul says throughout the epistle.

Despite this weakness, Johnson's book is a fine commentary. It is an excellent resource for lay readers and Bible teachers. I highly commend it.

WOMEN'S RETREAT

*Elizabeth Griswold and
Emily Van Dixhoorn*

The Women's Service Fellowship Fall Retreat was held at Graves Mountain Lodge in Syria, Virginia, on Friday and Saturday, November 1–2. Thirty-eight ladies from churches in Virginia, Maryland, and even Canada participated in the retreat. Meredith Proctor, the wife of OP pastor Philip Proctor, spoke on "Look to Your Left and Right" (on self-assessment for service), followed by discussion groups, and "Spiritual Shoes: Putting Feet on What We Learn." She also talked about her experience as a missionary in Uganda.



*Catherine Ellis and Emily Van Dixhoorn
at the Women's Retreat*