

REFLECTIONS

The Monthly Newsletter of Grace OPC

GUARDING ENTRUSTED TREASURES

By Pastor Brian De Jong

Throughout his letters of instruction to his young protégé Timothy, the Apostle Paul stressed the importance of sound doctrine. “Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me,” he says. “Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you.”

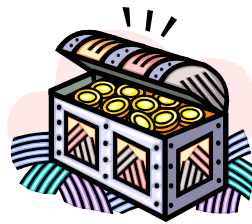
The glorious gospel of God’s grace was precious in Paul’s sight – far more valuable than piles of gold or mountains of money. Earthly “riches” are perishable, and quickly lost, spent or stolen. Real wealth consists of the spiritual truths which God has revealed. Through these “sound words” human beings come to know the Sovereign God and His salvation. Above all, Timothy must safeguard God’s holy deposit.

Two thousand years later, that duty is more important than ever before. Unscrupulous men – wolves in sheep’s clothing – prowl about the church of Jesus Christ. They seek to undermine and overthrow sound doctrine in order to push their “new” agendas and to introduce their latest innovative ideas. Hardly a week goes by without receiving some new “spin” or “twist” on the Christian faith through the mail or via the internet. It seems like everyone is hawking some pseudo-Christian fad that promises to revolutionize our understanding, and bring heaven on earth.

With the avalanche of modern innovations and religious novelties, a faithful and believing remnant must zealously protect the truths that God has entrusted to us. He does not change, nor has His truth been al-

tered – so we too must stand firm and continue maintaining that old gospel – that all men have sinned, that God sent His Son to live, die and rise again in order to save sinners – and that the only way of salvation is by grace through faith in the completed work of Jesus Christ. We dare not compromise such an important matter.

It was with great joy and profound appreciation that I read our denomination’s report on justification. A committee of our most learned men met and worked for two years to produce a document on justification that far exceeded my expectations. Dr. John Carrick has asserted that in the present day justification controversy,



the very gospel is at stake. If the Reformation’s understanding of justification is eclipsed, we will enter into a new “dark ages,” theologically speaking. Justification by grace alone through faith alone is essential to our continued existence as a true church. If that point is lost, all will eventually be lost.

To help you understand the controversy, and our denomination’s recent report, I have written another article – found inside of this month’s Reflections. Please take time to read and consider this article about this most-important matter. We all have a duty to understand and to safeguard God’s truth – that pattern of sound words given by God to the Apostles, and handed down to us on the pages of the New Testament. To concede this point would be disastrous for the OPC, for Grace Church and for your faith.

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Inside this issue:

<i>Pastor’s Article</i>	1
<i>The Justification Controversy by Pastor De Jong</i>	2-5
<i>Birthdays</i>	6
<i>July Calendar</i>	7
<i>Comments on Finance by Joel Moody</i>	8
<i>Grace Church by Rev. Ivan De Master</i>	9
<i>From Phillip Nachonie</i>	10
<i>Orphanage Thank You Note</i>	11
<i>London by Carla De Master</i>	12
<i>Malawi by Pastor De Master</i>	13
<i>Recipe Corner</i>	14
<i>Getting to know Ken Koehler</i>	15-16
<i>Did You Know?</i>	16
Mnemonics...	
• <i>Men’s Breakfast & Study, Aug. 5th</i>	
• <i>Youth Group, Aug. 13th</i>	
• <i>Church Picnic, Aug. 17th</i>	
• <i>Session Meeting, Aug. 1</i>	

THE JUSTIFICATION CONTROVERSY

by Pastor Brian De Jong

Over the past decade, storm clouds have been gathering on the theological horizon. In the last several years, a full blown tempest has broken upon conservative, Bible-believing, Reformed churches. The center of this controversy is the doctrine of justification by faith alone. As a result of a church discipline case in 2002-2003, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church has become embroiled in this controversy, and our good name has been unfairly sullied as a result. In response to these developments, the 2004 OPC General Assembly formed a study committee to evaluate the controversy, and to provide a definitive response to these modern developments.

As with all good study committees in the OPC, they could not meet the original time-table of one year. At the 2005 GA, they asked for another year to finish their work – a request which was granted. In the late Spring of this year, the committee's work was ready for publication. Our OPC website made their report available to all OPC officers, and I downloaded and printed a copy for my own study. I quickly came to see that this report was worth the wait – what I read far exceeded expectations.

Let me set forth the background and context for this report, and then provide the report's own summary for your edification.

There are several streams that flow in the same direction, and have contributed to this ongoing controversy. One of these streams is the teachings of Dr. Norman Shepherd. For many years, Dr. Shepherd served as a professor at Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia, and was a minister in the OPC. Due to some of his teaching, questions began to emerge about Dr. Shepherd's view of justification. The seminary, and later his Presbytery, became involved in the matter. Dr. Shepherd was accused of teaching that works played an important role in our justification – even that good works were necessary in some sense in order to be justified. After much analysis, the Presbytery cleared Dr. Shepherd of any

theological errors. The Seminary, however, dismissed Dr. Shepherd from his teaching post, and he left the OPC. Opinions at the time were divided – some maintaining that Shepherd was simply unclear in formulating his doctrinal statements, while others believed that he was teaching a version of works righteousness. Dr. Shepherd has created more controversy with recent writings – especially the book The Call of Grace. In that volume, he does seem to suggest that we are justified by faith plus works, and not by faith alone. Yet his writing is far from clear, and sometimes is downright confusing.

A second stream is what has come to be known as the “New Perspectives on Paul” movement – or simply, the “New Perspective.” This approach is the combined efforts of several British New Testament Scholars – E.P. Sanders, James Dunn and N.T. Wright. Each of these men have contributed ideas to this new perspective, and called for a major revision of scholarly thought about the New Testament, and about the Christianity of St. Paul. In a nutshell, the NPP folks believe that the Reformers mis-interpreted Paul's writings, and misunderstood the nature of first century Judaism. Luther and others read their own struggles with Roman Catholicism back into the New Testament. According to the NPP, first century Judaism was not teaching works righteousness, nor denying salvation by grace. Therefore the idea of “justification” in the Bible is not an idea about how a sinner is forgiven of his sins, and “gets right with God.” It is not a judicial act related to the guilt of sin. Rather, justification is about how someone knows that they are part of God's people. Justification, to the NPP, is all about covenant signs and seals – about the markers which identify “insiders” and distinguish them from “outsiders.”

What is conspicuous – and troubling – by its absence is any answer to the question of guilt and sin. The NPP authors – especially Wright – don't, won't (can't?) answer the simple question “How does a sinner become right with God?” They will not say how your guilt is removed, and how you can be reconciled to a holy God. That is central to Biblical Christianity,

and to personal salvation.

The third stream is called “The Federal Vision” or “Auburn Avenue Theology.” This movement is deeply connected to the PCA, although it has not won many adherents in the OPC. The roots of this viewpoint go back to the Christian Reconstruction movement, particularly to the Reconstructionists in Tyler, Texas. In Tyler in the 1970’s and 1980’s, three men held leadership positions – Gary North, Ray Sutton and James Jordan. Though North was the most prolific and colorful of the three, it seems that James Jordan was the theological rudder of their church. The Tyler group eventually broke up, with Jordan going to Niceville, Florida. There he set up a ministry called “Biblical Horizons” and began teaching, writing and promoting his agenda. His ideas leaned toward an Episcopal/Roman Catholic view of the church. He taught that the sacraments are central to the life of the church, and to Christian worship. He also promotes a priestly view of the ministry. In his teaching, the minister corresponds to the Old Testament priest, the deacon to the Levite, and the elder to a civil official – the “elders in the gate” in Old Testament Israel.

One of Jordan’s helpers was Peter Leithart, who took Jordan’s perspective to Moscow, Idaho. There, he introduced Doug Wilson and his friends to Jordan’s ideas. Wilson, in turn, spread Jordan’s views to Steve Wilkins of Auburn Avenue PCA Church in Monroe, Louisiana. Auburn Avenue began holding annual conferences to popularize this teaching – especially to the Southern parts of the PCA. The first Auburn Avenue conference that created furor featured Wilkins, Wilson, John Barach and Steve Schlissel. At that conference, these men taught many unbiblical things, including the statement by Schlissel that Luther “was wrong about justification.” Schlissel stated that justification by faith is not the central doctrine of the New Testament, because there is no central doctrine in the New Testament. They have also suggested that water baptism brings about, or causes, regeneration to occur. They further suggested that the “elect” are those who are members of the visible church, and that you can lose your “election” if you are removed from the visible church. The

next year Auburn Avenue PCA held a second conference, where the same speakers re-affirmed what they had taught at the first conference.

These erroneous teachings provoked strong responses from the conservative quarters of the PCA. Greenville Reformed Presbyterian Seminary, in particular, provided leadership to challenge the teachings of the Auburn Avenue movement. There were meetings held, conferences organized, and charges threatened. The Mississippi Valley Presbytery of the PCA formed its own study committee, which produced a strong report condemning the Federal Vision perspective.

The OPC’s involvement came as the 2003 General Assembly took up the appeal of John Kinnaird. Kinnaird was a ruling elder who had been teaching and writing about justification. Some people in his church felt he was teaching a form of works righteousness, and they challenged him on it. He stood his ground, so eventually charges were brought against him. Mr. Kinnaird’s Session tried him and found him guilty of teaching justification by faith plus works. Kinnaird then appealed to the Philadelphia Presbytery. They heard his appeal, and denied his appeal. They ruled that the local Session had been correct in its findings. Kinnaird then appealed to the General Assembly. His case was heard by the Assembly, and he was questioned at great length. (I myself was a commissioner at that Assembly and voted on the appeal). The majority of the Assembly believed that Mr. Kinnaird was not teaching works righteousness, and they upheld his appeal. Therefore the convictions of the local Session and the Presbytery were overturned. Mr. Kinnaird was admonished to strive for greater clarity in his teaching, and he later stepped down from active service in the church. The declarations of the Assembly were very clear, to the effect that they judged that he was not teaching what he was accused of teaching, and therefore could not be found guilty. Yet they also said that if he had been teaching works righteousness, he should have been convicted and deposed from office.

Despite the clarity of the Assembly, this turned into ammunition for some old opponents of the OPC. John Robbins and the Trinity Foundation

began claiming that the OPC was teaching works righteousness, and that we had adopted the Federal Vision perspective. Nothing could have been further from the truth. Rev. Stephen Pribble, an OPC minister, has called Robbins to repent of his slander, but Robbins stood fast and would not repent or cease from slandering our good name. Among the Federal Vision advocates, the Kinnaird case seemed like a victory. They, too, claimed that the OPC had joined their movement. Not so, but the claim was made and believed by some.

Seeing the fallout of the Kinnaird appeal, some in Midwest Presbytery determined to ask the next General Assembly to reaffirm our commitments to the Westminster Standards on Justification by faith alone. Not only did the 2004 Assembly clearly reaffirm what we've always believed, but formed the study committee of which I've been speaking. The committee was the cream of the crop in the OPC, featuring our best theologians and churchmen. They did their work diligently and provided an insightful report that gets to the heart of the issues in question – especially justification.

The Report's "General Summary"

There is perhaps no better confessional summary of the biblical, Reformed doctrine of justification than that found in WLC 70:

Justification is an act of God's free grace unto sinners, in which he pardoneth all their sins, accepteth and accounteth their persons righteous in his sight; not for any thing wrought in them, or done by them, but only for the perfect obedience and full satisfaction of Christ, by God imputed to them, and received by faith alone.

In this statement, one can see all of the major aspects of the doctrine, which the following paragraphs summarize.

First, the *nature of justification* may be described as both *forensic* and *definitive*. Justifica-

tion is forensic in that it is a judicial declaration of God, proclaiming a person righteous in his sight, rather than a transformative, renovative work by which a person is made subjectively holy. The very word Greek word used in the NT to describe justification (*dikaion*) is ordinarily forensic in

“Justification by faith puts one at peace with God and secures his final destiny for eternal life.”

meaning and is clearly forensic in the contexts in which Paul expounds the doctrine of justification (e.g., in Rom 3:19-20; 5:16; 8:33-34; for OT background, cf., e.g., Exod 23:6-7; Deut 25:1; Prov 17:15; compare also the judicial language in WCF 11.3; WLC 67, 70, 75; WSC 31, 33, 34). Justification is definitive in the sense that it is a once-for-all accomplished, completed, and perfect act in this life, upon a person's coming to faith. Justification by faith puts one at peace with God and secures his final destiny for eternal life (e.g., see Rom 5:1, 9; WCF 11.4-5; WLC 77).

Very important background to this doctrine of justification is that God requires perfect obedience to his will, measured by the standard of his law, and that all of us, as fallen sinners, are unable to meet this requirement and thus stand condemned apart from Christ. God is a just God. As the just judge of the whole earth, he cannot but condemn the sinner and acquit the righteous (e.g., Exod 23:7; Deut 10:17; Prov 17:15; Nah 1:3). In creation God entered a covenant of works with Adam in which he promised eschatological life upon perfect obedience and death upon disobedience (see Gen 2:16-17; WCF 7.2; 19.1; WLC 20; WSC 12). In accord with his justice, God condemned Adam and his posterity when he fell, and he continues to demand perfect obedience from all people after the Fall (e.g., Gal 3:10; 5:3 WLC 99). We rejoice that God is merciful as well as just, but his merciful justification of sinners cannot be other than a just act (WLC 71). It is for this very reason that sinners, judged upon the basis of their own works, can never be justified by our holy and righteous God (e.g., Rom 3:19-20; WCF 16.4-6).

In his justice and mercy, God has provided jus-

tification for sinners by sending his Son to satisfy the just demands of the law and by imputing the benefits of his work to believers. Sinners are justified by the righteousness of Christ, that is, by his *passive and active obedience*. Christ's passive obedience refers to his suffering obedience, his bearing the penalty of the curse of the law throughout his life and especially in his crucifixion. By this work our sins are forgiven (e.g., see Isa 53:4-6, 10; Heb 10:5-10; 1 Pet 2:24). Christ's active obedience refers to his keeping the commands of the law throughout his life. By this work we are reckoned to have kept the law perfectly, as originally demanded of Adam in the covenant of works (e.g., Rom 5:15-19). In this great work, the demands of God's justice are satisfied and the glorious riches of his grace are displayed. The Westminster Standards speak of this twofold obedience as the ground of our justification in numerous places (e.g., WCF 8.4-5).

This righteousness of Christ, his passive and active obedience, must be applied to believers if it is to be of benefit to them. The application of this benefit of Christ comes through union with Christ, by means of *imputation*; that is, when sinners are united to Christ by faith, Christ's righteousness is judicially reckoned or credited to sinners so that their sins may be forgiven and the perfect obedience of Christ accounted as their own (e.g., see Psa 32:2; Rom 4:5-11, 22-24; 2 Cor 5:19, 21; Phil 3:8-9; WCF 11.1; WLC 69-71; WSC 31-33).

This imputation of the righteousness of Christ is received by the sinner by faith, and by faith alone. Scripture sets forth faith as that by which a

sinner is justified in numerous places, and often does so in sharp contrast to the other alternative, that is, justification by works (e.g., Rom 3:21-22; 3:28; 4:4-5, 13-14; 9:30-32; 10:5-6; Gal 2:16; 3:11-12; Phil 3:9; Eph 2:8-9). For this reason, the Westminster Standards properly speak of faith as the "alone instrument" of justification (e.g., WCF 11.2; WLC 70, 71, 73; WSC 33). This truth is properly understood when the nature of saving faith is appreciated: it is unique and distinct from "works" in that faith is an extraspective trust that looks outside of one's self and rests only upon the perfect work of another, namely, Jesus Christ (e.g., Hab 2:4; John 3:16, 18; Acts 10:43; Rom 3:22; 4:20-21; 1 Pet 1:8; WCF 11.1-2; 14.2; WLC 72-73; WSC 33, 86). As such, faith expresses the gracious character of salvation and thus is indeed the appropriate instrument of justification (e.g., Rom 4:16; 11:5-6).

Finally, the doctrine of justification is properly understood when justification is seen as both absolutely distinct as well as inseparable from sanctification, that work of God by which sinners are inwardly renewed in holiness. Never is God's forensic work of justification to be confused with his transformative work of sanctification, yet never does God fail to sanctify those whom he has justified (e.g., Rom 6:1-2, 15; Gal 2:17; 5:13; WLC 77).

For more information on the New Perspective on Paul and/or the Federal Vision, you can visit our OPC website – www.opc.org or simply ask me and I can easily provide the summaries from the report on those movements.



AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

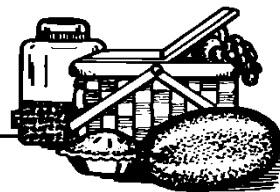


*Happy
Birthday!!!*

Annual Church Picnic

The annual church picnic is scheduled for Thursday, August 17, at 4:30p.m. at Firehouse Park, located on Highway Y a little south of Highway J. We're planning dinner for 6:00p.m. Please sign up on the sheet on the bulletin board by Sunday, August 13. Please bring your own drinks, plates, cups, utensils, and a ta-

blecloth and lawn chairs if you wish. Also, if you wish to join in on a softball game after dinner, bring a mitt and your favorite bat or if you wish to get some other type of game started, feel free to bring what's needed for that.

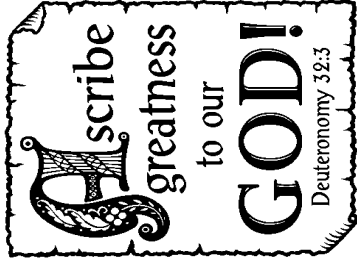




Grace OPC

March 2011

Showing forth the excellencies of Jesus Christ



Church Office:
4930 Green Valley Ln
Sheboygan, WI 53083

Phone: 920-565-2160
Email: graceopc@tds.net
briandejong@earthlink.net

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 Session Meeting 6:30 p.m.	2 Prayer Meeting, 7:00 p.m.	3	4	5 Men's Study 7:30 a.m.
6	7 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.	8 Pine Haven Study 1:30 p.m.	9 Prayer Meeting, 7:00 p.m.	10	11	12
13 Missions Sunday Youth Group	14 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.	15	16 Prayer Meeting, 7:00 p.m.	17 4:30 p.m. Church Picnic (Dinner at 6:00 p.m.)	18	19
20	21 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.	22 Pine Haven Study 1:30 p.m.	23 Prayer Meeting, 7:00 p.m.	24	25	26
27 Lord's Supper,	28 Women's Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.	29	30 Prayer Meeting, 7:00 p.m.	31		

COMMENTS ON FINANCES

By Joel Moody

General Fund

June General Fund receipts totaled \$10,936.99 as compared to budgeted receipts of \$10,313.40. Actual disbursements for the same period were \$8,920.91. June Year to Date Actual General Fund receipts totaled \$83,932.02 while Actual General Fund Disbursements for the same time period totaled \$57,904.43. Budgeted General Fund Receipts/Disbursements were \$67,037.00.

totalled \$1,130.26 while Budgeted Benevolence receipts were \$1,250.00. For the first six months of the year, Actual Benevolence receipts totaled \$8,064.56 while Budgeted receipts for the same period were \$7,500.00.

In addition to the normal disbursements to Worldwide Outreach and to the Church Extension Committee of the Midwest Presbytery scheduled for August, a disbursement of \$500.00 will be made to Middle East Reformed Fellowship.

Benevolences

Actual June Benevolence receipts

From All That Dwell

From all that dwell below the skies let the Creator's praise arise;
Let the Redeemer's name be sung through every land, by every tongue.

In every land begin the song; to every land the strains belong.
In cheerful sound all voices raise and fill the world with joyful praise.

Eternal are your mercies Lord; eternal truth attends your word.
Your praise shall sound from shore to shore till suns shall rise and set no more.

by Isaac Waats, 1719; mod. Based on Psalm 117

GRACE CHURCH - BEGINNINGS

written by Rev. Ivan De Master

The history of Grace Church goes back to the Beacon Lights Chapel established by the First Christian Reformed Church of Sheboygan. The goal for starting the chapel was to reach out with the gospel to others who might not come to First Church. Some of the members committed themselves to this mission effort. Fred and Toni Barthels were among those who made this commitment and who shared this vision.

A building was found on Superior Avenue located between 39th and 31st Streets. The building is still there. An evangelist was called to serve the chapel and the Lord blessed this work. Attendance grew to 75 people.

One of the evangelists who served the chapel was John Fikkert. He served for a couple of years. His zeal and ministry were greatly appreciated. When he left he came in contact with the Rev. Don Stanton and the Rev. Henry Fikkert. These men were part of prebytery's Church Extension Committee (CHEX). They encouraged John Fikkert to become part of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and seek ordination. John responded positively to this and took up the mission work in Green Bay where the presbytery wanted to see a church planted.

The Beacon Lights Chapel faced some difficulties in the early 1970's and the decision was made to close the chapel. The people were

encouraged to worship at First Church. Some did so but being a part of a large church was very different from the smaller mission chapel. There was a desire to continue what had been done. Some people brought up the idea of coming to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. The decision was made to go up to Green Bay on a particular Sunday and worship with the people pastored by John Fikkert. This visit and the discussion with Pastor Fikkert encouraged the people to investigate the OPC further.

Meetings were held with Pastors Stanton and H. Fikkert as to how to proceed in starting a church here in Sheboygan. Prayers and plans were made. People from the chapel and others notified of the decision. A date was set to begin worship services.

The first worship service was held on Sunday, January 28, 1973. The service was held in the basement of Fred and Toni Barthels home on Superior Avenue. The Rev. Henry Fikkert conducted the worship service and his son Brian sang a solo. The basement was largely filled. Current members who were part of that service were Harlan and Nancy Harmelink and their daughters Gail Moody and Sandy Kaieser.

We are thankful to God for these pioneers who had a vision for the church. They would be joined by others who loved the Lord and desired to reach out with the gospel.



Toni Barthels



Nancy & Harlan Harmelink



From Phillip Nachonie

Highlights from two letters received by the Bosses from Phillip

June 19, 2006

I am glad to have the opportunity of writing to you after a very long silence. I have not been able to access internet. The college where I expected to find it does not have it anymore. It has been more than three months since they lost it. However, this cannot prevent us from communicating to one another as there are other means of communications such as writing letters.

My trip back home was very good. We did not have any problems on the way. We had to fly to Dubai, United Arab Emirates in order to get the Kenya Airways flight instead of flying straight from Amsterdam to Nairobi, Kenya. Despite this change we were able to be in Lilongwe, Malawi, on time. My family was there waiting to welcome me.

I am doing fine as well as my family, too. They are helping me a lot in adjusting and everything is going on smoothly. I have been able to talk to Edward Kalua. He is doing well in Karonga where he is teaching together with Michael Gondwe. I also told him about the DeMaster's visit and he was very excited with the news. I will be calling him as soon as the DeMasters arrive.

As far as the DeMaster's trip is concerned, we are eager to welcome them later next week. Either my nephew Ben or my brother-in-law Stewart will be driving them. In fact they will be using my car that I have just

bought. I hope they will enjoy their visit in Malawi.

Pass our sincere thanks and gratitude to the entire congregation of Grace Church for their prayers and love. I really miss Grace Church.

July 10, 2006

I hope you are all doing well and enjoying the summer. We are also doing fine. The winter is not as cold as that of Wisconsin.

It was really a wonderful moment to have the DeMasters with us here. Michael Mulenga joined me to welcome them at Lilongwe International Airport from Johannesburg, South Africa. From there we drove to my place where they spent a few days with my family. Stewart Chinkhata, my brother-in-law, drove them around the country. God has really helped to make the DeMaster's dream of coming to Malawi to come true. I have just bought my car and this helped a lot as they did not need to hire a car for themselves.

Pass my warm and tender greetings to the congregation of the Grace Church. I miss them, as well as the Sunday School, a lot.

On June 29 Michael Mulenga also sent a short note asking that we, "Greet all people for him."

London - June 22-26

written by Carla De Master

Pat VanDerWaal was a welcome sight at Heathrow Airport on June 22. She took us and our baggage in her little black Honda to her home in Southall. Maneuvering the little streets on the wrong side of the road, Pat proved to be an excellent driver. To get us to understand the work of the twenty plus ministry team in Southall, she took us to a shopping center where there are two bookstores, one Muslim and one Hindu. These are prominent religions in the area. It was something like Sonlight books with a twist. Two of the Hindu gods that were interesting were the elephant god and the prosperity god.

Following this we went into a Hindu temple and a Sikh temple. The Hindu gods were mostly life-size and stood in a row with bright colors. People would come in any time of the day and worship before them. The Sikh temple is one of the largest in the world, with the holy book under the golden dome seen from the outside. No shoes and a veil are required as we sit on the floor with feet tucked in.

After a few days of London sights, we continued to understand what World Harvest is doing in London. We were able to stay with Pat because one of Pat's house mates, Amber, a member of the team for a year, is in India, helping with Vacation Bible School. As reported in church on Sunday, the first day they had 300 attending. At the closing program there were over 700 people. This is an extension of what is happening in London.

Since worship for the mission work is at 5 p.m., we went to All Saints Anglican church, where John Stott had been pastor, in the morning on Sunday (glorious music led by an orchestra) where Rico Tice preached on Praising Sacrifice in Hebrews 13. That was followed by a picnic in Regents Park with two more of the team members, Carolyn and Jack. They volunteer every year for 8 months and come from Chatanooga, TN. Jack is 79. They do whatever is needed, including providing transportation which they did that day.

At the worship service at New Life Masih Ghar Church, testimonies were given of what God is doing with the mission team in India in the Bible

school. Others told of people whom God used in the past to lead to Christ some of whom were also visiting that day. Sunil Raheja led the service and spoke on Ephesians 2:10. Communion was served in Iranian cups with Indian flat bread.

A vegetarian dinner follows every worship service. Ivan sat for a while with a Sikh man who was seeking, visiting with a girlfriend. I met Rose Marie Miller, Piya, and Heather, part of the church. Good fellowship was obvious all around. Friendship evangelism is used throughout the ministry at the many different encounters with people. People need to know they can trust the person before they hear the message.

On Monday we saw Asha, the thrift store ministry. Asha, by the way, means hope. Some team members were sorting out clothes and other donated items in a shed in the back or selling in the front room where I bought this dress, a punjabi style. In the middle room is where the action takes place. This is another aspect of the friendship evangelism approach. Ahmjad, a converted Muslim, sits there answering questions and leading Bible studies with one or more. Ahmjad was led to Christ after 11 years of ministering to him by his brother, an engineer in Pakistan. The brother is retired and building a church there. Ahmjad's great desire is to help Muslims find Christ. Chia, who lives upstairs at Asha, serves Indonesian tea and shows hospitality to all guests. Pat also has a Bible study here for women a couple days a week. Chia is one of her most eager students.

A providential ending to the London experience was receiving two books by Rose Marie Miller and her deceased husband, Jack. I read From Fear to Freedom on the plane to South Africa—very timely, especially of the chapters of her first trip to Uganda, some of the feelings I was also experiencing anticipating Malawi. Jack's book, A Faith Worth Sharing, Ivan and I read on the way back this week. Jack is the founder of World Harvest Missions and the motivation behind all that we saw.

Malawi

from Pastor Ivan De Master

We returned from Malawi on Wed. and had a blessed time with Ephiam and Ennie Tembo. We were able to get to the 7 churches he listed and to have services with each during the four days. We spent a great deal of the time riding in the car - a Toyota Corolla - with the 5 of us. We were well received and the Tembos and the churches send their greetings to the OPC.

Pastor Tembo is the only pastor for the 30 churches of the denomination - the Reformed Presbyterian Church. There are three students in seminary - two that just finished their first semester. I met both of them, each at their home church. This was the semester break. Help is needed for the churches. They would be glad for a missionary but even someone to come for a couple of weeks and provide training for the elders who now are doing most of the preaching.

Pastor Tembo because of the health of his wife has moved to Blantyre. This is two hours from the church he was serving in Ngabu and at least that time from most of the others. He receives no support from the churches, only occasional help with food. What income they do have is from selling clothes that his wife makes or buys from markets and resells. He did receive 60 pounds from a man in the UK for about a year and half - 98 and 99. Later some Christian from America did send a few gifts - the last in 2003.

I gave him my copy of the OPC Church Order. He had been using the 1995 copy. I left some money for Chechwa Bibles, for the tuition for the two students for the first year. Grace Church here purchased copies of the Westminster Standards and Cummings Confessing Christ

which I left with him. There were 7 copies for the churches we visited. Additional catechisms and confessions were included.

The previous missionary sent by the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland was there from 1988 to 1995. He retired perhaps health reasons were also a factor. The church was not able to replace him and terminated their support of the three pastors after a year. The two other pastors died since then one at the age of 57 and the other at the age of 50. Pastor Tembo is age 53 and his wife is younger.

Certainly the opportunity is present to assist and encourage these churches. There is presently only one pastor who is very open and easy to work with. He did not know what I would be like nor I him. I was pleased with his work and character. He appears to be a humble man of God.

I report this and trust this is helpful. It would be wonderful to go back again. Our trip seemed to be guided by the Lord in all the details.

In addition we got to see six of the Malawi students that worshiped with us at Grace Church. We stayed 3 nights with Philip and had lunch in two of the other homes. We visited three teach training colleges, an orphanage, and two other Presbyterian churches in the north. I preached at one of these services also. Of course, my preaching was done with a translator.

Camp Westminster

The Sixth Annual Presbytery "Camp Westminster", will be held Monday, July 31 through Friday, August 4 at the Green Lake Conference Center in Green Lake, WI. This year the Rev. Bruce Hollister, pastor of New Covenant Community OPC, will be speaking on the

topic of the Holy Spirit. Reservations are taken on a first come first served basis as to what remains available.

Please see the poster and brochures on display. TO make your reservations: call (630) 894-5559 or email at joejudylew@juno.com.

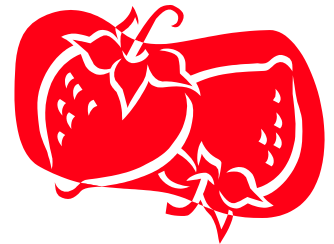


Strawberry Bread

- 3 cups flour
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. cinnamon
- 1 ½ cups sugar
- 4 eggs, beaten
- 1 cup oil
- 2 cups strawberries, washed and chopped
- 1 ¼ cups chopped nuts

Mix dry ingredients. Gently stir in other ingredients. Divide into 2 loaf pans. Bake at 350 for about 1 hour.

Debra Boss



“There is nothing better for a man than to eat and drink and tell himself that his labor is good. This also I have seen, that it is from the hand of God. For who can have enjoyment without Him?”

Getting to know... Ken Koehler

compiled by Harlan Harmelink



Proclaiming the
Excellencies of our
Lord Jesus Christ.

The Monthly Newsletter
of Grace OPC

Worship: Grace OPC
4930 Green Valley Lane,

Phone: 920-565-2160
Email:
graceopc@tds.net
briandejong@earthlink.net

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Did
You
Know
?

★ That the hymn writer Isaac Waats was born in 1674?
★ Waats was a preacher in London?
★ He was responsible for *Hymns and Spiritual Songs*, a popular hymnbook in 1707?

★ The title “Father of English Hymnody” is one used by many in reference to Waats?

★ He worked to paraphrase psalms and also wrote many hymns?

★ Isaac Waats wrote “Alas, and did my Savior bleed”?

★ His great love of the psalms can be seen in “O God, our help in ages past” and “Joy to the World”

Some information found in A Survey of Christian Hymnody by William Reynolds & Milburn Price, rev. by Music & Price

Ken Koehler, continued...