



Q&A
One-on-one
with Paul Martin
page 14

**SGF EVENTS,
NEWS, REPORTS,
MINISTRIES**
PAGE 5

KIDS PAGE
A great big God!
PAGE 15

ARE YOU HAPPY?
GOSPEL TRUTHS
THAT FUEL JOY
—Page 7—

BARNABAS

BIBLICAL ENCOURAGEMENT // NEWS // CULTURE // & MORE

FALL 2010



SPECIAL FEATURE

ENCOURAGEMENT IN CHRIST

**CHRISTIANS CAN SO EASILY GET DISCOURAGED.
YET WE ARE CALLED TO BE PART OF A CHURCH BODY—
AND WE NEED EACH OTHER! ARE YOU PURPOSEFULLY
ENCOURAGING THOSE AROUND YOU?**

PAGE 8

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**“David had served God’s purpose
in his own generation...”**—ACTS 13:36



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inside

FEATURES

7 Are you happy?

Gospel truths to captivate our souls and give us joy

BY ROGER FELLOWS

8 Encouragement in Christ

Encouragement is an integral part of being in community

BY CORRINA LOBBEZOO

14 Interview

Q & A with Paul Martin

COLUMNS

4 Editorial

Discouragement in the church and in the world

11 Rewind

R.A. Fyfe: A Canadian Baptist hero (Part two)

11 Mixed media

Trip Lee's Christian rap

12 Teen beat

The battle for the mind

12 The arts

Handel's masterpiece

DEPARTMENTS

5 News & events

Carey Conference wrap-up; ordination report; Fall Youth Day; Brainerd retreat; new church plant; new ministries

13 Off the shelf

Books worth reading

15 The kids page

Devotional, Bible reading, word search

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Michael Horton's book *Christless Christianity* deals with, among other matters, the disturbing reality of burn-out in the church. Even in Christ-centred churches, Christians burn out, and they are not sure why. Horton writes: "...in many [of the] cases I have encountered, the reason is that they have been subjected to constant demands while the gospel remains in the background" (228).

The book of Hebrews talks about discouragement in the Christian life as well, and comes to a similar conclusion. As the believer is surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses (those who have lived profound and passionate lives for Christ), he is called to first throw off the sin that so easily entangles, and second, to fix his eyes on Jesus. This all culminates in Hebrews 12:3: "Consider him [Jesus] who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart."

Throwing off sin and fixing our eyes on Jesus happens simultaneously. With the cross at the centre of our lives, filling us with a great love for Jesus, we are encouraged. Maybe the beginning of encouragement for you in this issue is considering Jesus. Maybe the gospel has settled in the background? Maybe you have been buried under your sin, or feel the weight of the opinions of others, or even the excessive pressure of success? Maybe you have sought to get rid of sin but stopped there and have not fixed your eyes on Jesus? And maybe that is the way you have treated others in your family, marriage or church.

So where to begin? Horton once again is helpful as he brings us to Luke 7 and the story of the sinful woman who could not stop showing her love for Jesus. Witnessing the woman's love, Jesus

turns to Simon the Pharisee and states, "He who is forgiven little, loves little." Horton writes: "Then he turned to the woman and said, 'Your sins are forgiven' (Luke 7:47-48). When we regularly hear and receive Christ's forgiveness, we are filled with love for him and for others" (228).

So, are you growing weary and losing heart? Are you discouraged? Are you filled with love for Christ? As we know of his love, we will know that "...God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19).

Discouragement can also come from the world. In Ecclesiastes 1, the Teacher describes "life under the sun" as meaningless, circular and empty—there is nothing new under the sun. His summary? "For in much wisdom is much vexation, and he who increases knowledge increases sorrow" (Ecclesiastes 1:18). Live in this world long enough and you will find discouragement and sorrow. You will want to give up, you will not "feel like" persevering, you will be filled with fear, regret, guilt and tears.

Again, is there any hope? The first sermon of Jesus in Matthew brings us his first word: "Blessed." In this sorrow-filled world, there is blessing, that is, the smile of God on his people. And this blessing is found in unique and unexpected places: poverty of spirit, mourning, meekness and persecution. Can it be that in a world of sorrow there is a heart satisfied in the blessing of God? Is it possible to find simple joy and profound peace in the heartbreaking moments of life? It is, when we know Jesus invaded this meaningless existence with the blessings of God in the most unexpected places.

Whether in the world or in the church, our encouragement comes when our eyes are on the life and person of Jesus.

David Robinson, Editor-at-large

DAVID BRAINERD COLLEGE AND CAREER RETREAT NOVEMBER 5-6, 2010

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Cost includes lunch, supper, refreshments throughout the day, gym rental, speaker costs, etc. We provide a vegetarian option with our meals. If you want to play sports on Saturday afternoon, please bring shoes and sports clothing. NOTE: If you need a place to stay on Friday night, register early so we can arrange billeting. Thanks!

How to get to Grace Bible Church? (address is above)
www.mapquest.ca

More details?
You can download the flyer from sgfcanada.com

Questions...
Just send an email to janicevaneck@rogers.com

SPEAKERS ↓



Pastor **HABIB SAKR** (left) from **Grace Chapel, Markham** will bring a three-part series called **Resonate: 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10** and Pastor **DAVID ROBINSON** from Grace Bible Church, Cambridge will speak on **Psalm 51: What to do with all this guilt?**

POST-CONFERENCE REPORT

A GREAT WEEK

ON SATURDAY, AUGUST 21, 2010, attendees from forty different churches were welcomed to the 32nd annual **Canadian Carey Family Conference**. The Carey was held at the excellent facilities of Braeside Pentecostal Camp in Paris, Ontario, its home since 2006.

Widely appreciated conference speaker and author Stuart Olyott was to be the 2010 plenary speaker. However, in the providence of God, Pastor Olyott was forced to withdraw due to illness. Thankfully, **Bill James**, pastor of Emmanuel Evangelical Church in Leamington Spa, England, was able to join us for the week. Pastor James ministered to our souls preaching five times from a rich series entitled, "The heart of the apostle Paul."

Morning sessions were preached by SGF pastors and followed the theme: "Walking wisely: Insights from Proverbs." The weekend messages laid an essential foundation for the week, proclaiming "Christ our wisdom" and "The fear of the Lord." All 2010 Carey messages are freely available at www.careyconference.net.

Much of the blessing of the Carey is the establishment and renewal of friendships with other Christians. Lazy afternoons and evening campfires provided ample opportunity for fellowship with family and friends. Children enjoyed the freedom to roam the grounds in safety on their bicycles, making use of the skateboard park, playgrounds, swimming pool and the zip-line.

Afternoon sporting events were organized for children and adults and provided friendly competition for the participants. In typical Carey fashion, the Wednesday talent hour was capped by the creative efforts of our resident poets.

The Carey continues to be a blessing for Christian families. Details for the eagerly anticipated 2011 conference will soon be available on the Carey website: www.careyconference.net.
—Harry Droogendyk



EAST TORONTO CHURCH PLANT

PLANTING A NEW WORK IN TORONTO

Julian Freeman has been called by the elders of **Grace Fellowship Church**, Toronto, to lead a church planting effort on the east side of Toronto. There will be a core group of committed members who will go with the Freemans to establish this new work early in 2011. They are currently looking for a place to meet around the DVP and the 401 and will meet in the homes of families involved in the work for the interim. Please pray for Julian, his family, Grace Fellowship Church, the believers who will be helping to establish the church, and the area into which they are going—that God would move mightily, bless the evangelism and preaching of the Word and bring much glory to his name. To follow this work online, see Julian's blog at: julianfreeman.ca.

UPCOMING EVENTS

OCTOBER 16-17, 2010 TRINITY BAPTIST CHURCH ANNIVERSARY

Speaker: Bill Hughes
Saturday: 7:30 p.m.
Sunday: 9:45 a.m., 11 a.m., 6:30 p.m.
Held at Trinity Baptist Church, Burlington, ON
trinity-baptist-church.com

OCTOBER 28-30, 2010 FYFE STUDY CENTRE COURSE

Course: Handling the Word
Professor: Kirk Wellum
Fyfe Study Centre at SGCC
For more details, see sovereigngracesarnia.com/fyfe

NOVEMBER 5-6, 2010 DAVID BRAINERD COLLEGE & CAREER RETREAT

Topics: Psalm 51: What to do with all that guilt?; Resonate: 1 Thess. 1:1-10
Speakers: Habib Sakr and David Robinson
Cost: \$25/person
A weekend of ministry, sports and fellowship.
Held at Grace Bible Church, Cambridge, ON
Register by October 28th.
janicevaneck@rogers.com

NOVEMBER 6, 2010 THE VOYAGE THAT SHOOK THE WORLD

Movie night and discussion by Creation Ministries
Time: 7 p.m.
Held at Trinity Baptist Church, Burlington, ON
trinity-baptist-church.com

NOVEMBER 13-14, 2010 SPECIAL SPEAKER

Speaker: Al Martin
Men's breakfast: 8 a.m.
Sunday: 11 a.m.
Held at Grace Baptist Church, Essex, ON
www.gbce.org

NOVEMBER 19-20, 2010 SGF GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Speaker: Pierre Constant
Time: Fri. 1 pm.–Sat. 12 noon
Join with people from all the SGF churches as they gather for their annual assembly. Hear about what God is doing and how he is working in other SGF churches. Be encouraged; encourage others.

Held at Grace Baptist Church, Ottawa, ON
Register online at www.sgfcanda.com

NOVEMBER 19-20, 2010 SOLA SCRIPTURA LONDON CONFERENCE

Topic: The Holy Spirit
Speakers: Joseph Pipa, Guy Prentiss Waters, Heinz Dschankilic
Times: Friday 7-9:45 p.m.
Saturday 9 a.m.–4:30 p.m.
Cost: \$50 both days, \$30 one day; discounts for students and pastors
The conference will explore many aspects of the Holy Spirit: his Person and deity; the seal of the Spirit; guidance, gifts, fruit and common grace.
Held at Hillside Church of London, ON
For more info/to register: www.sola-scriptura.ca

NOVEMBER 27, 2010 SGF FALL YOUTH DAY

Speaker: David Robinson
Time: 12:30-7 p.m.
Cost: \$10/person
A day of music, fellowship, sports and food. The games may include outdoor sports so dress accordingly.
Held at Grace Bible Church, Cambridge, ON
Register by November 15.
j.ainkster@gmail.com

ORGANIZING AN EVENT? LET BARNABAS KNOW.
EMAIL JANICEVANECK@ROGERS.COM

ORDINATION OF CLIFF LINNARD

ON FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2010, a number of pastors and delegates of the Sovereign Grace Fellowship of Canada (SGF) went to Belleville, Ontario, to consider the qualifications of **Clifford Linnard** for the ministry of the gospel as a Baptist pastor. He presently ministers at **The Sovereign Grace Family Church**, meeting in the Belleville Recreation Centre, 116 Pinnacle Street.

There were thirteen representatives from various SGF churches. Pastor Stephen Kring (Bethesda Baptist Church, Delhi) was elected moderator of the ordination council. Cliff Linnard was introduced by Mr. Mac Paul, a member of the Belleville congregation. This was followed by a letter written by Adam Paul in which he shared the impact of Pastor Linnard's ministry upon himself and the congregation as a whole.

Cliff Linnard then rose to deliver a statement outlining his conversion experience and his call to the pastoral ministry. He told how he was raised in a Christian family and gave his heart to the Lord early in life. In high school he bore a strong witness to Christ, and by the time he was seventeen, he felt the Lord was calling him to missionary service. Taking his training at Canadian Bible College (London), his heart was turned to pastoral ministry, and he entered the ranks of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, with charges in Ontario and on the East Coast. Following a tenure on the East Coast, he and his wife Berna returned to Belleville to raise their three boys while Cliff stepped out of the ministry to build a financial business venture. After a number of years, and seeking without success to find a gospel-preaching church in the area, Cliff believed the Lord was leading him back into full-time service. Two years ago a Sovereign Grace church was established in Belleville.

Cliff shared his call to the ministry and how from his early conversion into adulthood he had a strong desire to serve the Lord in a teaching and pastoral capacity. He explained how his Arminian views had left him without strength in the diffi-

cult task of the ministry. Further, he sensed that his ministry had become an idol to him at that time. Out of the ministry for a period of time, Cliff began to study the Scriptures more closely, and his eyes were opened to the glorious doctrines of grace. These solid truths strengthened him with a renewed desire to preach and share them with others. It was a thrilling testimony that blessed all our hearts, and after a question period, it was unanimously approved to accept his statement on conversion and the call to the ministry.

On Saturday we returned to the centre for the ordination. Following a hymn of praise and prayer, Cliff's son Jeremy testified to his father's love of the Word and his faithful leading of the family in the things of God. Then Pastor Linnard read his doctrinal statement, covering all the major doctrines of



the Christian faith and the practical outworkings of those truths. Numerous questions followed, as "iron sharpens iron," but in the end our brother's presentation was a blessing to all, and met with hearty approval. It was moved by Pastor Carl Muller (Trinity Baptist Church, Burlington) and Pastor Glenn Tomlinson (Sovereign Grace Community Church, Sarnia) that Clifford Linnard be ordained into the pastoral ministry of the churches of the Sovereign Grace Fellowship of Canada (SGF).

The charge to the candidate was given by Pastor Brian Robinson (Faith Baptist Church, Scarborough), following which the ordained pastors of the SGF laid hands on Cliff and prayed for God's richest blessing, help and protection. The following day retired pastor Jim Clemens delivered the charge to the Belleville congregation.

We trust that if you are ever visiting or passing through Belleville on a Sunday, you will stop in and share in the worship service. Continue to pray for the Sovereign Grace Family Church—that God would add to their numbers and bless Cliff and Berna as they serve the Lord.

—Brian Robinson

FALL YOUTH DAY

The **SGF FALL YOUTH DAY** will be held this year at Grace Bible Church, Cambridge, on November 27, 2010. Pastor David Robinson will be the speaker. There will be singing, fellowship, worship, games and sports. *Please register by November 15, by sending an email to Jay & Amanda Inkster at: j.inkster@gmail.com.*

SGF GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Join with members from other SGF churches as we gather for the annual SGF General Assembly at Grace Baptist Church, Ottawa, ON, November 19-20, 2010. Enjoy fellowship, hear reports from other churches and ministries and share in the Word. Register online at www.sgfcanda.com

MINISTRIES TO NOTE

GLORY GRACE INTERNATIONAL MINISTRIES (GGIM)

This is a new ministry that **Bob and Dorothy Penhearow** are initiating to bring the love of Christ to orphans and widows in India. GGIM is administered in-country by local believers in Grace Fellowship churches who are seeking to serve their communities through feeding centres, economic projects, medical teams and in freeing sex-slaves. To discover more about Glory Grace, see their website: www.glorygrace.org.

WORLD TEAM — MEDIA DEVELOPMENT

You may have had a chance to meet **Paul and Stephanie Muzzin** at their booth at the Carey Conference this year. They are part of a global fellowship of missionaries called Word Team. Paul is a professional filmmaker and is spearheading a media development team that aims to use the media to bring about gospel change within the church and society. They will be responsible for producing missionary documentaries, teaching materials, promo videos and inspiring films. To find out more, see their blog: www.paulandstephanie.blogspot.com.

ARE YOU HAPPY?

Gospel truths to captivate our souls and give us joy **BY ROGER FELLOWS**

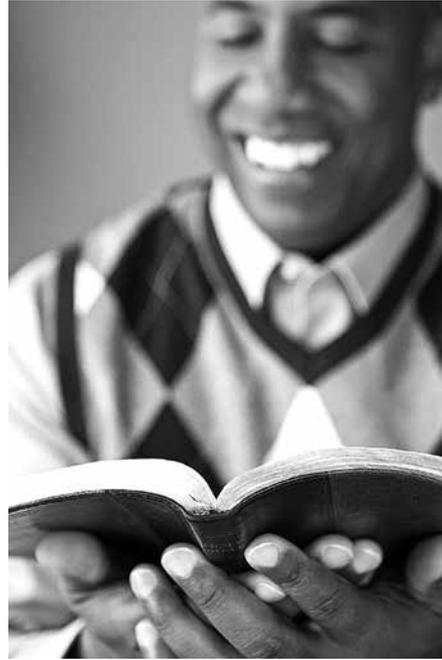
How do we measure happiness? Some people shout and cheer when something happens to bring them great pleasure. Others jump up and down for joy. Others may not say very much but their faces glow with delight. However we might express great happiness, it is something we all seek. Obviously we can seek joy in many things—possessions, experiences, relationships; the list is endless. The ways in which we seek happiness can determine whether we will find it and are satisfied, or whether it will be a life-long search that results in frustration because we never seem to achieve what we desire. The Bible can help us to assess whether we are seeking happiness in the right place.

One of the Bible's words for happiness is "blessed." It suggests great happiness, extreme joy. In Psalm 32, David speaks of a very important source of joy. Let us note the first two verses: "Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the LORD does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit."

David begins by speaking in the third person, "Blessed is he," but as he proceeds through the psalm it is clear that he is relating his own experience. David was a happy man and is here expressing what brought this joy. We can note three things:

1. FORGIVENESS OF SINS

To know that our sins are forgiven will bring great joy. It is sad that many actually seek happiness in sin, perhaps in sexual sins, gambling or excessive drinking. It may bring a temporary happiness, but it does not last, and usually those who pursue happiness in these ways find that they have to get involved in deeper sin and more bizarre ways to satisfy their desires. The person who knows forgiveness of sins is the one who knows true and permanent happiness. In verse 1 the writer uses two illustrations of forgiveness. When he speaks of transgressions being forgiven, it means literally, "picked up and taken away." Every Wednesday morning we are visited by the agents of forgiveness. They pick up our garbage and take it away, never to be



seen again, at least by us. We often joke about our garbage being forgiven when the garbage collectors have come. How wonderful to think that because Jesus died and rose again we can have our sins removed as definitely as our garbage is removed!

The second expression in this verse is that our sins are covered. They were there but are no longer visible. When we use whiteout to correct errors in writing or typing, the errant text is still there but no longer seen. So it is that the Lord does not see our sins when we have confessed them. Of course, in his sovereignty he knows that we sinned, but he does not take notice of those sins for the simple reason that they have already been punished in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Do you know that your sins are forgiven? What a blessed experience to know that though we have sinned greatly and often, those sins are now forgiven and not regarded by God because of the work of our Saviour at Calvary. Nothing is more important to know than this, and nothing can bring joy like this.

2. JUSTIFICATION

The second great blessing that David notes is that his sins are not counted against him by the Lord. This is a little different from forgiveness. When God forgives sins, he removes the guilt and does not inflict the punishment we deserve for our sins. Justi-

fication actually includes forgiveness but goes beyond it. Our sins are not counted against us. To reverse that, we are seen as if we had not sinned. And there is even more: we are seen as if we had perfectly kept all God's commands. If you think I am reading more into the text than is warranted, we should note that Paul, in his great treatise on justification in Romans, uses these verses to prove his doctrine. Note what he says in Romans 4:6–8: "David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: 'Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him.'"

God credits righteousness apart from works. We can never be righteous in God's sight by keeping his commandments, but when our faith is in the Lord Jesus Christ we are declared righteous. How righteous? As righteous as Christ is himself, for it is his righteousness that is imputed to us. Isn't that a wonderful truth? That should make us jump for joy and thrill our souls. There is one more thing we should note.

3. NO DECEIT

This is different. Forgiveness and justification happen *to* us. Being without deceit is the result of a work *in* us. One accusation often brought against the doctrine of justification is that it makes things too easy. We can be forgiven and carry on living as we did before. But this is not true. Those whom the Lord forgives and justifies, he also changes. He not only takes away our sins but he also renews our hearts. Many things happen to the believer, but one very important thing is that he or she is made honest. David speaks in verse 3 about the time when he refused to confess his sin. He was not honest about it, and we were all in that condition at one time. But now that the Lord has poured his grace into our lives, we are made honest. We face up to our sin, confess it and then seek to live for the glory of God.

Are you forgiven? Do you know that God does not count your sins against you? Has he changed you and made you an honest person—honest with him and honest with people? Then you are a happy person: you are blessed. Rejoice in that, and let others know about it. **B**



Encouragement in Christ

BY CORRINA LOBBEZOO

“So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others” (Philippians 2:1-4).

Do you ever feel discouraged? I do, all the time. A dozen glum thoughts can fill my head, from *you’ll never accomplish anything, to why are you bothering to pursue this dream, to nobody cares (except your family: they have to care)*. Relationships can discourage. Failure and anxiety can discourage. So can fears of wasting your life, of never doing or getting what you really want.

Discouragement is normal for us humans. I know that the first step to remedy this is to open my beat-up Bible and start soaking

in applicable truth. Satan deviously suggests that even the Bible can’t help: “What you have been for the last two weeks (grumpy, lazy, dishonest) is what you will always be. Don’t even bother reading Scripture. There’s no hope for you.” By the grace of God, I crack the cover, and my eyes fall on this truth: “Anyone who is in Christ is a new creation. The old has passed away, the new has come” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Some pressure lifts. There’s hope. I’m a new creation.

Paul snaps his fingers to get my attention, telling me to “continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel” (Colossians 1:23). Not shifting from hope, eh? Hmm. How do I do that?

We need other believers

Reading and studying Scripture, along with meditation and prayer, is key. So is sitting under solid preaching that opens up the Word of God. But there's another important element that is sometimes lacking in churches today. Jesus tells us to be in fellowship with one another, to exhort one another every single day (Hebrews 3:13) so that the deceitfulness of sin won't harden us. Sin is deceitful: it convinces us to believe lies like "your life is meaningless." Lies can be easy to spot in the lives of friends but hard to see in our own lives. The reality is that when we are in the midst of lies the truth can be shrouded in fog, and we need help. We need other believers.

Scripture is clear. "Love one another deeply, from the heart" (1 Peter 1:22). "Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honour one another above yourselves" (Romans 12:9-10). One way of practicing this is to pour out genuine encouragement. Offering truth about who God is and our status with him combats discouragement. We need to speak truth to each other. Let's say you stop by your friend Alexander's place to arrange a ride for church and end up helping him combat a lie about his spiritual status.

Alexander: "Man, I fell into that same old sin this week. I don't feel like going to church. If people knew what I was up to, they'd call me a hypocrite. I don't deserve to go."

"Hey Alex, listen, as the pastor pointed out last week in his sermon on Matthew 7, there's a difference between a life of hypocrisy and being inconsistent at times. Jesus loved you when you were a sinner, he saved you out of it, and he continues to do it." (Pulls out Bible) "Alex, Jesus sympathizes with your weakness because he was down here as a human too, so you can confidently go to his throne of grace, and you'll receive mercy and find grace to help in this time of need (Hebrews 4:15-16). Man, can I pray for you right now?"

What keeps us from ministering to each other?

I wish it were normal to see people praying together in twos and threes before and after church services and in many other situations. It's a devastating mistake to divide the spiritual from real, practical life, Sundays from weekdays. Too often, despair builds and builds, we get deeply depressed or angry, and finally go talk to the pastor because he's the "spiritual guy" to talk to. It is not supposed to be this way. Yes, the pastor can be a great counsellor. But he is also there, the Bible says, to equip us (the saints) to minister to each other and build up the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:12). Are we falling short of the command to minister to one another? Ministering to each other can be as simple as helping people apply Bible truth to their lives.

We hear benedictions at the end of a church service. But as we browse through the pages of Scripture, we see a lot of these blessings. Should we use them so infrequently? Imagine someone sends you this text message:

Hey Sam,

Im not a good riter but can open my bible 2 n-courage u. So... "it's my prayer that ur love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, that u may approve what is

excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God" (Phil. 1: 9-11). Have a gr8 day!

It would take me a day to unpack all the encouragement in that verse, and I would be stirred up to press on. And that doesn't coincide with discouragement.

Yet some people might feel awkward or defensive at this point, thinking that this is hyper-spiritual behaviour. We live in a very

Lies can be easy to spot in the lives of friends but hard to see in our own lives. The reality is that when we are in the midst of lies the truth can be shrouded in fog, and we need help. We need other believers.

real and very tough world. And the truths we believe that are preached from the pulpit and sung from our hymnals are the truths that need to be integrated into the everyday, woven inextricably into the fabric of our complicated, messy lives.

What would it be like if we stopped doing "church face" and were honest enough to ask for prayer? We don't need to give all the details all the time, but vagueness doesn't get us far either. True encouragement also necessitates honesty and humility. How often has pride held me back from telling someone "right now I doubt that God cares about me." That's heresy!!

Fear of judgement prevails, so I, alone, foster my doubts and dimly limp along, when I could be striding with confidence in who God is and who I am in him. Of course, exercise discretion. Don't post your deepest doubts as your new Facebook status. But talk to trusted friends and unburden your heart. You're not alone.

We've all had doubts and discouragements. Read some biographies of "great" women and men of the faith: it seems that the more you obediently run with God's plan to use you and your gifts for his kingdom and glory, the more Satan is going to try to take you out. God can use your life to impact others for the kingdom. But when you're discouraged, you're out of the fight. Satan destroys, distracts and beguiles; he can also get us, more sneakily, by stealing our joy. C.S. Lewis says that "if Satan's arsenal of weapons were restricted to a single one, it would be discouragement." We have powerful weapons and armour at our disposal (Ephesians 6), but if the enemy can simply convince us to lay down our guard and weapons, it's psychological warfare at its finest. Much is at stake. In peaceful North America, have we forgotten that we're in a battle? We're not fighting humans—flesh and blood—but the cosmic powers over this present darkness, the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

So, while it's easy to tell someone you like their new haircut or shirt or bling, it's hard to offer gospel encouragement. Why? For one thing, it can be awkward. Maybe we need to embrace the awkwardness. Remember, Satan is the chief joy-stealer. He loves to take a legitimate source of blessing and turn it sour so we avoid it. It's also a competitive world. People are more likely to cut you down for your accomplishments than to build you up. Unfortunately, it can be the same in the church, and for the same reasons. Have you ever experienced this? What bitter rejection to receive a twisted 'compliment' when you expected support and shared

gladness. What holds us back from encouraging others? In all honesty, Paul's warning in Philippians 2 is right on the money: rivalry and pride. *I want to excel and be noticed for my excellence, not build you up.* Yet Christ calls us to a humility and meekness both in sharing our struggles and building up others.

Cheering one another on

So, how can we encourage each other? First, we can speak truth into one another's lives about our identity in Christ, which is grace-based, not performance-based. Second, we can remind each other who God is: powerful, faithful, merciful and compassionate. Third, we can look to the promises of God for believers, like "he will never leave nor forsake us." Fourth, we can encourage brothers and sisters to run the race in the specific realm to which God has called them and for which God has gifted them, whether teaching, parenting, in construction or in an office. (It is often clear that God is using others with different gifts in different situations for his glory; however, we can be blind to our own value and usefulness. Pray for spiritual eyes to see and share how God is at work in and through others.)

Fifth, encourage others when you see spiritual progress. If you've known someone for a while, you can probably see areas that need improvement. But where do you see growth? Perhaps she has become more compassionate. That's a result of the Holy Spirit working through prayer and the Word in her life. Let her know. Maybe he has better control of his temper. Praise God that even if he still loses it sometimes, it's less frequent, and he's faster to apologize.

We are in a race, right? Why aren't we cheering each other on? Maybe we think that because the person is still struggling in one area, we don't want to express approval in another area in case they think they're off the hook. If we're Christians, we know that we're on a journey toward holiness, growing, learning. Imagine a teacher who refused to compliment a student for getting a 75% when he used to pull fifties. "If I encourage him *now*, he'll think 75% is the best he can do, and I want nineties." Nobody would agree with that logic!

Encouragement is good. It stimulates greater growth. It tells the person she's not alone in the fight, that someone is noticing and seeing this pilgrim's progress. It doesn't build false pride. You're not telling her that she's achieved perfection, merely that you see growth. The compliment is essentially God-ward—you see God's hand in her life. It's "yeah, God!" not "yeah, person, for doing this all in your own strength!" Actually, it's also humbling, because we know it's true that without God, we'd never have good fruit. And, even if your encouragement sparks some pride, trust that God will convict. The Holy Spirit is in us and his Word is crystal-clear: "By *grace* you have been saved through faith. And this is *not your own doing*; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:8–10).

It's not rocket surgery

Imagine, you go to meet with the believers on a Sunday morning. You're talking to a friend about your struggles, and he says, "Can I pray for you?" (Well, you're probably not going to say no to that, right?) And she flips open her Bible to Colossians 1:9, and prays like this:

Lord, I pray that _____ will be filled with the knowledge of Your will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so he can walk in a manner worthy of You, fully pleasing to You, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of who You are. God, please strengthen him with all power which is found in Your glorious might, to provide all endurance and patience with joy, that he would even give thanks to the Father in this tough time because You have qualified him to share in the inheritance of the saints in light and have delivered both of us, and all the believers here today, from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of your beloved Son, who has redeemed us and forgiven us of our sins.

...encourage others when you see spiritual progress. If you've known someone for a while, you can probably see areas that need improvement. But where do you see growth?...let them know...

This is not rocket science or brain surgery. You're a believer. You have the words of God in your Bible. Activate! Engage! Scripture is intensely practical when we apply it to daily life. And the faithful, unconditional love of a brother or sister in Christ is incredibly powerful.

Do you ever have bad dreams, or a hard time falling asleep? Maybe you've been wrestling against lust, and the one place the Evil One still gets you is in your dreams. Maybe you're *just* hanging onto trust in the day, but late at night all your fears rush in, building up to a terror that makes you desperate to escape your own life. What would

it be like if you had a friend you could call any time of day or night to pray with you? What if you could dial up your mom, and instead of placating you with the not-so-helpful comment, "It'll be okay," she were to tell you these startling words: "Rejoice in the Lord always, even right now. God is at hand. Don't be anxious, but in prayer, with thanksgiving, let God know all of your concerns. And He promises that His peace, which far exceeds your fears, will guard your heart and mind in Christ. Guard is a military word. Take refuge in the truth that Christ in God is standing watch like a security guard armed to the teeth. You're safe. He's guarding you from sin and evil, and you'll know it when you turn to Him." Then she adds, "Lord, please help my son set his mind on things that are true, honourable, just, pure, lovely, commendable, excellent, praise-worthy. Help him to stay there, to really think of these things. And Lord, cause Your peace to cover him as You've promised in your Word."

True Christian encouragement is meant to be part of true Christian fellowship. We enjoy superficial compliments ("nice shirt!"), but we remember genuine words of encouragement for years. As Christians, who are we? Travellers, having not yet reached our destination. Pilgrims, seeking something. Runners in a race. Fighters in a battle. These are all incomplete, continuous actions. We're travelling, seeking, running, fighting. We *all* are. We're all in this together. May our actions reflect this truth! **B**

Corrina Lobbezoo is a member at Grace Bible Church, Cambridge. She is an ESL teacher and currently pursuing a masters degree at the University of Waterloo.

“Though dead, they speak”—A series on EARLY CANADIAN BAPTISTS

R.A. FYFE: A CANADIAN BAPTIST HERO (PART TWO)



BY MICHAEL A.G. HAYKIN // Like a number of other Ontario Baptist pastors, Robert Alexander Fyfe was deeply exercised about the lack of a facility for theological and higher education among Baptists in his native province. On November 19, 1856, owing in part to Fyfe’s leadership, a Baptist convention had convened in Brantford to make some concrete decisions about this matter. Among the decisions made that day was one that called for the establishment of a school to be located not “east of St. Catharines” or “west of London.” Within a month, it had been decided to locate the school in Woodstock on property provided by a Baptist deacon, Archibald Burtch.

The Canadian Literary Institute

The school that Ontario Baptists vitally needed became a reality in the summer of 1860 when, as the Canadian Literary Institute, it formally opened, with seventy-nine students and five teachers. In a report that was drawn up with regard to the 1856 convention that had led directly to the building of this school, the Baptist leadership behind the school were hopeful that they had “entered upon a new and more prosperous era in the history of our denomination in Canada.” They were right. Ontario Baptists had indeed entered upon a new, and far more fruitful, phase of their history. And much of that fruitfulness was linked to the school in Woodstock. It is not fortuitous, therefore, that the motto of the school—given to it by Fyfe—was *Sit Lux*, “Let there be light.”

Ontario Baptists had indeed entered upon a new, and far more fruitful, phase of their history. And much...was linked to that school in Woodstock.

Principal Fyfe

Not surprisingly, Fyfe was asked to head up the school as its first principal. He resigned from the Bond Street pulpit in mid-March 1860 and by mid-June was in Woodstock. He had come from a demanding and busy pastorate, and he had no time for rest before assuming the challenge of his new position. As he wrote to an old friend, Daniel McPhail, who has been remembered as “the Elijah of the Ottawa Valley” because of the power of his preaching and prayers:

The confidence which my brethren in the ministry have, almost to a man, expressed in me as Principal, has affected me in a manner beyond my power to describe. While it encourages me, it makes me tremble. Who is sufficient to mould and train our rising ministry? I hope you and the ministry generally, as well as the churches generally, will remember me at the Throne of Grace. Will you not have some set time, some monthly season, of prayer for God’s blessing on the Institute?...

I love to preach the Gospel. I love to recall the times—now far in the past—when you and I visited many destitute fields together. And if I had my own way, I would ask no better work than to be without pastoral charge, with enough to live upon. Let me go from place to place and seek out “the few sheep in the wilderness.” One of the considerations which induce me to go to Woodstock, is that I shall still have opportunities to preach.

I should be glad if I could get a few days or weeks rest, before entering upon my new duties, for I feel weary and my toils and anxieties for the past year have been very great. But I fear I shall get no rest.

Fyfe’s fear was well-founded. Though the school grew to a peak of 253 students by 1874 and was enormously influential in giving shape and cohesion to the Baptist cause in Ontario—some of its key leaders, like E.W. Dadson (1845–1900) and its first overseas missionaries, John McLaurin (d.1912) and Americus Vespucius Timpany (1840–1885), were students under Fyfe—it took a heavy toll on the principal.

Every school year between 1861 and his death in 1878 from diabetic complications, Fyfe regularly taught six hours a day, five days a week. On Sundays he never declined an opportunity to preach and conduct Sunday School classes. And, in the summers, he would travel the length of the province raising funds for the school. In the entire seventeen years that he was principal, he took only two vacations and all but worked himself to death.

But, through Fyfe’s visionary and self-sacrificial leadership, Ontario Baptists had a school that could train their pastors, give their young people a solid education and provide men and women for their burgeoning missionary convictions. **B**

See the Summer 2010 issue of *Barnabas* for Part One of this article.

mixed MEDIA |

Youthful sounds: Reformed RAP music?

TRIP LEE
BETWEEN TWO WORLDS
REACH RECORDS (2010)

I saw William Lee Barfield III (*aka*. Trip Lee) when taking in the recent Desiring God conference in Minneapolis. It intrigued me, and I went in search of his music. What I discovered was a rapper with solid lyrics (and with rap its all about the lyrics), making it onto *Billboard*’s top charts and speaking



to his generation about the gospel and challenging his listeners with a thoroughly biblical worldview. Whether it is confronting himself with the allure of the world in “Covenant Eyes” or hating sin and loving God in “Snitch,” Trip Lee directs his listeners back to the Word and the forgiveness and strength found only in Christ.—*Janice Van Eck*

Are you enjoying a new CD? Share it in *Barnabas*. Send an email to: janicevaneck@rogers.com.

THE BATTLE FOR THE MIND



BY MARK HUDSON // For some, school means a happy reunion with friends and a welcome return to a structure and a pattern of life that provides comfort, meaning and direction. For others, it's little more than an unwelcome interruption of a much loved summer holiday. Homeschoolers see

their parents don their academic robes to ensure the work begins again in earnest. Another year, another grade, another step closer to some future goal. Academic programs will do all they can to fill your brain with issues and details related to science, math, history, language, music and other fascinating disciplines. The world will continue to try to fill your brain with a philosophy that will entice you to accept its offer of happiness and success without any of the restrictions it claims religion brings. From the depths of your own heart, and out of your own mind, will come arguments and reasoning that tell you it's better to take the path of least resistance and live your life largely for yourself. Yes, there will be many things trying to distract, discourage and derail you. There will be attempts made to corrupt your character and, if you are a Christian, efforts will be made to assassinate your godly witness and to hijack your soul.

Through the five senses, data continually floods into your brain for analysis. As well, images, information and ideas previously stored there, arise in the form of thoughts, memories and desires. Beyond that there is your imagination that allows the mind to wander in fields previously unexplored and beyond our past experience. Whether you realize it or not, your mind is sifting, sorting, selecting and storing information in a variety of forms at a phenomenal rate. What you spend your time thinking about will have a profound impact on what kind of person you are or will become. Fortunately, God knows the nature of this battle for the mind and teaches us what we can do to maximize the impact of truth and minimize the impact of error.

“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things” (Philippians 4:8, *ESV*). Paul instructs us in the necessity of thinking about the right kinds of things. To act properly as Christians, to live as we should before God and the world, our thinking must first be set in order. Paul gives us a beautiful cross-section of fields in which our thoughts can freely run. The word “whatever” is a very broad term giving us liberty to pursue an infinite range of thought that falls within the expansive bounds of these descriptors. Imagine how much is encompassed by all the things that are true, honourable, just, pure, lovely, commendable, excellent and worthy of praise! Believers have the great privilege of opening their minds to the teaching of the Spirit in all these areas. In a lifetime, we will never exhaust the potential scope that is offered to us here. Fill your mind with as much as you can within these realms. Leave no room for the often corrupt thoughts encouraged by the world and the devil, but, when they knock on the door seeking access to your mind, let them encounter the words, “Already occupied.” **B**

In a lifetime, we will never exhaust the potential scope that is offered to us here.

HANDEL'S MASTERPIECE



BY JEREMY JOHNSTON // Have you listened to music lately? We certainly hear a great deal of music every day—at the grocery store or shopping mall, over the car radio, during TV commercials—but most of this music is heard as “background noise” and not a result of focused listening.

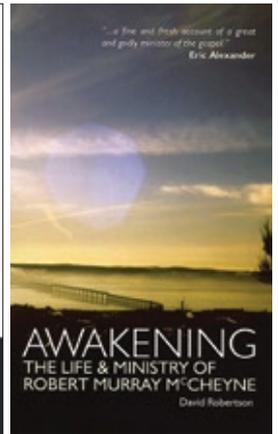
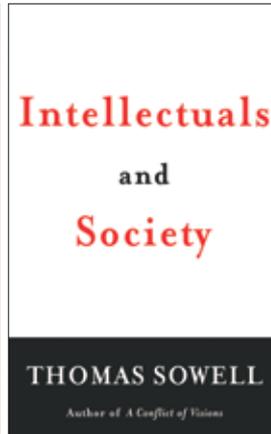
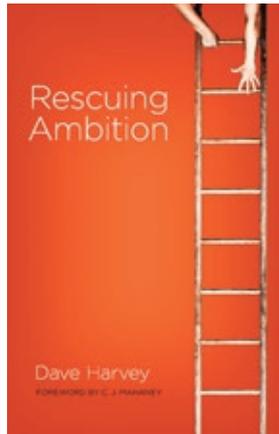
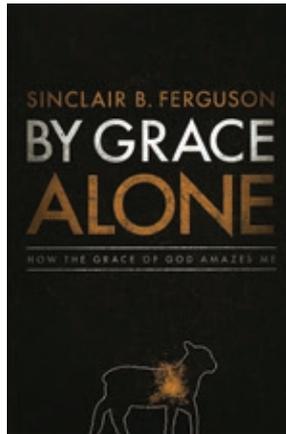
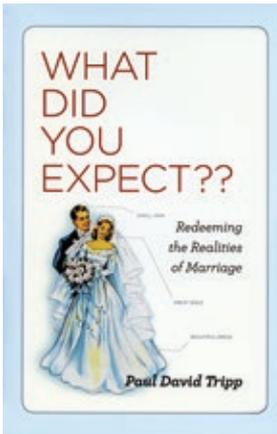
God created a universe where beautiful music can be made and played. Though we worship God in many ways, we most often worship him musically. In singing hymns we may be careful to pay attention to the poetry, but we often fail to listen to the music. Both lyrics and the music, however, can convey valuable messages and stir the heart to devotion and worship of God.

Nowhere is this more evident than in Handel's *Messiah*. This masterful composition brilliantly uses texts taken entirely from the Scriptures and music designed to powerfully convey an even more powerful message—the gospel of Jesus Christ. Handel's *Messiah* is like a sermon put to music. Handel's friend, Charles Jennens, arranged the libretto (text of the *oratorio*) “in order to challenge the deists, rationalists, and atheists who opposed the divinity of Christ.” When Handel received the libretto, he was in ill health and financial ruin. Yet, the arrangement of Scripture verses inspired him like no other work he set out to compose. In only twenty-four days, Handel composed his monumental work—260 pages of handwritten notes!

The beauty and power of Handel's masterpiece is not only in his use of the Scriptures, it is in the way he weaves the Scriptures and the music together, using the instruments and voices to help convey the meaning of the message. Sometimes this comes in simple ways, like the rise and fall of notes in lines such as “Ev'ry mountain (↑) and hill (↑) made low (↓)...” and the appropriately vibrating sounds of “crooked” and “rough places” becoming straight and smooth-sounding when the vocalist sings “straight” and “plain.” Sometimes the music is more complicated, such as contrasts in tempo and tone, instruments and vocalists, as it grapples with the theological tensions between God's holy justice and his love for humanity in Part 1—the Advent portion of the oratorio.

In Part 2—the Easter section—Handel's music vacillates between cheery and sombre tones as the scale of our benefits in Christ is weighed against the cost incurred by our sin: “And with his stripes we are healed.” At the astounding “Hallelujah” chorus concluding Part 2, the tragic reality of the cross becomes a gloriously beautiful celebration of the resurrected and reigning “King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.” During the London performance in 1743, King George I stood during this chorus believing the oratorio was over. But like the gospel story, Handel wasn't finished; Part 3 of the work describes the redemption of the world through faith in Jesus Christ. This final part of *Messiah* reminds us that the gospel is not only a historic demonstration of God's love and power, but the gospel is also a *present reality* of transformative power. In other words, we should come away from Handel's *Messiah* not only moved by the love and sacrifice of Christ, but also *empowered* and *renewed*. The chorus in Part 3 declares: “But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” If you have the opportunity to *hear* part—or all—of Handel's *Messiah* this Christmas season, then be sure to *listen* carefully as well! **B**

A QUARTERLY review OF NEW & RECENT books



WHAT DID YOU EXPECT??
Redeeming the realities of marriage
BY PAUL DAVID TRIPP
Crossway (2010), 288 pgs
ISBN 978-1433511769

Intensely practical, realistic, challenging and hopeful, Paul David Tripp's book on marriage is a must-read for every person in the pew. Conducting a marriage in a fallen world, between fallen people, causes us to be realistic in the challenges we face; knowing that we bring into that marriage a God who is faithful, powerful and willing to be our Helper gives us the hope we need to redeem marriage for his glory.

Tripp has written this book based on six commitments every couple needs to make to one another. Newlyweds, those with healthy, godly marriages, those whose marriages are stale and those who are floundering will benefit from consciously incorporating these commitments into their lives. By organizing the book this way, Tripp makes it easy to remember and reflect on these commitments while providing the hope that these God-honouring behaviours and attitudes will revolutionize our marriages.—*Eva Robinson*

BY GRACE ALONE
How the grace of God amazes me
BY SINCLAIR B. FERGUSON
Reformation Trust (2010), 123 pgs
ISBN 978-1567692020

Do you find yourself in awe of the costly gift of grace? Sinclair Ferguson was inspired to write

this book from reflecting on a hymn, "How the grace of God amazes me," written by a pastor from Burundi.

Christians are to be amazed by grace because amazement, writes Ferguson, "is a sign of spiritual vitality. It is the litmus test of how firm and real is our grasp of the Christian gospel and how close is our walk with Jesus Christ." In failing to find grace amazing, we lose strength and joy. Ferguson uses each stanza of the hymn to provide seven chapters that deal with themes such as freedom from the bondage of sin, reconciliation to God and strength and grace in the difficult times. He explains how grace is amazing as it is not a *thing* but Jesus Christ.

This book was a soothing balm to my soul. I hope that you will read it and grow in amazement at the glorious grace that has saved you.—*Danielle Evans*

RESCUING AMBITION
BY DAVE HARVEY
Crossway (2010), 224 pgs
ISBN 978-1433514913

Ambition. Does this word smack of worldliness? If *Christian ambition* sounds like a paradox to you, leaving you frustrated, paralyzed or confused, this book is for you. Dave Harvey provides practical answers to having a faith focused on God's ambition: "In Christ we live—therefore we do, and do gladly." The gospel redefines ambition. Our dreams and desires become centred on a new identity, pur-

pose and delight. The first three chapters explain God's salvation story: the conversion of sinners, "glory thieves," into the glorious image of Jesus. The rest of the book focuses on how we cooperate with God's ambitious transformation of our lives. Harvey uses biblical characters and personal stories to address real life issues: motive, failure, contentment and risk. "God wants to rescue ambition so that ambition, in turn, can rescue us. Ambition rescues us by exerting claims on us that change our lives." This book is insightful and inspiring.—*John McDonald*

INTELLECTUALS AND SOCIETY
BY THOMAS SOWELL
Basic Books (2010), 416 pgs
ISBN 978-0465019489

There has never been a time in history when intellectuals have played a larger role in our society. Yet few people know these influential people—and even fewer question their policies or ideas. In this book, renowned conservative thinker Thomas Sowell offers an introduction into the world of intellectuals; those who mould our society and impact people in every walk of life, both for the better and for the worse. Unfortunately, given their secular presuppositions and rejection of biblical truth, their impact on society is usually for the worse.

Sowell's vision is expansive as he tackles economics, politics, the media, academia, the law

and even war, showing the significant ways in which this small group wields a dangerous influence upon Western civilization. Christians need to take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. This book reinforces why we must never accept at face value the consensus of so-called intellectuals, whose thinking in the end leads only to folly.—*Jonathan Wellum*

AWAKENING
The life & ministry of Robert Murray McCheyne
BY DAVID ROBERTSON
Christian Focus (2009), 282 pgs
ISBN 978-1845505424

Robert McCheyne was a young Scottish preacher who came to pastor a church plant in Dundee in 1836. His Calvinism was warm and experiential and his extensive visitation work reflected the love he had for the poor, working-class people of his parish. While he was away in Israel, a revival broke out in Dundee, under the interim ministry of W.C. Burns, and many were converted—especially teenagers (12–15) and young children. McCheyne returned, and by 1840 there were 39 prayer meetings going on each week, 5 of which were being led by teens. It was a remarkable time!

An easy read, *Awakening* will captivate you with what God can do through weak but devoted vessels and challenge you to think about the advance of God's kingdom with great hope. **B**
—*Janice Van Eck*

PAUL MARTIN, pastor of Grace Fellowship Church, Toronto, talks to JANICE VAN ECK about planting churches, active membership, curbing our online obsessions and cultural change...by conversions.

Q

Paul, you and Grace Fellowship Church (GFC) have had a vision to be a church that plants churches. Could you articulate this passion?

A. The desire to be a church-planting church reflects a theological commitment. Christians are entrusted to deliver the “good news” to the world, which means we ought to regularly see people getting saved. When people are converted they need a place to worship God, hence the need for more churches. In Toronto, you could easily plant one church per square mile and still have room for more. Q. GFC has helped to plant two churches and you are about to plant a church in east Toronto, which will involve your co-pastor Julian Freeman leaving and taking up that work (January 2011). What are some ways we could pray for you, for GFC and this new venture?

A. This will be the first plant that takes a sizable group of our members away. Julian has been with GFC since “day one” and the folks going with him are humble, serving, gracious, well-loved members. This is going to hurt. But we are taking comfort and hope from Jesus’ example and words: “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.” Pray that we would all be willing to die to friendships, ministries, income, routines and an ethos we love, in order to see a new church born on the other side of town. Secondly, please pray for Julian. He is a well-qualified planter, but this is hard work. Pray for grace for him and Stacey and their three little girls.

Q. Mobilizing the people of God to serve their local church, on the face of it, seems like it



shouldn't be a hard thing to do. But the reality is, it is! How do you challenge your members to serve one another and be active in the body?

A. We have a very robust membership commitment. If you want to join us then we expect you to serve because God expects every Christian to serve. We also have a group of leaders who model self-sacrificial service. One of our core values is the pursuit of humility, and humility by its nature promotes serving one another. Philippians 2:4–5 says, “Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus.” If we say we believe the Bible then how else could we live?

Q. For the last few years, you have spearheaded the monthly Toronto Pastors’ Fellowship (TPF) and the annual pastors’ conference (TPC), what are you pursuing with this group?

A. There is a resurgence of interest in the doctrines of grace, and the Bible in general, even among more liberal denominations. Pastors are weary of programs and false promises and are looking for substance. We have a rich heritage in the SGF of deep doctrinal commitments that I have always believed need more “air time.” If the Spirit is working in pastors, then we ought to serve them by delivering the best of Reformed theology and pastoral practice—without demanding that they become just like us.

Q. I noticed on Facebook that you’ve been studying the life of Robert Murray McChyne (see Awakening, page 13). How has learning about his life blessed yours?

A. Reading McChyne pretty much wrecked me for most of the spring. His life has taught me that I am spiritually shallow, woefully prayerless, profoundly self-reliant and overly cautious. Clearly I am trying, by God’s grace,

to correct all those things...the jury is out on how well that is going.

Q. You’ve done some teaching at Toronto Baptist Seminary (TBS). Are you teaching now?

A. I thank God for TBS, but my local church is my priority, and as we grew it just became too arduous to carry on seminary teaching. I spend my training time meeting with a group of “potential pastors” every week and try to help them as best I can.

Q. Blogs, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, news, online ministries and other social networking opportunities can eat up our time. How does a Christian find the balance? Any advice?

A. Yes. Install Leechblock on your computer and then honestly evaluate how many times you check any of those sites. I was shocked. I have never spent much time online, but I would check throughout the day. Now I don’t let myself. It was misery at first, which is a good indication of how some of those things had become an idol to me. Actually, talking with real humans is way better than stalking them on Facebook!

Q. How do you see the evangelical church in Canada responding to the theological and moral issues confronting the church today? Do we have much of a coherent dialogue in society?

A. I am not a huge fan of even trying to have that dialogue. Don’t get me wrong, I am not opposed to those who do it. But I think this culture will change by conversions, not conversations. We need proclaimers of the gospel, not moral reformers. We must focus on the gospel, and it will be foolishness to some and offensive to others. But sometimes it will be the means of life to even more!

Q. You and Susan have four children. How does the church minister to you as a family?

A. GFC loves my family. They evangelize my unconverted children, treat my converted family members like other brothers and sisters in Christ and act normal around us. On top of that, they pay me a gracious salary that enables me to work hard as their pastor and take care of my family’s needs. GFC is extended family to us. There is no other church we like to be at so much.

Q. Could you share a thought or a passage that has helped to keep your own heart sensitive to sin and warm to God this past year?

A. John 15:5: “I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.” **B**

5 THINGS ABOUT PAUL

- 1 Paul is married to Susan, and they have four children, Chloe, Allie, Sophie and Will. They also have a dog named Bishop Ridley.
- 2 Fell out of a boat at 30 miles/hr. He was the only person in the boat!
- 3 Is convinced the Toronto Maple Leafs will win the Stanley Cup before he dies.
- 4 Was deeply impacted by a two-hour conversation with Bill Payne once. “You must read Owen!”
- 5 Dislocated his shoulder in a brave attempt to save his wife in the 1994 Northridge Earthquake. The shoulder went back in and Susan lived.

To find out more about Paul, visit his blog at preacherthoughts.blogspot.com

LITTLE PILLOWS

Adapted from Frances Ridley Havergal

Called by name

“I have called you by name” (Isaiah 43:1)

Look out, if it is a clear night, and see the stars sparkling all over the sky. You cannot count them; no one can, because there are more than eyes or telescopes have ever reached. But “He calls them each by name” (Isaiah 40:26) and knows every star separately. And yet, though he has all those wonderful worlds of light in his hands, and “brings out the starry host one by one,” he turns to say to each of his poor weak little children on this dark earth, “I have called you by name.” He knows your name; you are not merely one of the rest to him, you are _____ to him. Take a pencil and write your own name there, it will be perfectly true!

That name was given you in his presence by your parents—and God knows it and calls you by it.

But he has done more than this. Why do you care to read about God? Why do you care to hear about the things which are “not seen”—about Jesus, and grace and salvation and heaven? What is it that seems like a little voice within you, persuading you to seek and love Jesus? To look to him for forgiveness? That is God’s own voice in your heart, calling you by name! For you know it is to *you*, because it is only in your own heart; no one else hears it, no one else even knows of it. When God calls, listen, and see what else he has to say to you: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are mine.”

Jesus is our Shepherd,
For the sheep he bled;
Every lamb is sprinkled
With the blood he shed.

Then on earth he setteth
His own secret sign;
“They that have my Spirit,
these,” saith he, “are mine.”

BIBLE FOCUS

A great, big (tender) God

BY JANICE VAN ECK // When Isaiah was called to be a prophet in chapter 6, he was given a sight of heaven, the throne of God and the constant worship that is given to God. He had a great sense of God’s holiness and greatness and was given the job of delivering God’s Word to the people of Judah. Read Isaiah 40:12–31 and answer these questions.

1. What do verses 12–17 tell you about God?

2. In verses 18–20, what is the irony about what the people were doing?

3. In verses 21–26, Isaiah uses creation to show how God is above everything and everyone. What are some things God has done or is doing right now?

4. In verses 27–31, how is God’s tenderness and care of his people shown?

Word search

- compare
- counsellor
- craftsman
- Creator
- dust
- eagles
- earth
- everlasting
- grasshoppers
- heard
- heavens
- idol
- knowledge
- Lord
- might
- mountains
- nations
- power
- stars
- strength
- tent
- understanding
- weak

S	R	E	P	P	O	H	S	S	A	R	G
T	F	C	R	A	F	T	S	M	A	N	N
R	S	N	O	I	T	A	N	P	I	Y	I
E	A	G	L	E	S	O	O	T	M	Q	D
N	R	P	M	L	Z	W	S	D	O	B	N
G	D	U	S	T	E	A	F	R	U	R	A
T	C	H	K	R	L	G	V	A	N	R	T
H	W	E	A	R	T	H	P	E	T	O	S
T	A	A	E	N	L	S	R	H	A	T	R
L	N	V	W	X	R	A	G	F	I	A	E
A	E	E	H	A	P	I	G	D	N	E	D
P	A	N	T	M	M	T	D	R	S	R	N
K	M	S	O	E	S	K	I	O	E	C	U
Y	R	C	O	U	N	S	E	L	L	O	R
K	N	O	W	L	E	D	G	E	I	P	L

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