

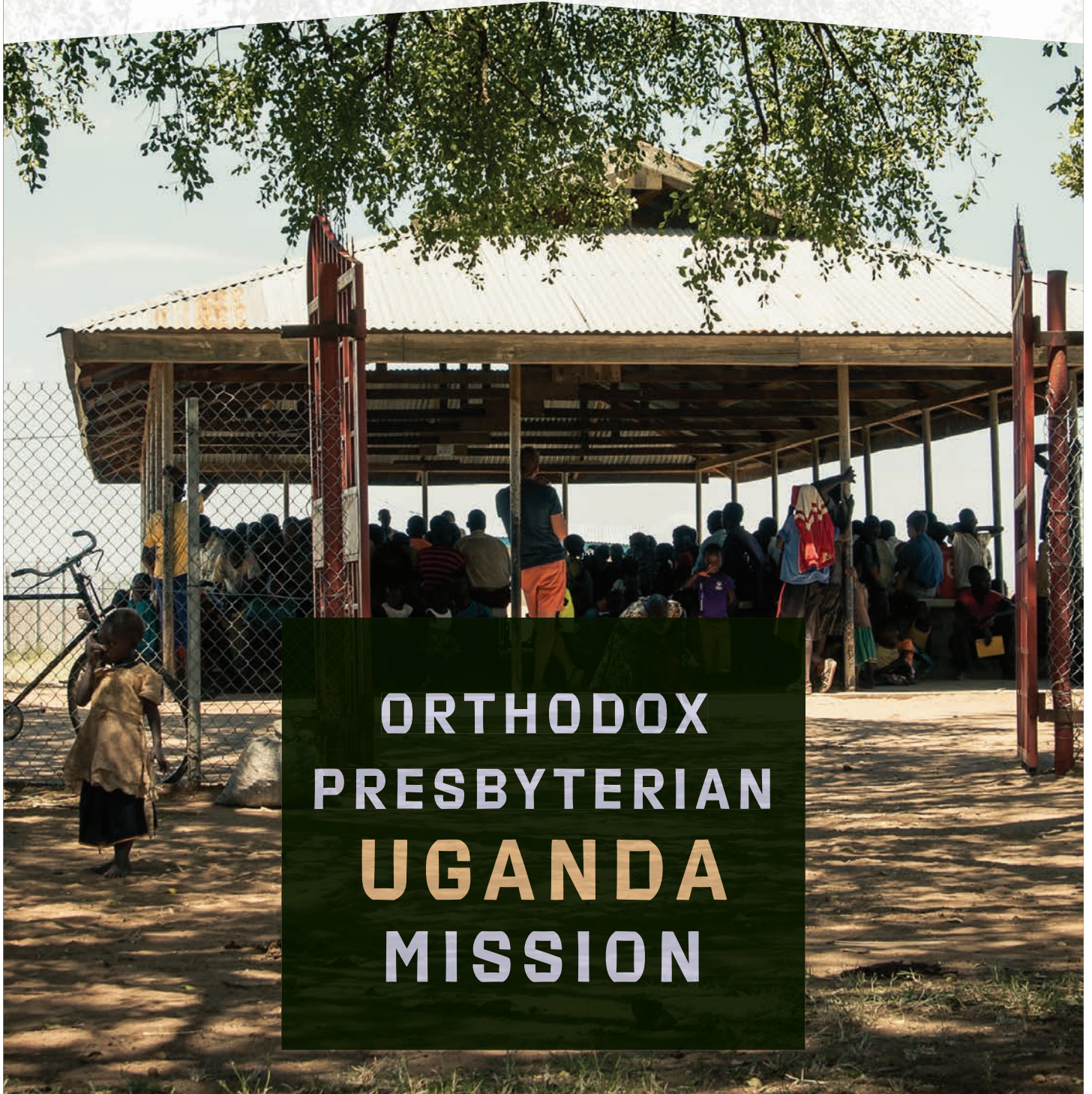
# NEW HORIZONS

≡ *in the* ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ≡

**3** Teaching, Preaching, and  
Deeds of Mercy  
*// by Eric W. Tuininga*

JUNE 2019

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*// by Christopher and  
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ORTHODOX  
PRESBYTERIAN  
UGANDA  
MISSION

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*Cover image courtesy of Christopher Verdick*

## New Horizons

in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church

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This group of young people and their leaders from Living Hope OPC in Allentown, Pennsylvania, showed up at member Jean Nelson's door in the pouring rain one day this spring to do some landscaping—and as the rain let up, they weeded, curbed flower beds, and spread six cubic yards of mulch.



# PRODIGAL DAUGHTER



MARY YORK // Honesty usually comes easily to me, but telling this story has not. It's hard to admit that I, who was raised in an Orthodox Presbyterian church, brought up in a Christian family, steeped in good doctrine, and surrounded by Christian friends, fell away from the faith.

I didn't expect to. I'm an obsessive rule-follower. My skirts go to the knee, and I still address adults as "Mr." and "Mrs." The only tattoo I have is a Czech phrase taken from the statue of a martyred Reformer that stood in the village outside Prague where I served for two years as a missionary associate for the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. I may have struggled with aspects of my Christian walk, but my faith had never wavered. Not once.

## Prague

I had never felt closer to my Maker than in Prague. It was clear to me that I was where God wanted me to be, serving him in a beautiful place with wonderful people. Even though it was by no means a simple two years, God's presence was so tangible and his provision so evident that I felt refreshed and revitalized daily.

While there, I frequently hosted friends and acquaintances who were meandering their way through Central Europe. The routine was the same: we'd meet up, I'd show them the city, and

sometime between the hot coffee or the spiced wine and the sweeping views of majestic castles and steeple spires, we'd talk about God.

The story was often the same: they were struggling. They didn't feel connected to God or the faith of their parents. They were afraid to tell their families or people in their church about their doubts. Feeling like hypocrites, many of them were considering leaving the faith altogether because it would be easier to slip away unnoticed than to cause a public stir.

At the time, I didn't understand. I told them that they should talk to someone, seek accountability, pray, *draw near to God*. After all, I had a great relationship with the Lord, so clearly it could be done.

Many of those friends are no longer in the church.

## San Diego

I think I left a lot of my relationship with God in Prague. Almost immediately upon returning home to San Diego, I

was swept up into college and work and making new plans for the future. And I was lost. There were no road signs from God, no clear direction. It seemed that he had just backed away completely, that he didn't need me anymore.

My Bible reading was the first thing to go. It was followed closely by poor decisions at school—worldly choices, things that drew me away from the Lord rather than to him. Small sins became habitual, big sins began appearing.

I wanted to see how far I could push myself down the wrong path before something went *really* wrong. Like the prodigal son, as I began to recognize the trouble I was getting into, I assumed I could work my way out of it. If I hadn't witnessed my own progression, I would never have recognized the person that I had become—a rebel still parading around as a put-together Christian, leading youth group events and explaining to my non-Christian friends that "my faith is everything to me."

What a lie.

I kept it up for two years. Late one

night, I came home from work, sat on the floor, and opened my Bible, my soul feeling particularly unsettled. I did not know where to begin, so I reached for a devotional tucked in the back cover of my Bible and read the first page. A voice in my head interpreted every line with bitter, cynical mockery. It was a voice I had never heard before—certainly not mine!

I closed the book and tried to pray, only to find my heart empty of words and my mind doubting that I had a listener. God wasn't there. For the first time in my life, I found myself cut off from my Savior.

The doubt that hit was the worst part. Sin I knew I could be forgiven of, but if there was no God, then there was no hope and no purpose. The world as I knew it was wrong, and everyone I loved and trusted was a fool. *I was a fool.* Had God just been a figment of my imagination this whole time? Had I been brainwashed by a group of nice but narrow-minded people?

Those were agonizing days. Two years later, I understood at last what my friends travelling in Prague had been going through.

## Two Options

That night on the floor with my Bible, I realized that I had two options. The first, of course, was to give in to the despair and walk away for good. In so many ways, it would have been easier. I was so far into the world already, and I desperately wanted what it offered—status, opportunities, fun, romance, and relationships. I had plenty of sympathetic friends who would have been happy to welcome me into a world without God.

I don't know why, but by God's grace I took the second option. Crying

on the floor, unable to even look at my Bible, writhing in the physical pain of my spiritual loss, with the clock on my wall blinking just past one o'clock in the morning, I picked up my phone and sent one text message to three believing friends: "I'm doubting my faith."

They all responded before morning with verses, prayers, and promises to meet up. And for the next three weeks, they were God's living witnesses, displaying his faithfulness, his kindness, his mercy, his strength, his love. And they held me tightly with arms, like his, that would not let me go.

One friend met up with me in person multiple times—a half hour before work, a quick cup of coffee at the end of the day—to pray and read Scripture together. She sent me articles and told me to meet with godly people at my church to broaden my circle of accountability. She also encouraged me to seek out the wisdom of our elders. (I did. It was both terribly difficult and terribly rewarding.)

Another friend sent me Scripture verses, almost daily. He challenged my doubts and questioned my devotional habits with unbending tough-love. It was uncomfortable and humbling, and I needed it.

The third friend—my prayer warrior—messed me daily: "How are you doing? I'm praying for you."

God still felt far away, but I began reading Scripture every day. I began to fight the sin that had built up. I began to pray again. I was drawing near to God—toddling closer with the clumsy steps of someone learning to walk for the first time. This time, I understood what was hanging in the balance. I understood why we refer to our Christian walk as the "good fight"—because it is a fight. It is spiritual warfare that we must

consciously engage in, and we *must win*. And only by the grace of God do we.

## Prodigal Daughter

I share this story not because I am proud of any of it—not the fall from grace, nor even the return. Rather, I share because I know that I am not alone. I know that those who grow up in the church will one day be put to the test, if you haven't already, and I want you to know that you are not alone in this fight. Fellow saints and believers are struggling too, and they are here to pick us up as we stumble—in sin, in doubt, in fear, in grief, in loss.

I also share this story to encourage the church to be honest. It is easy for us to waltz into church on Sunday in our best clothes while hiding the sin, hurt, and pain welling up inside. If we do not confess it to each other, we cannot build each other back up. God uses a broken church to work out his sovereign grace.

The three people I reached out to were not randomly chosen—they were friends who had confided in me their own struggles with faith and obedience. They were the people I thought might know how to help, not just judge or pity or condemn.

Finally, I share this story in order to shatter my self-crafted image as a poster child for the Christian community—me, the missionary associate, the youth leader, the camp counselor, the school evangelist, the Christian blogger, the proverbial older sister of that parable with prodigal siblings. No, *I* am the prodigal. I am a sinner, ransomed and redeemed, lost and found. And like the prodigal's story, my story is all about the father. What a father. What a God! His grace is sweet, and his mercy is free.

Even though the road home can look long and feel empty, we will not be walking it alone. Christ will be shepherding our footsteps all the way, until we reach the end and find our heavenly Father waiting to receive us with open arms. □

*The author is a member of Bonita OPC in Bonita, California.*



Mary York in Prague during her two years as a missionary associate

# MEET THE VERDICKS

// CHRISTOPHER AND CHLOE VERDICK



Christopher and Chloe Verdick with their daughters Carmel (5) and Zion (3)

## TOO MANY THINGS

*Christopher Verdick*

My time in Uganda has been best memorialized by Mark, one of our Karimojong friends, who said—and I paraphrase slightly—“Christopher has done too many things. He came here as a photographer, then he became a pastor, now he is a doctor. It’s just too many things.” While some of the titles he has given me are wrong, his characterization of my time here fits perfectly.

Most of my pre-Uganda life was spent as a web designer, a role I fell into when my employer would hand me work he had promised to his clients but that I had no idea how to pull off. Around the same time, I became the de facto leader of the Campus Crusade group at my junior college when the real leader left and I was the one who happened to have the group’s banner. At my home church, New Life PCA in La Mesa, California, I found myself responsible for leading both the audio/visual team and the youth group when eminently more qualified people moved in other directions. Similarly, since going to Karamoja, I have found myself helping wherever there is a need when others have gone on furlough or made a transition.

In contrast, Chloe has always been the steady half of our lives. Pre-Uganda, she held a single job for a single employer, which she performed with distinction. On the mission, she has been the bookkeeper since we arrived, slowly taking on more components of that work and making incremental improvements along the way. If our relationship was an atomic model, she would be the nucleus—steady and solid. I am the electron, zipping crazily hither and yon.

When we first kicked around the idea of working in Karamoja, our aspiration was to fill gaps wherever they appeared, the way you might keep adding screws to a favorite piece of

furniture. Our San Diegan and Ugandan lives share a common goal—to serve Jesus Christ where we are serving others. For example, in San Diego, I wanted to keep the youth group at New Life going because it had meant so much to me when I was in high school (it was, after all, former OP missionary Dave Okken who led it during my formative years). And, with that same desire, we want to see the work continue here. I will not claim that *Akisyon a Yesu* Presbyterian Clinic has been brilliantly revitalized under my tenure as its administrator, but when the possibility of its closing was considered, my vote and energy went into keeping it open, because it was and is a wonderful aspect of our mission’s ministry in Karamoja.

My friend Mark said to me at the clinic on a different day, “When you first came, we did not know you, and we did not know what you were doing, but now we have come to see that you care for us, the Karimojong.” In his mind at that moment (and, hopefully, in my mind as well), the titles and even the efficacy of my work were not paramount. What spoke to him was that I was willing to serve in the right place even at the wrong time. May it be, through the Spirit’s movement, something that our Lord will use.



# CHANGED BY CHRIST

*Chloe Verdick*

When we landed in Uganda in 2012 to begin our first term as missionary associates, I was twenty-six. My husband, Christopher, and I had been married for three years, although we had dated for six before that. We were leaving behind two promising careers, close-knit families, an incredibly supportive church, and our newlywed home. We were high on adrenaline. Oh, the prospects of changing the world for Christ!

It seemed that the Lord had prepared us both for this moment of naive hope. I was born and raised in San Diego in a family with a travel addiction, which meant that moving to Africa was an adventure rather than an overwhelming unknown. When I was fourteen, I went on my first mission trip for two months to Cambodia without the safety net of family. My college degree from George Fox University is in missions. Christopher had fallen in love with the work and the people in Karamoja on his previous visit in 2006. He was intentional about his job choice out of college to give him skills to prepare him for the work there. We often talked about missions and, although my desire was always to go, Christ gently reminded me during that time that serving in missions is not the only way to live for him. As the years passed, we added two beautiful girls to our family, Carmel (5) and Zion (3).

The adrenaline of being on a foreign mission field has now dissipated. What was once strange is now commonplace. My responsibilities as bookkeeper for the Uganda Mission have been rewarding, humbling, and challenging. Christ continues to show me that being a missionary is not about the conversions, the church attendance, or even the hungry fed and the sick healed. Its crux is the crux of every Christian life. We simply live in relationship with our Savior, facing every day and its struggles in light of that relationship. Location doesn't matter. In fact, in many ways we're spoiled here because we have churches and friends constantly lifting us up in prayer! Whenever anyone asks us what we do, that relationship to the Savior is forefront in our answer. Our work and our personal lives are entwined around the life-giving vine.

Being a missionary means having two homes and none at the same time. The longing for a heavenly home with no more goodbyes or split hearts is abiding. Some days, I wonder why he sent me, a closet introvert, to a culture with no personal bubble or space. There are times when I weep at my inability to truly, selflessly love the downtrodden and broken-hearted. Or I see my failure as a mother, wife, neighbor, friend, sister, daughter. Yet, when I have nothing to bring and come empty-handed and broken to the throne of grace, I find that "nothing" is exactly what I should bring. He sings me a lullaby of peace, placing the yoke of rest upon my shoulders, and I breathe deeply of his presence. Those are the days when I have hope of seeing the world changed for Christ.



*Ugandan wind storm (top)  
Karamoja Education Outreach (bottom)  
(Photos courtesy of Christopher Verdick)*

## What's New

### // Appointments

**Rev. Dr. Richard W. Daniels** (ordained in a congregational church) has been appointed to serve as a missionary associate in Mbale, Uganda, where he will be assisting as a lecturer at Knox School of Theology for six months beginning in August 2019.

### // Comings/Goings

**Rev. and Mrs. Markus G. (Sharon) Jeromin** (Presbytery of Michigan and Ontario) concluded their term of three years and three months of service as missionary associates in Montevideo, Uruguay, in April 2019.

# ARE YOU WOKE?

// GREGORY E. REYNOLDS



Alan Noble

“Woke” is the new byword for social awareness. But Alan Noble’s book *Disruptive Witness: Speaking Truth in a Distracted Age* is calling us to be “woke” to the transcendent God, rather than numbed by the immanent frame of the contemporary mindset. Noble includes Christians in his critique of modernity, showing that we are not immune to the cultural smog we breathe. He also challenges us to bear disruptive witness to a world distracted by triviality. Noble has been deeply influenced by the philosopher James K. A. Smith, who has in turn been influenced by the sociology of Charles Taylor. Noble’s numerous citations of these two authors will whet the reader’s appetite for more.

Noble is aware of the important influence of electronic media in cultivating the modern way of thinking that locks us into the lie that what you see is what you get. The internet spreads us over a thin surface of reality and tends to block out transcendent realities, especially the immanent presence of the true and living God. Metanarratives are out, since everything has a natural explanation (3).

Back in 1968, Francis Schaeffer was one of the first to alert thoughtful twentieth-century Christians to this danger. In his influential book *The God Who Is There*, he warned that secular people “have already accepted with an implicit faith the presupposition of the uniformity of natural causes in a closed system” (111). This should not surprise us since we are born in our first parents, “who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth” (Rom. 1:18).

In his introduction, Noble shows that Christians have unwittingly succumbed to the idea that Christian faith is simply a preference (1). One barrier to comprehending the gospel is “the practice of continuous engagement in immediately gratifying activities that resist reflection and meditation” (2). Another is “the growth of secularism, defined as a state in which theism is seen as one of many viable choices for human full-

ness and satisfaction, and in which the transcendent feels less and less plausible” (2). The challenge is to break through the protective, defensive bubble of the modern person with the gospel.

In his first chapter, Noble focuses primarily on the electronic distractions that consume our attention. The boundary between work and leisure is blurred, so that people are constantly available for “communication” (13). The electronic world seeks to capture our attention in order to gather our data through a relentless bombardment (18). Consequently, much of our privacy is disappearing, but like fish in water we remain largely unaware of how all-absorbing this environment is. We are adrift in a sea of triviality (22) that enables people to ignore the logical flaws in arguments, to resist introspection, and to assume that “conversations about faith can be easily perceived as just another exercise in superficial identity formation” (25). In this context, the gospel seems like “just another image vying for our time” (29). Thus, evangelical witness often naively clothes its evangelism in pop culture, unaware of how the medium is an integral part of the message (30).

In chapter 2, Noble investigates the “buffered self,” protected behind a barrier of individual choice, rationalism, and a disenchanting world (37). The modern quest for fullness is subjective, looking within for meaning (36). We have moved from faith to feeling, assuming that there is no transcendent source for fullness and meaning.

The last chapter in Part One deals with the human quest for fullness. “[A] culture of technological distraction inclines us to look for meaning in preoccupation, novelty, consumer choices, and stimulation” (62). Moderns are not disposed to seek fullness from a transcendent source. Identity formation through self-expression is believed to be the only path to fulfillment (62). Noble believes that the urge to justify one’s existence is essential to our being human (64–65). But the wonder of being alive in this world is suppressed by the buffered self.

“To live a life of meaning is to have an interpretive framework for explaining how our significance relates to the rest of existence” (67). But a kind of popular existentialism moves people to believe that there is no inherent meaning in anything. We must create meaning from within (68).

In Part Two, “Bearing a Disruptive Witness,” Noble invites us to challenge the assumptions of unbelievers with countercultural thoughts, words, and deeds, meant to purposely disrupt the assumptions of moderns. Secularism is not so much a rejection of Christianity as a “deeply ingrained cultural assumption” (85). Thus, we “simply can’t reorder society or argue our way out of this societal condition” (87).

This means “we must abandon practices adopted from the secular marketplace that trivialize our faith, and instead return to traditional church practices that encourage contemplation and awe before a transcendent God” (88). In other words, we must ourselves be disrupted by God as our Creator and Redeemer before we can be disruptive witnesses.

Noble speaks honestly of his own struggles with his smart phone and his embarrassment at saying grace in restaurants, which he still recommends as a type of disruptive witness (114). He also goes on in a surprisingly traditional way to recommend Sabbath-keeping as a radically disruptive testimony that there is something more important than this present world (115–18).

In the penultimate chapter, Noble calls the church back to means-of-grace ministry instead of imitating the latest cultural fad. Noble concludes this chapter by valorizing prayer and the Lord’s Supper as two aspects of the liturgy that “most strongly challenge life in a closed, immanent frame” (141). This is the most important and useful chapter in the book.

The final chapter addresses disruptive witness in cultural participation. As an English professor Noble has seen how the reading of twentieth-century literature can assist a disruptive witness. Books like Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* and Hemingway’s *The Sun Also Rises*, which describe the world as a bleak place, can puncture the buffer and reveal the cross-pressure between belief in a meaningless world and longing for meaning and hope (149).

I wish Noble had used the doctrine of original sin more in his analysis of the buffered self. He seems to assume it, but could have been more explicit. While Noble’s sociological analysis and prescription for witness may not be completely satisfying for the presuppositionalist, his book offers an intriguing analysis of the contemporary situation and some thoughtful and stimulating proposals for improving our witness.

*The author is pastor emeritus of Amoskeag Presbyterian Church (OPC) in Manchester, New Hampshire, and is the editor of Ordained Servant. A longer version of this review was published in Ordained Servant Online, November 2018.*

*Disruptive Witness: Speaking Truth in a Distracted Age*, by Alan Noble. Grand Rapids: IVP, 2018, 192 pages, \$16.00, paper.

## OUR MEMBERSHIP VOWS

### The Church’s Worship

*Glen J. Clary*

The fifth membership vow in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church requires us to promise that we will “participate faithfully in this church’s worship and service.” The most important thing that we do in life is worship God. That’s the purpose for which God created us. The Shorter Catechism says that “Man’s chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever” (Q. 1).

Everything that we do in life should serve the glory of God. As the Apostle Paul said to the Corinthians, “Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Cor. 10:31). In that sense, our whole life and everything that we do in it may be regarded as an act of worship. It serves the glory of God. The Christian life is a life in which we present our “bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship” (Rom. 12:1).

While all of life is to be lived “to the glory of God” (1 Cor 10:31), Scripture also teaches that there are specific acts of worship in which God requires us to faithfully participate. First and foremost, God requires us to gather for public worship on the Lord’s Day. The fourth commandment instructs us to “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy” (Ex. 20:8). The Christian Sabbath day is Sunday—the Lord’s Day—the day in which our Lord Jesus was raised from the dead.

As the disciples of Christ, who are to observe all that he has commanded us (Matt. 28:20), we are to “remember the Sabbath day” and “keep it holy” by assembling in Christ’s name on the Lord’s Day for public worship. Moreover, Scripture is very clear that we are not to forsake assembling ourselves together:

And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. (Heb. 10:25)

That is why the OPC requires those who make a profession of faith to promise that they will “participate faithfully” in the worship and service of Christ’s church.

## ☆ Congratulations

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

• **Mayah Gritter**, *Grace Presbyterian, Columbus, OH*



## HOME MISSIONS

# A NEW WORK IN NORTH CAROLINA

// SCOTT S. WILLET



Worship at Harvest OPC in Winston-Salem, NC

December 2, 2018, was an exciting day for Pastor Calvin Keller. Not only was it the first Sunday in his newly installed position as the organizing pastor of Harvest OPC in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, but he also had the privilege of hearing the public profession of faith of seven new members and performing the baptism of a covenant child. With two additional covenant children joining with their parents that day, ten folks were added to the official membership.

Members of the mission work, for their part, were eager and ready to receive a resident pastor. They had previously been ably served by regular and ongoing pulpit supply, but that is a far cry from an on-site preacher from week to week.

### Excitement and Fearfulness

Harvest began four years earlier, when several families of the Covenant Reformed Presbyterian Church in Mount Airy, North Carolina, asked their session to consider starting a new mission work. The issue was geography—the families had much affection for their mother church, but they lived forty-five minutes away in Winston-Salem. Some lived even further. The session was agreeable, and Sunday evening Bible studies began in late 2014. The big step of starting morning worship in Winston-Salem began on May 31, 2015. I had the privilege of being the guest preacher that day, observing both the excitement and the fearfulness of a group out on their own for the first time.

Those early months brought the sorts of obstacles mission works often face. While some people visited in worship, even regularly, some also moved away. Not all the original families continued with the mission work. Attendance stabilized but didn't increase. And the mother church herself went through a difficult and extended pastoral transition, such that the session had to focus most of its energy on the work in Mount Airy. I came to Mount Airy in the midst of that, in March 2016,

with an invitation to be the interim pastor for six months. That temporary relationship was made permanent a year later in April, and only then could the needed attention be given again by the session to the mission work in Winston-Salem.

In the meantime, Harvest was slowly becoming more stable. The charter member families were committed to the work and committed to each other. One by one, additional families started to attend and stay. Regional home missionary Lacy Andrews increased his involvement at Harvest to three weeks a month, providing a necessary stability in the pulpit from week to week. Boone Leigh, a ministerial member of the presbytery and a professional counselor, preached the other week each month.

### A New Pastor

The overseeing session was a commission elected by the mother church in Mount Airy, consisting of elder Mike Shields, myself, Lacy Andrews, and Mike Cloy, an elder from a nearby work in Gastonia, North Carolina. The two elders were exceptionally qualified and experienced in all aspects of



Calvin and Connie Keller

churchmanship and mission works, committing themselves to being present regularly at Harvest and even exhorting occasionally as needed. They shared in the typical shepherding duties as well, along with the ministers. With that level

of experience and commitment, combined with the breadth of and length of ministerial experience on the session, everything was in place for Harvest to take the next, eagerly anticipated step of calling her own pastor.

The Pulpit Search Committee began their work in earnest by the end of 2017. Calvin Keller was then serving at Cornerstone OPC in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and he was well known to most of the session members. He became a person of interest early in the process, but the committee was eager to be diligent and comprehensive in its search, so many other men were given consideration. In my opinion, never had the mission worked together as well as during those deliberations. There was a free-flowing exchange of ideas and thoughts, and because the conversations were confidential, openness and forthrightness flourished. There was no personal agenda being pursued, no power struggles—just the nitty-gritty work of a diverse group of people seeking to discern the Lord's will for a man best suited to the needs of this new mission.

Leadership in evangelism was a key factor in that pastoral search. A high proficiency in preaching was also an agreed-upon requirement, along with the desire for maturity and experience. By the end of last summer, we focused on Keller, and with a successful introduction to the congregation and candidating week in August/September, he was called and then installed last December.

Calvin and his wife, Connie, began “commuting” from Chattanooga for several weeks, then secured a temporary apartment. By this past March, they were able to sell their home in Chattanooga and purchase a new home in Winston-Salem. That is the short story of a series of events in which God's hand was clearly evident in providing for their needs. Their move to Winston-Salem also confirmed their new status as “empty-nesters,” as their four children are now pursuing the normal activities of young adulthood—employment, advanced education, and marriage.

### Ordinary Prayers

Harvest continues today as it was begun, with an emphasis on the value and simple beauty of corporate worship. Evan-

gelism and outreach are now being stressed, with many of the members willing to follow along and take part in the efforts Keller leads. The church meets at a building owned and occupied during the week by the local council of the Boy Scouts of America and is in close proximity to Wake Forest University. Outreach efforts on that campus are anticipated. Outreach efforts at a local mall have taken place on several occasions.

The men are meeting weekly for prayer and discipleship. The church meets mid-week for study and prayer. The fellowship of the saints is sweet. And visitors are still coming.

The mission work is starting to think about how to take the initiative in diaconal ministry. They may also soon need a new location with a larger space for worship and facilities for both Sunday school and nursery care of their youngest children and babies. Keller is trying to identify the best ways to encourage

parents in the covenant nurture of their children even as he also helps prepare another couple to be married soon. There are three children waiting to be born, others eager to make a public profession of faith.



*Small group at the Kellers' home*



*Fellowship after the service*

So please pray for Harvest in all the ordinary ways! Pray for additional families, not only by transfer of membership but also by profession of faith. Pray for the unity of the body, and for the building of a strong and edifying relationship between the congregation and her new pastor. Pray for God to raise up elders and deacons. Pray that her worship of God and service to the city of Winston-Salem would be warm and genuine, that humility would be evident in everyone, and that orthodoxy would be always accompanied by an abundance of love for others and for God.

*The author is pastor of Covenant Reformed Presbyterian Church in Mount Airy, North Carolina.*

### **Home Missions Today**

For up-to-date news and prayer requests, receive our newsletter by e-mailing [HomeMissionsToday@opc.org](mailto:HomeMissionsToday@opc.org).  
New editions: June 5, 19.

# EDWARDS E. ELLIOTT: EVANGELIST



JUDITH M. DINSMORE // Forty years ago, in late May 1979, the general assembly meeting at Geneva College let out early. The commissioners eagerly jumped in their cars or scrambled to book flights home for the same afternoon. OP pastor Edwards Elliott, however, headed to the campus library to study.

The next day, as planned, he flew from Pittsburgh to Chicago. When he landed at O'Hare, he was late for the connecting flight and began to sprint across the airport.

"The last time anyone who knew Daddy saw him, he was running at full speed," said Nancy Mehne, Elliott's daughter.

The plane waited for Elliott, and then took off. It was airborne only a minute before something went wrong. One of its engines fell out, toppling over the left wing and severing the hydraulic fluid lines. Unable to right itself, American Airlines Flight 191 tipped to the side and crashed in a nearby field, killing all 271 passengers and crew in what is, to this day, the worst aviation accident in US history. Elliott's remains were never identified.

Sixty-five years old, Elliott had been a pastor in the OPC since 1942, first in Maryland and later in California. At what would be his last general assembly, he shared a table with Jim Bosgraf, then a young pastor in Denver, and Roger Schmurr, who had interned for him a few years before.

"It was a special privilege to be able to sit next to him," Bosgraf remembered. "He was very gracious to me—patient and encouraging." Two days later, Bosgraf also came through O'Hare, and drove right past the site of the crash. Everyone in the airport was talking about it; everyone in the country knew.

"When I arrived home, I heard about the crash and was stunned," Schmurr remembered. "I felt like I had my legs cut out from under me. It was quite a shock."

The memorial service was like a Presbytery meeting, Mehne said, because everyone from the surrounding OP churches came. It was held at Garden Grove OPC, California, which Elliott had pastored for twenty-three years. The church had to open the windows and line up chairs outside to fit

everyone. Not only did the tight-knit presbytery show up, but the surrounding community did, too. The lumberman who had helped with the most recent church building expansion was there. So were grocery store clerks. Everyone, it seemed, knew Edwards Eugene Elliott.



Edwards E. Elliott

## A Tireless Evangelist

And with good reason. Although a quiet man, Elliott has become an OP byword for evangelism. In the trunk of his car were rows of cardboard boxes with the tops cut off, and, in the boxes, he had file folders containing little black books. "Each box was for a neighborhood around his church," Schmurr explained.

Every afternoon, he would drive to the next street on the list, knock on the door, introduce himself, and start a conversation. Afterward, he wrote down the information in the books: resident names, religious affiliation, whether the neighbors were new. He visited each house every three years or so. "It was his way of keeping in touch

with the community,” Schmurr said. “He was systematic.” It worked. Garden Grove expanded its facilities three times, and most of the growth was due to new converts, not transfers.

He was not doing a sort of Evangelism Explosion, Nancy Mehne is quick to explain. He wasn’t asking folks where they’d end up if they died that night. Rather, he was introducing himself—always as “pastor,” never as “reverend”—and leaving a calling card. “When people had a crisis, they would reach for that card,” Mehne said.



*Pressed for space while an evangelist in Baltimore, Elliott taught Sunday school in an old school bus*

In one sermon at Garden Grove, Elliott described just such a situation: “Last Sunday a man came to our church upon whom I had called five years ago. He had visited the church a few times but remained indifferent to the gospel—until this summer’s major crisis in his life.”

In the early 1960s, Elliott told one housewife from the neighborhood, Jennie Yahuso, that he would be happy to pick up her daughters for Sunday school. She agreed, but after some time began to feel guilty that this friendly pastor was picking up her children for church when she knew she should be doing it herself. She and her husband, Danny, began attending church with their daughters, and eventually both made professions of faith. Danny Yahuso, who was Japanese but born and raised in Hawaii, became an elder and served for some twenty-five years at Garden Grove OPC, attending general assembly and presbytery at Elliott’s encouragement. “The Yahusos were defi-

nately some of the best fruit of Pastor Elliott’s neighborhood survey calling!” wrote David Winslow Jr., himself an elder at Garden Grove.

The diligence Elliott applied to evangelism, he applied to the rest of life as well. “He was a very organized man,” Schmurr said. “Mornings were study: sermons and Bible studies.” A Greek major in college, Elliott kept his Greek New Testament always at his side, even on that flight from O’Hare. He had vast amounts of Scripture memorized, and Winslow remembers Bible verses

flowing easily into his sermons, without citing chapter or verse. He wrote out and read from the pulpit his sermons, each of which lasted a mere twenty minutes—short by today’s standards. “But we found his sermons to be very edifying and uplifting,” Winslow wrote.

Along with sermon-writing and Bible study, Elliott kept up with current events and consistently wrote letters to editors of local newspapers and national publications, which he saw as a natural outworking of his role as shepherd, as well as over forty articles and reviews for the *Presbyterian Guardian*.

But, like a true Californian, Elliott did more than study: “At noon, I would have lunch at his house,” Schmurr said. “But he didn’t have lunch. He went to the YMCA and played volleyball to keep in shape.” He jogged before jogging was cool, doing laps around the church parking lot. During his whole marriage, Mehne said, Elliott never gained a pound.

### **Almost Missionary**

Shortly before the plane crash, Elliott had told his family and the elders at Garden Grove that he planned to retire imminently and move with his wife, Doris, to Egypt, to teach. In a way, this helped to prepare both the church

leaders and the family for his death. “We knew that there was going to be a move. We just didn’t know that Daddy was going to go to heaven instead of Egypt,” Mehne said.

Elliott was the son of missionaries to China, and laboring in Egypt may have seemed a more natural fit for him than spending twenty-three years in sunny, suburban Garden Grove. Yet he didn’t see a difference between home missions and foreign missions. “When I was a little girl, I told him that I wanted to be a missionary,” Mehne remembered. “He looked right at me and said, ‘You don’t have to go someplace else to be a missionary.’”

“It is easier to dramatize Foreign Missions than Home Missions or Christian Education,” Elliott wrote in a sermon. “But a so-called self-supporting church can be just as much a mission station as one supported by the Missions committee. In our Lord’s eyes, there is no such distinction.”

Being a missionary kid undoubtedly affected his life, however. As one of six children left behind with relatives in the States while his parents labored in China, he learned young the value of money. One year in college, finances were so tight that he ate peanut butter sandwiches the whole year. As an adult, when he moved to California after pastoring a church in Baltimore, he hesitated to take on roles on denominational committees—he didn’t want to cost the church the expensive airline tickets to and from the West Coast.

He did still labor faithfully for the larger church, serving as stated clerk and moderator for his presbytery and assistant clerk for general assembly. When he died, letters of condolence flooded in from all over the country. As difficult as it was, the family knew how he would want them to act. “He had so nurtured us in God’s sovereignty,” Mehne said. “And his death has given us plenty of opportunities to, as my father would say, ‘speak a good word for the Lord.’” □

*The author is managing editor of New Horizons.*

## STEWARDSHIP

# WHEN YOU GIVE TO FOREIGN MISSIONS, WHERE DOES YOUR MONEY GO?

The Foreign Missions Committee budget is approximately one-fourth of Worldwide Outreach and is divided into Program Services, which includes all missionary funding, and Supporting Services.

### Program Services

*Proposed 2020 budget: \$1,656,665*

**Asia (\$346,452):** Supports the work of four missionaries and one tentmaker, who continue to labor under difficult circumstances.

**Horn of Africa (\$20,000):** Supports the work of the persecuted Reformed congregation planted by OPC missionaries over twenty years ago.

**Ethiopia (\$51,300):** Supports the work of part-time missionary evangelist Anthony Curto and provides assistance to the Ethiopian Reformed Presbyterian Church.

**Haiti (\$116,912):** Supports the labors of missionary evangelist Benjamin Hopp on the island of La Gonâve and Port-au-Prince (where he joins with Octavius Delfils [PCA] in planting a Reformed congregation in that capital city).

**Kenya (\$2,400):** Contributes to the running costs of the Muruu Trinity Bible Institute, which was started by OPC missionaries over twenty years ago.

**Quebec (\$13,756):** Contributes to the support of Bernard Westerveld, Jr., as he labors to build up congregations of the Reformed Church of Quebec.

**Uganda (\$741,445):** Supports four missionary evangelists, a medical doctor, and a diaconal facilities engineer, as the Orthodox Presbyterian Uganda Mission operates the Knox School of Theology, the Reformation Book Room, Akisyon a Yesu Presbyterian Clinic, the Timothy Discipleship Program, Karamoja Education Outreach, and

assists the Presbyterian Church of Uganda in church planting and leadership training. This is our largest mission.

**Ukraine (\$36,000):** Contributes to the support of missionary evangelist Heero Hacquebord, who is laboring with the PCA Mission to the World team in Ukraine, planting Reformed churches.

**Uruguay (\$113,200):** Supports the labors of missionary evangelist Mark Richline, and assists with the operating expenses of the church plant in Montevideo.

**New Field/Missionary (\$90,000):** A placeholder in the budget to allow for the addition of another missionary on one of our fields.

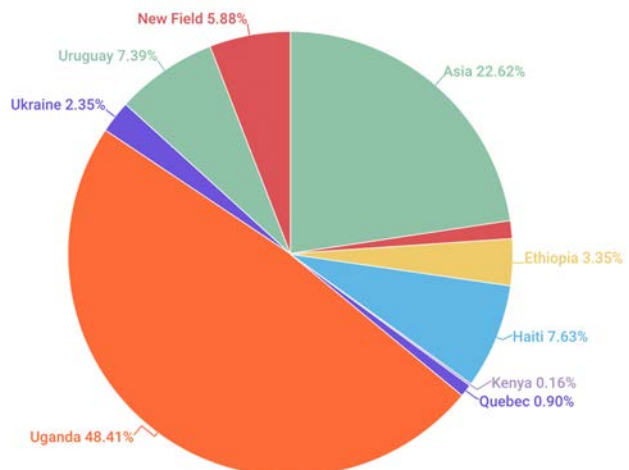
**Other Program Services (\$104,800):** Supports the work of short-term missions and interns, the Mobile Theological Mentoring Corps, training for missionary candidates, furlough vehicle maintenance, and benefits to retired missionaries.

### Supporting Services

*Proposed 2020 budget: \$524,471*

Provides for the administrative support of our missionaries, including promotional materials, and the salaries of our general secretaries, an administrative assistant, and an office secretary. (Just as the OPC does not require its foreign missionaries to raise their own support, it also doesn't require them to cover their associated administrative or promotional expenses.) It also provides for departmental expenses including committee meetings, travel, and printing and publication of promotional materials.

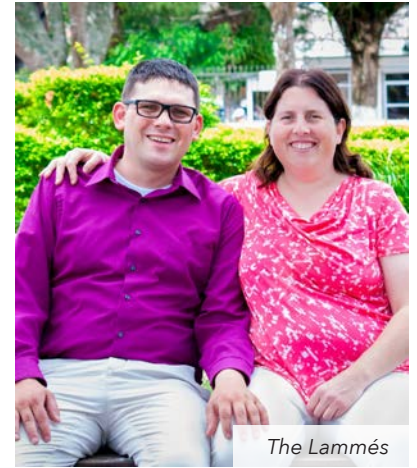
Missionary Support by Field (2020)



JUNE



2018 Boardwalk Chapel volunteer



The Lammés

- 
- 1** Boardwalk Chapel, Wildwood, NJ. Pray for house parents **MARKUS & SHARON JEROMIN**. / **CALVIN & CONNIE KELLER**, Winston-Salem, NC. Give thanks that members at Harvest OPC are inviting people to church.
- 
- 2** Pray for **NATHAN (ANNA) STROM**, as he completes his church-planting internship at Immanuel OPC in Andover, MN. / Pray for **SEMINARIANS** who are beginning summer or yearlong internships and for their mentoring pastors.
- 
- 3** **RYAN & ROCHELLE CAVANAUGH**, Merrillville, IN. Pray for unity at Mission Church and transparent and redemptive relationships. / **BEN & MELANIE WESTERVELD**, Quebec, Canada. Pray for this summer's evangelistic efforts.
- 
- 4** **MARK & JENI RICHLINE** and missionary associates **STEVE & CARRIE HILL**, Montevideo, Uruguay. / Pray for the work of stated clerk **ROSS GRAHAM** during the General Assembly, meeting this week in Dallas, TX.
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- 5** Pray for Christian Education general secretary **DANNY OLINGER** and Home Missions general secretary **JOHN SHAW** as they report to the GA. / **DAVID HANEY**, director for the Committee on Ministerial Care.

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**6** General secretary **MARK BUBE** and associate general secretary **DOUGLAS CLAWSON**. Pray for the report on Foreign Missions to GA. / **CARL (LINDA) GOBELMAN**, summer intern at Westminster OPC in Indian Head Park, IL.

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**7** **MR. AND MRS. M. M.**, Asia (on furlough). Pray for Mr. M. M. as he travels to GA to report on the work in Asia. / Home Missions associate general secretary **AL TRICARICO** and Diaconal Ministries administrator **DAVID NAKHLA**.

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**8** **MICHAEL & NAOMI SCHOUT**, Zeeland, MI. Pray for Christ-centered fellowship at Grace Fellowship OPC and a deep desire to reach out to the community. / **LAWRENCE (HAILEY) GALE**, summer intern at Reformation OPC in Oviedo, FL.

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**9** **MR. AND MRS. J. M.**, Asia. Pray that Mr. J. M.'s language skills and oral communication may be strengthened. / **CHRIS & MEGAN HARTSHORN**, Anaheim Hills, CA. Praise God for today's particularization of Anaheim Hills Presbyterian.

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**10** **BEN & HEATHER HOPP** and **OCTAVIUS & MARIE DELFILS**, Haiti. Praise the Lord for several Reformed works uniting to form a presbytery. / Pray for **LACY (DEBBIE) ANDREWS**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of the Southeast.

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**11** **NICHOLAS & ROSEMARIE LAMMÉ**, Houston, TX. Pray for Nick's evangelistic efforts in the neighborhoods. / **MR. AND MRS. S. F.**, Asia. Pray for the church as an intern is licensed and as they make decisions.

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**12** Tentmaker **T. D.**, Asia. Pray for quality time to encourage local friends as she wraps up her term of service. / Yearlong intern **DAVID CARNES**, Lake Sherwood OPC, Orlando, FL.

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**13** **CHARLENE TIPTON**, database coordinator, and **ABBY HARTING**, Christian Education office secretary. / **MR. AND MRS. D. K.**, who have recently returned from Asia. Pray for wisdom as they seek God's will.

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**14** **ELIJAH (GRETA) DE JONG**, summer intern at Concho Valley OPC in Concho, AZ. / **BRAD & CINNAMON PEPPA**, Dayton, OH. Ask God to bless the transition from evening to morning worship at First Street Reformed Fellowship.

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**15** Pray for associates **P. F.** and **M. S.**, Asia, as they finish the spring semester of teaching and welcome the summer volunteers. / **MARK STUMPF**, administrator for the OPC Loan Fund.

JUNE



The Hacquebord family

**21** Pray for Joel Pearce as he leads efforts to develop a digital edition of the **TRINITY PSALTER HYMNAL**. / Pray for **DR. FLIP & ANNELOES BAARDMAN** as Flip takes continuing education classes in tropical medicine this summer.

**22** **JEREMY & GWEN BAKER**, Yuma, AZ. Ask the Lord to bless Yuma OPC's monthly outreach efforts. / **MARK & CARLA VAN ESSEDELFT**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for a new missionary associate who can assist them.

**23** Pray for **JIM BOSGRAF**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of the Midwest. / Pray for the volunteers and kids at **ENGLISH FOR KIDS BIBLE CAMP** in Quebec City and St-Georges de Beauce, QC.

**24** Missionary associates **LEAH HOPP**, **REBEKAH MOORE**, and **CHRISTOPHER & CHLOE VERDICK**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for their work with the clinic. / Pray for short-term mission outreach and service in **PUERTO RICO**.

**25** Missionary associate **ANGELA VOSKUIL**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for her work with the Karamoja Education Outreach. / **RON & CAROL BEABOUT**, Mifflintown, PA. Ask the Lord to add several new families to Grace and Truth.

**26** **JOSH & KRISTEN MCKAMY**, Chambersburg, PA. Pray that God would bless the future of Covenant OPC as they complete denominational support this month. / **SETH (EVA) DORMAN**, summer intern at Pilgrim OPC in Bangor, ME.



Team Haiti during 2018 VBS

**27** **CHARLES & CONNIE JACKSON**, Mbale, Uganda. Pray for transitions at Knox School of Theology as they prepare for furlough. / Pray for the short-term mission team in **HAITI** from June 22-July 4.

**28** Pray that **NEW HORIZONS**, **ORDAINED SERVANT**, and **OPC.ORG** would edify and spread the good news. / Missionary associate **JOANNA GROVE**, Mbale, Uganda. Pray for her work with the Reformation Book Room.

**29** **ANDREW & REBEKAH CANAVAN**, Corona, CA. Pray for unity and growth within the congregation of Corona Presbyterian. / **MARVIN PADGETT**, executive director of Great Commission Publications.

**30** Yearlong interns **JEREMY (KOURTNEY) BRANDENBURG**, Calvary OPC, Glenside, PA, and **AARON (JACQUELINE) MIZE**, Trinity OPC, Easton, PA. / Pray for **STEVE (JOANIE) DOE**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic.

**16** **STEPHEN & FELICIA LAUER**, Wilmington, OH. Pray for Wilmington Reformed as they begin receiving denominational support. / **HEERO & ANYA HACQUEBORD**, L'viv, Ukraine. Pray for their outreach to teens this summer.

**17** **DAVID & REBEKAH GRAVES**, Coeur d'Alene, ID. Pray that the Lord would fill the body at Coeur d'Alene Reformed Church with the maturity of Christ. / **MASON DEPEW**, summer intern at Harvest OPC in San Marcos, CA.

**18** Pray for OP military chaplains on active duty: **JOHN (LINDA) CARTER**, US Navy; **DAVID (JENNA) DERIENZO**, US Army. / **BEN (TIFFANY) WARD**, church-planting intern, Christ the King, Naples, FL.

**19** Pray for retired missionaries **CAL & EDIE CUMMINGS**, **BRIAN & DOROTHY WINGARD**, **GREET RIETKERK**, and **YOUNG & MARY LOU SON**. / **JAMES STAFFORD**, summer intern at Grace Presbyterian in Columbus, OH.

**20** **DAVID & RASHEL ROBBINS**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for the family as they visit the US for matters relating to the adoption of their child Moru. / Home Missions administrative assistant **KATIE STUMPF**.

# NEWS, VIEWS, & REVIEWS

## SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA OPC WOMEN'S RETREAT

*Beth Sibley*

On April 5–7, one hundred five women of the Southern California Presbytery met in Idyllwild, California, for its thirty-seventh annual retreat, spending three days and two nights fellowshiping and being encouraged in God's Word.

Taylor Lim from Faith OPC in Long Beach, wife of pastor James Lim, spoke on "To be a Member." Tricia Mathys from Providence OPC in Temecula gave a morning devotion to begin each day, and James Lim led the Sunday morning worship. God was proclaimed, and the times of prayer reminded all that God is at work in his people. May we continue to serve him with devoted hearts.



*Attendees of the 37th annual Southern California Women's Retreat*

## LAUER ORDAINED AND INSTALLED AT WILMINGTON

On April 9, Stephen S. Lauer was ordained and installed as an evangelist for the Presbytery of Ohio and organizing pastor of the Wilmington Reformed Church of Wilmington, Ohio. Pastor Benji W. Swinburnson (Lynnwood OPC

in Lynnwood, Washington) preached the sermon. Pastor Stewart E. ("Woody") Lauer, OP minister laboring in Japan and Stephen Lauer's father, gave the charge to the evangelist, and regional home missions coordinator Michael D. Diercks gave the charge to the congregation. Pastor Stephen Lauer pronounced the benediction.



*At the April 9 ordination and installation of Stephen Lauer (left to right) Brad Peppo, Thomas Dizer, Stephen Lauer, Stewart Lauer, Benji Swinburnson, and Michael Diercks*

## UPDATE

### MINISTERS

- On April 2, the Presbytery of the Dakotas dismissed **Brad J. Irick** to the Rocky Mountain Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in America. Mr. Irick was the pastor of Winner Orthodox Presbyterian Church, in Winner, SD.
- **Stephen S. Lauer** was ordained on April 9 as an evangelist for the Presbytery of Ohio and organizing pastor of the Wilmington Reformed Church of Wilmington, OH.
- On April 17, **Chad B. Van Dixhoorn**, professor at Westminster Theological Seminary, was installed as a Teacher of the Word by the Presbytery of Philadelphia.
- On April 23, the Presbytery of New Jersey dissolved the pastoral relationship between **Neil J. Lodge** and Immanuel Orthodox Presbyterian Church in West Collingswood, NJ. Mr. Lodge has retired for health reasons.



## LETTERS

Editor:

Alan Strange carefully described the spirituality of the church (“Spirituality of the Church,” May 2019) while urging the church not to get involved in the “details of public policy that Scripture doesn’t prescribe.” However, he does point out that Scripture “does have something to say” concerning matters of same-sex marriage, abortion, and equity for the poor and all races. What if Scripture’s “something to say” included prohibitions that align with specific public policy proposals that would constrain the practices in question? Would the spirituality of the church require it to remain quiet? If not, how would the church decide which civil affairs were “cases extraordinary” and thus allowable to comment on?

Roger Schmurr  
Cleveland, TN

## REVIEWS

***Still Protesting: Why the Reformation Matters*, by D. G. Hart. Reformation Heritage Books, 2018. Paperback, 207 pages, \$14.00. Reviewed by OP member Tyler D. Gaastra.**

Is the Roman church the only proper home for Christians who are intellectually serious? Is the Roman church the only sure bastion of orthodoxy on questions moral and ethical? Aren’t Protestants responsible for hopeless divisions within the church?

D. G. Hart, who needs no introduction in these pages, hammers an emphatic “no” to these questions and shows his work in his timely book *Still Protesting: Why the Reformation Matters*.

*Still Protesting* “is about the real and abiding strengths of the Protestant Reformation as a critique of the Western church five centuries ago. Despite dramatic changes within the ecclesiastical landscape, the status of human beings before a holy and righteous God and the message of the gospel as explained by the Reformers remain the same” (9).

For confessional Protestants, the opening chapters remind us of the enduring importance of the gospel message that was recovered by our forebears, and the later, polemical chapters provide us with rebuttals to the common critiques of the Reformation specifically and Protestantism in general.

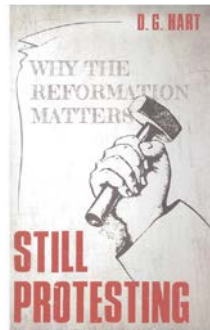
This is the book I needed to read some years ago as a confused college student on the campus of a progressive-friendly, Christian liberal arts university. At the time, my favorite professors were members of the Roman church or were heading in that direction. It seemed to me that Rome was the only alternative to the activism and flip-pant doctrine of evangelicalism.

From the outside, Roman liturgy, art, and religious practice appear to be more serious and spiritual than the liturgy and practice in some Protestant churches. But, as Hart shows, Rome is full of its own errors, and one can’t sit in awe of its architecture without noticing the “kitsch,” all of the candles and home decorations. The ordinary means of grace and the solemn invocation that “our help is in the name of the Lord” are exceedingly more helpful than statues and paintings, which only keep us from true worship of the irreducible God. The worship of confessional churches is biblical, simple, necessary, and sufficient.

In a helpful chapter entitled “What If at Vatican II Rome Abandoned Being the Church Jesus Founded?” Hart highlights the disparate trends that are present in the post-Vatican II church. In many respects, Rome

and mainline Protestant denominations are following the same trajectory of theological chaos and liturgical experimentation. The modern Roman church is not the same one claimed by Augustine or Aquinas, let alone the one Jesus founded.

Intended for a general audience, *Still Protesting* is the book to give to those friends and family members who are tempted to climb the cathedral steps. It is also a fitting read as we remember the milestones of Protestantism, from Wittenberg to Dordrecht. The Reformation still matters because God is still God, and we must give him the glory.



***The Wholeness Imperative: How Christ Unifies Our Desires, Identity and Impact in the World*, by Scott Redd. Christian Focus, 2018. Paperback, 160 pages, \$9.20 (Amazon). Reviewed by OP minister Dennis L. Disselkoen.**

Christians are called to holiness and to wholeness, but sin has brought about brokenness and disintegration. In *The Wholeness Imperative*, Redd walks readers through his approach to a return to wholeness. He blends Old and New Testament passages to illustrate that God brings order out of chaos, beauty out of ugliness, and wholeness out of fragmentation. He skillfully employs extended personal anecdotes, ranging from his own early struggles with faith to his marriage and family life.

Foundationally, Redd says, “Wholeness is something that is true of a person



At the February 19 installation of Robert Mossotti (center) as Teacher of the Word at Mid-Cities Presbyterian in Bedford, TX

and something that is pursued by a person.... This dynamic is often referred to by the label *indicative-imperative*. That which *is* undergirds and compels that which *should be*.... Being precedes becoming, and becoming fulfills being. They make up two parts seeking wholeness” (14–15, 17).

How should God’s people resist the pull to a fragmented life? How do they mend the perforation that divides this life among family, friends, work, public, private, earthly and heavenly? Redd sees that the Shema provides an answer to those questions: “Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might” (Deut. 6:4–5). Redd writes that, “Wholeness presupposes faithfulness; faithfulness responds to the character of God by giving birth to a life unified by the love and worship of the living God” (21).

Redd then turns to the pursuit of wholeness. In Psalm 119, the psalmist recognizes the power of the Word of God to transform, ultimately finding consolation and healing in it. Redd connects this to our pursuit of worship, which anticipates “the day when Christ will come again and complete the work of redemption and new creation that He has begun in us already” (48).

What role did Jesus have in redeeming wholeness? Redd points us to Mark’s gospel, which shows “who Messiah is and what Messiah means for the world” (75). Christ speaks wholeness to the paralytic man and to us. “We come to Him broken and fragmented; He makes us whole” (84).

Redd states that the power of Christ to transform and to make whole extends to the spirit world and to the physical elements. Referring to the incidents of the stilling of the storm and of the demonized man near Gerasa, he says, “Our Lord...is the one who calms the sea-storm with a word and who restores peace to the troubled spirit” (102–3).

In his conclusion, Redd treats the im-

portance of Christians living out their new lives with a sense of victory. “Jesus has turned back the curse of chaos, disease, and death. He began His work while He was with us, and He continues it today through His body, the church” (139).

**Richard Dawkins, by Ransom H. Poythress. P&R, 2018. Paperback, 195 pages, \$11.50. Reviewed by OP pastor Robert Y. Eckardt.**

As a reviewer, I decided to read this book to see if it was truly accessible through clear writing and incisive, constructive critique. The editor says this is the purpose of the entire Great Thinkers series, of which this book is a part. I have a background in chemistry, as well as theology, and bring both to my reading.

The author, Ransom Poythress, is a professor of biology at Houghton College and a graduate of Westminster Theological Seminary. Poythress uses the tools not only of presuppositional apologetics, but also of his father’s (Westminster professor Vern Poythress) emphasis on Lordship attributes.

Poythress analyzes Richard Dawkins, whose most famous work is the best-seller *The God Delusion* (2006). Dawkins is a prominent figure in the New Atheist movement and is noted for his incisive critique of Christianity and his debate of various Christian apologists. With his basic premise being that a human being is an animal, but also like a machine created by his own genes, Dawkins posits that a creator is not necessary for explanations of life, but that evolution provides evidence against a personal God.

According to Poythress, the New Atheist movement has three characteristics: simplicity, an evolutionary story of life, and a strident tone. In his analysis

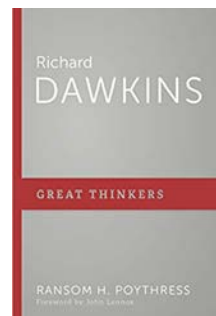
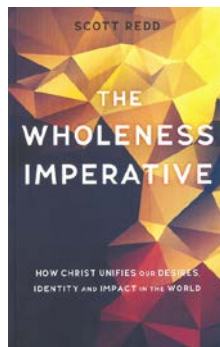
and response, Poythress is striving for an alternative: simplicity, a Biblical/logical story of life, and an irenic tone.

In his effort to keep things simple, Poythress has written a short book, with simple vocabulary, pithy definitions, memorable summary statements, helpful analogies, diagrams, and homespun illustrations.

Despite these efforts, however, some issues are difficult to simplify. As a result, later sections of the book get a little complicated and philosophical. I would prefer Poythress’s own words rather than quotes from some others who are less clear. I would hope for the audience to be the non-scientist, and even the non-theologian, but the typical Christian in the pew may have trouble following the material.

Later chapters include: *Issues in Science*, dealing with origins, law, the universe, and complex life; *Questions about God*, where the author shows the unique claims of the Bible; *Miracles*, answering Dawkins’s flawed definitions; *Evil*, where we find that not understanding sin and salvation are the key issues; and *Morality*, for which Dawkins seems to have no basis.

Poythress is kind and fair to his opponent throughout. He concludes with a great appendix on how to talk to atheists as people, in love, keeping emotions in check, and praying for the work of the Holy Spirit. This book is a good addition to the discussions with atheism in our day.



## Position Available

**New Testament Faculty:** Westminster Seminary California announces a new faculty opening in New Testament. This is a full-time, tenure-track position that begins July 1, 2020. Your curriculum vitae should be submitted by August 2, 2019. For further information, visit our website at [www.wscal.edu](http://www.wscal.edu) or contact President Joel E. Kim at [facultysearch@wscal.edu](mailto:facultysearch@wscal.edu).

NEWS, VIEWS, & REVIEWS *Continued*

***The Battle for the Biblical Family, 2nd ed.*, by George C. Scipione. Crown & Covenant, 2018. Paperback, 304 pages, \$16.00. Reviewed by OP pastor David P. Bush.**

If I profess, with the loudest voice and the clearest exposition, every portion of the truth of God except precisely that little point which the world and the devil are at that moment attacking, I am not confessing Christ, however boldly I may be professing Christianity. Where the battle rages the loyalty of the soldier is proved; and to be steady on all the battle-field besides is mere flight and disgrace to him if he flinches at that one point.

This famous quote (which is often attributed to Martin Luther but rightly belongs to Elizabeth Rundle Charles) states precisely why Dr. Scipione's book is a must-read for all church officers,

marriage counselors, and anyone who is married or who plans on being married. The forces that have allied themselves to actively dismantle the biblical family have, of late, been largely successful in their warfare, perhaps because many in the church are soldiers asleep at their post. Scipione arms his reader with concrete, well illustrated, and biblically sound stratagems to aid the church militant in the grand battle that she presently faces in protecting the biblical family.

Scipione works through a variety of family-related issues much like a gemologist who inspects the various facets of a diamond. Each chapter addresses an aspect of the family and how attacks have been leveled against it from psychology, atheistic ideologies, humanism, and even the Girl Scouts. Starting with a defense of

the family as a basic building block to a healthy society, Scipione takes his reader from that foundation through to contemporary issues such as transgenderism. Scipione utilizes a rich complement of systematic, historical redemptive, and exemplary approaches to develop his various topics of discussion.

The weakness of this book might be the fact that some will desire a fuller treatment of a few of the topics. This Scipione admits in the book (see especially his remarks with respect to the civil magistrate as it relates to the family). However, I trust the vast majority

of readers will find sufficient material to digest and to aid them in their particular fight.

Three strengths make this book worthy of note. First, Scipione does not simply identify the battle for the biblical family that closely concerns many Christians, but offers concrete biblical solutions for getting the victory. Second, the enemies exposed in this book are forces both outside the family as well as inside the family. Third, the book includes a number of very edifying appendixes that address some presently debated subjects (gender roles, counseling, and the civil magistrate, to name a few).

This book is the expansion of a previous work titled *The Sword and the Shovel* (2002), which was itself a revision of a work titled *The Biblical Battle for the Family* (1996). Those who have read either of those books will find sufficient additions in this present work to justify its purchase.



At David Okken's Feb. 8 installation as associate pastor of Shiloh OPC in Raleigh, NC (left to right) Tony Curto, Matthew Holst, David Okken, Philip Proctor, Al Tricarico