



NEW LIFE NEWS

The official newsletter for New Life Presbyterian Church • July/August 2009

DIVINE ENCOURAGEMENT

by Sherrene David

On their blog, the Blairs use the term “divine encouragements” to describe the way God has been directing every detail of their lives. If you follow their story, you know it’s true. The Blairs have made the transition from Kazakhstan to China successfully, and God has already provided the family with a new home. It is a nicely furnished apartment near the church, at the junction of two subway lines and next to Beijing’s only Walmart Super Center!

The Blairs will be serving at Beijing International Christian Fellowship Zhong Guan Cun, and since arriving Mark has already had a chance to preach. Most members of this church are students involved in education, studying Chinese for further involvement in the country. The location of the church is right in the midst of 82 universities. Interestingly, there are more people in the crowded city of Beijing than the entire expanse of Kazakhstan. In addition, the congregation itself is largely international, with members from every continent. With such an ethnically diverse crowd, the Blairs can minister to “the nations” as they minister to these representatives of many nations. The congregation is eager to grow in their understanding of God’s Word and welcome the Blairs’ involvement.

Health wise, the Blairs are doing well. While in Beijing, Mark had a thorough physical exam. There were no traces of the two cancers he had surgery for in February 2007, praise God! Nathan, the Blairs’ son, was also found fit and healthy after a stress test for his heart. Nathan will be participating in



three ultra-marathons later this year, the longest being 100 miles. With the money he raises from these races, Nathan hopes to provide schoolbooks for children in Mongolia.

God is doing great things in the lives of the Blair family. As you trace God’s hand in their lives, remember to praise Him for how He has so distinctly guided them, blessed them with good health, and His incredible provision. Pray for language acquisition as the Blairs need to learn Mandarin. Also pray for the continued funding for their ministry (and consider supporting!) as they continue preaching at ICF, teaching in local Bible schools, and settling in this new environment.

May we as a congregation be “divine encouragement” to them as well as we are encouraged by seeing God work in their lives.

For more personal anecdotes and pictures, check out their blog: www.blairstan.blogspot.com.

MISSION BOOKS

See Sherrene David for additional titles.



ZOO NIGHTS ARE BACK!

Submitted by Trudy Verdick



Nighttime zoo began Friday, June 26 and will continue to September 7. If you would like to join others from New Life for a casual night of enjoying God’s creation and fellowship, come to the flamingo exhibit near the entrance any Friday night before 5:30 p.m. We start our trek at 5:30 sharp! Be aware that outside food is limited to what can fit into a backpack or handbag. Along with the new Elephant Odyssey, there are new street signs, exhibit names and a new zoo map. Check it out at www.sandiegozoo.org and come prepared to discover the “new” zoo.

MERCY MINISTRIES CONFERENCE 2009, PART 2

New City Fellowship; Chattanooga Tennessee, March 12-14 • Part I By Christopher Miladin and Gary Pavlovich

Gary found the following breakout sessions particularly germane in helping the financially poor, restoring hope to the troubled families within the church and community, and resolving conflicts by living the Gospel life among the church and at home.

“The Poor and Their Money: Helping People Move Forward” - Steve Corbett. This workshop looked at two ministry options, “Financial Literacy” and “Individual Development Accounts” to help economically poor people get more out of the money they have and earn.

In **“Practical Steps Towards Renewing Hope,”** Dr. Bob Burns answered the question of how to minister to each other within the family, church, and community. How do we “walk in the Light” (*I John 1:9*), and live healthy, authentic and transparent lives in our most important relationships, (husbands with wives, parents with children, and Christians with believers and neighbors.)? This “walk” is manifested in healthy communication patterns, mutual respect and mutual repentance, which children can learn through modeling.

“Ministry Mercy and Proclaiming the Gospel by Being a Peacemaking Church” - Fred Barthel. Every person, family, organization, and church has conflicts. One of the most effective ways to minister mercy and proclaim the Gospel is to equip and assist church members to respond to conflict biblically. As we teach, model, and help our people to humbly confess, gently confront, and truly forgive, the glory of God and the power of the Gospel will be reflected in restored marriages, grace-filled parenting, and authentic friendships. This seminar explained how the church can create and sustain an atmosphere of genuine Christian love and unity, (i.e.) build a culture of peace by living out biblical

peacemaking principles in every aspect of the church ministry. As the PCA Book of Church Order states, “Biblical peacemaking is one of God’s highest priorities (*Matt. 5:23, 24, Rom. 12:18, Gal. 6:1*); therefore, it must be one of our highest priorities.”

“Maintaining Christian Fellowship When Conflicts Come - How to Live the Gospel in Conflicted Relationships” - Tara Barthel. Jesus said we would show ourselves to be His disciples by our love for one another (*John 13:35*). Repeatedly in Scripture, we see how important unity is to our Christian ministry and outreach (*John 17:20-33, Eph 4:1-3*). But any time you put a group of people together, especially when diaconal and mercy needs are bringing extra pressure to bear on the relationships, conflicts will arise. It has been said that “where two or more are gathered together, there will be conflict.” Limited resources, varying levels of maturity, and outright sins will threaten to diminish brotherly love and Christian unity. This seminar taught us how to equip deacons and lay leaders to minister peace and hope to the broken relationships often reflected in the diaconal ministry of the church. Based on the Peacemaker Ministries’ biblical theology for conflict resolution (as codified in the PCA Book of Church Order Appendix on Conflict Resolution), this session offered examples and solutions for maintaining Christian fellowship in the church even when conflicts come.

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We have been given God-given tools and the Holy Spirit to improve the outreach to the community, help the disadvantaged, proclaim the Gospel, and heal the Church within and without all through the Power that abides with us.

To God be the Glory. ✠



The human heart has so many crannies where vanity hides, so many holes where falsehood lurks, is so decked out with deceiving hypocrisy, that it often dupes itself.

— John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*

Some people think being serious about God means taking everything seriously. They don’t understand that God wants us to be so free and full of Him and His love that we can enjoy life and enjoy ourselves and our friends. We can laugh because we know that as bad as things are, God is in control, and He is with us.

—Eric Metaxas from “Faith and the Funny; When Should Christians Laugh?” “On Faith” magazine, summer 2009.

SUMMER READING

Compiled by Laurel Baertschi

Pastor Brian Tallman:

- *Ezekiel in the Brazos: Theological Commentary on the Bible* by Robert W. Jenson.
- *The Prodigal God: Recovering the Heart of the Christian Faith* by Timothy Keller.
- *The Hungry Soul: Eating and the Perfecting of our Nature* by Leon Kass
- *This Momentary Marriage: A Parable of Permanence* by John Piper
- *Robert Lewis Dabney: A Southern Presbyterian Life* by Sean Michael Lucas

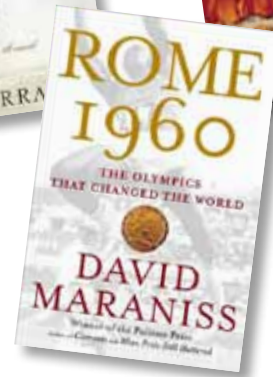
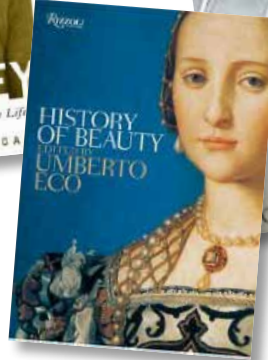
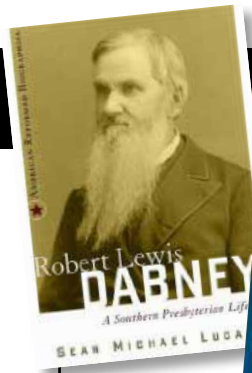
Tina Settergren:

- *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott (natch)
- *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* by J.K. Rowling (to Lucas)
- *Christless Christianity* by Michael Horton
- *Inkheart* by Cornelia Funke, must be Tobias' sister, (to Lucas)
- *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis (to Callum)
- *The Face of the Enemy* by Walter Buckalew

...and countless picture books to Callum and Mason

The Patton Family:

- Court is working his way through Calvin's *Institutes* and hopes to get into Umberto Eco's *The History of Beauty*.
- Tif: Alice Coopers' autobiography and is starting *Thieves of Baghdad* (about the looting and recovering of antiquities in Iraq).
- Miles: *The Fountainhead* by Ayn Rand and has started *Sophie's World* by Jostein Gaarder
- Emily: Hemmingway's *The Old Man of the Sea* and *My Antonia* by Willa Cather



Susan Bugbee:

- *Finding Nouf* by Zoe Ferraries, and of course, *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott

Bill Wood:

- Crowley, Roger. *Empires of the Sea: The Siege of Malta, the Battle of Lepanto, and the Contest for the Center of the World*. New York: Random House, 2008.
- Maraniss, David. *1960: The Olympics that Changed the World*, New York: Simon & Schster, 2008.
- Godfrey, W. Robert. *John Calvin: Pilgrim and Pastor*. Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2009.
- Heather, Peter. *The Fall of the Roman Empire: A New History of Rome and the Barbarians*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Robinson, Marilynne. *Home*. New York: FSG, 2008.
- Parsi, Trita. *Treacherous Alliance: The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran, and the U.S.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007.

Chloe Verdick:

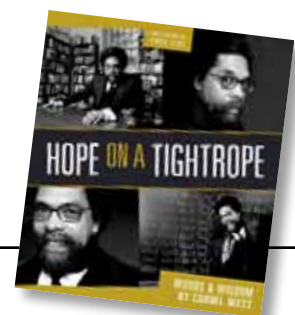
- *The Nude* by Kenneth Clark
- *Mere Christianity* by C.S. Lewis
- *Surprised by Hope* by N.T. Wright

Christopher Verdick:

- *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics* by Hans Urs Von Balthazar
- *Another Country* by James Baldwin
- *The History of Beauty* by Umberto Eco
- *Grace Eventually* by Anne Lamott
- *The Complete Short Stories* by Flannery O'Conner

Tabitha Verdick:

- *Surprised by Hope* by N.T. Wright
- *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger* by Ron Sider
- *Tea: The Drink that Changed the World* by Laura C. Martin
- *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat* by Oliver Sacks
- *The Perks of Being A Wallflower* by Stephen Chbosky
- *Sex God* by Rob Bell
- *No Future without Forgiveness* Desmond Tutu
- *Hope on a Tightrope: Words and Wisdom* by Cornel West



WHAT'S IN A NAME? SUMIT

By Sumit Bhardwaj

Der den Himmel kann verwalten, Will selbst Herberg in dir halten.
(He who can rule over heaven would find his dwelling within you.)

Johann Franck's hymn on the Lord's Supper (Schmücke Dich) was written with a distinctly Lutheran view, in that, Christ descends to dwell in the believer at that moment. For a reformed Christian, the pertinent words are the ones quoted above which, I take, refer to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the believers. The mystery of this sovereign election is beyond me, and all my attempts to explain the calling to follow Christ have, so far, been futile. In that vein, I will refrain from assigning credit and restrict myself to regurgitating the facts, albeit, with some emphasis on the providence of God and the critical role that it has played in my short life so far.

Born and raised in Darbhanga, a small town (pop, 250,000) in Bihar, India, I went to IIT Delhi (www.iitd.ac.in/) for an undergraduate degree in electrical engineering. After graduation, I headed to UC San Diego for graduate studies, a choice that has had, and will continue to have, consequences beyond my wildest imagination. My reason to emphasize the unintended and intended consequences of my actions is to bring out the role of providence in my life, a fundamental tenet of my, and our faith.

For our purposes, the factoid of interest is running into Aaron Kemp in Math 140A who convinced me that it was worthwhile for me to attend the reformation service at New Life where I met the Kemps, who kept on showing me the love of Christ. Meandering for another three years, all the while not realizing how God, in Christ, was bringing me to Himself through the ministry of the Kemps and Goodharts and Tidwells and ...ad infinitum. This process was completed when I became a member of the visible body of Christ on December 21, 2008.

Es ist das Heil uns kommen her Von Gnad und lauter Güte.
(It is our salvation come here to us, Full of grace and pure goodness.)

Knowingly, but more often, unknowingly, the unmerited favor and grace of God has been, thankfully, the light of my life. Whence I pray that God will give me the strength to carry my cross, or in the words of David:
Expectans expectavi dominum; et intendit mihi et exaudivit preces meas. 🍀



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IN REMEMBRANCE

By Bob Whitson (November 10, 1923- June 4, 2009)
Bob was working on this poem for New Life News in commemoration of July 4th.

June 1, 1774: Williamsburg, Virginia
When in the course of human events...

A fellowship of titans assembled in a church to pray,
To fast in calm humility and plan to foil a king,
They scorned the risk; their goal, just this—the way
To end at last a hated tyrant's sting.

July 4, 1776: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
We hold these truths to be self-evident...

The room is airless. The men are tense,
But most of them agree.
Their arguments stated, their visions made known:
These colonies ought to be Free!
Approving this union, of standing alone,
The delegates pledge all they own.

*And for the support of this Declaration,
with a firm reliance on almighty God,
we mutually pledge to each other our Lives
our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor.*

The paper before them affirms faith in God,
but lacks a final "Amen."
With trust in the shelter of His boundless power,
a bold man named Hancock seizes his pen.

2009: Everywhere, United States of America

The barbecue tables are covered with food,
And merriment spreads through the park.
The children are playing whatever they like,
Their parents? Enjoying their lark.
At last they've been fed; it's now after dark.
The fireworks start, and everyone "ooohs."
Except for one small terrified tike. 🍀

Sincere thanks to those remarkable men who risked so much to give us our beloved country.

To sacrifice something is to make it holy by giving it away for love.

—Frederick Buechener in *Wishful Thinking*