

the *Kerygma*



NEWSLETTER OF REDEEMER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

VOLUME 4, ISSUE 2 MARCH/ APRIL 2006

“I believe strongly that God has more in mind for parents than striving to produce so-called perfect, well adjusted children. Rather, parenting is first and foremost a call to embody the incarnational life of Jesus in the midst of our family.”

-David John Seel, Jr.,
Parenting Without Perfection

MOM GRACE BY KRISANNE STOLHANDSKE

When Tom, our pastor, asked me to write an essay about the challenges of being a mom, I thought, “Ha! First challenge: finding time to write! Second challenge: I don’t even *read*, so writing something for others to read is a bit ironic.” Then Mr. Sneaky-Pastor started running off paragraphs for me to read. Paragraphs turned into pages, chapters ... you get the picture. Then I started to *think* (I mean about things other than who needed to be picked up, and where they needed to be dropped off before I had to deliver the whatever to the person waiting on it)! A hodgepodge of truths started flying through my brain looking for a rhyme or reason to be. I never cease to be amazed by how many profound thoughts are born and developed in a forty-minute car ride every morning; which, by the way, are the only minutes I have alone. Every other minute of the waking day I am encircled by hungry children with innumerable questions (I could have sworn I saw a shark fin under one of their backpacks the other day). My family is living proof that children never outgrow question-asking, and escaping them is impossible. Cell phone companies guarantee that I am only a call away from every little thought that pops up in their mind! Such as, do I remember where they left their uniform socks, or where will we be spending Christmas 2008? Opportunities to think are few and far between, so in those 40 minutes idling in traffic on I-35, while everyone is dispersed at school and work, I asked some questions of my own.

Like: “What’s the deal with this whole ‘good mother’ thing? I am a sinner! How am I supposed to be a biblical model, if I am just a mess? Is this going to damage the kids?”

All of my recent reading mixes with my questions. Now I am slogging through the truth-mud we call application.

Usually, as I am pulling into the office parking lot, I have that moment of clarity, the resolving thought, the summary statement. And so that is how this essay was written. One 40-minute car ride at a time. Needless to say, the resolution is always the same: *The only way I can begin to be the mom God has called me to be is by His grace and by believing His word.*

Challenge #1 – The Perfect Picture

I remember walking through the mall while pregnant with my third child, and seeing a woman with three picture-perfect little girls. I wanted to be that picture! It was a split-second in time that I froze in my head. I then proceeded to build a story based on that image. They have a perfect life; and if I look like that, I will too! Why did I think the pretty picture would be happy and fulfilling? I love the way Dan Doriani says it in his book, *The Life of a God-Made Man*, “Godly parents liberate themselves from the pattern of imitation and rejection and, with God’s guidance, find their own wisdom” (pg. 96)

It is difficult not to turn motherhood into a production to earn the praises of men friends! It is *very* difficult not to compare my performance to others and say, “I want to be just like her. . .” But it is important to recognize this as a temptation. Parenting is done to the honor and glory of God, by the grace He has given. We do not muster up good parenting skills. We do not get to make it look the way we want it to, which amounts to idolatry. What God gives is far better!

I believe God gives us what I call “your baby grace.” The babies He gives us come with the grace we need to parent them! We don’t have the grace to parent our best friend’s baby, but she does. *God has begun this work, your baby.* He certainly isn’t going to leave him/ her and hope you figure it out. He will give you the grace to raise him/ her for Him!

Challenge #2- The Myth of Damage-Free Children

I have worried that I would have to pay for counseling when my children grew up to be dysfunctional 30-year-old’s with “my-mother-said” issues. Our children hear and remember every word we utter to them and around them! They remember it forever, too. Scary? No! It’s a good thing. *My children have learned far more from my mistakes and apologies than any of the well-intended formulas printed in the latest Christian-parenting books.* All these books have great ideas, and if we lived in a perfectly controlled environment with no sin or sinners then they would work. But I am too busy chasing, feeding, and cleaning them to read and apply the steps the



REDEEMER EXTENDING THE KINGDOM

MISSIONS MINUTE

Belize, by Jake Gray

Redeemer supported Bill and Sherry Day, MTW's missionaries in San Narciso, Belize, with financial support and two short-term mission teams in 2004 and 2005. The Days moved recently with their four adopted Belizean kids to South Carolina, where Bill is now helping churches in their Presbytery to establish outreach ministries to Hispanic communities there. We have discussed possible partnership with Bill to establish an English-as-a-second-language (ESL) ministry here in San Antonio.

Redeemer continues to support mission work in Belize with the support of Cornerstone High School, where both of our short-term mission teams served.

Redeemer also supports the Belize Theological Seminary in Belize City, where Mark Summers serves as MTW's missionary. Rev. Moises Chan (Belizean Pastor) is teaching the current seminary class (Systematic Theology 1). Most students are married, working full time and involved in a current ministry. Therefore they need prayer for endurance in all of these areas and wisdom in how to use their time effectively and in a way that is glorifying to Him.

The Seminary is working to develop a Teacher Education College (TEC) to prepare teachers to teach redemptively as well as have adequate training in education. This college will be under the Belize Theological Seminary. The Seminary is also sponsoring a Financial Planning Seminar, with someone from the USA going to Belize to present two Crown Ministries Financial Planning Seminars. Please pray for the Kingdom to expand in Belize, and for believers there to grow in gospel freedom.

John Ferguson, by Diane Deng

This summer the Ferguson family (John, Heather, Justin (10), Kevin (8), Miranda (8), Jason (7), Colton (6)) are preparing to leave their ministry at Texas A&M RUF (Reformed University Fellowship) to begin campus ministries in Trujillo, Peru. John will be training seminary students in Peru about college ministry. The current college ministry in Peru will fall under the RUF umbrella when the Fergusons begin. Currently, the Fergusons have raised 38% of the financial support they need by May. This Spring John will be visiting and speaking with churches and individuals about raising support, along with continuing his work with A&M RUF.

Preparing for a new ministry and life in Peru has been trying. The sole reliance of knowing and understanding Truth- that God is always good and sovereign- has become even more evident as the Ferguson's hope to raise 100% of their support money. Check out rufinperu.blogspot.com.

Prayer Requests: Endurance for the family, the ability for John to be a campus minister and raise money, as well as a good husband and father, a smooth transition for RUF when the new campus minister comes in the summer, raising the remaining support money.

** Stay tuned for the next newsletter when we will introduce you to our two other new missionary families, Doug and Masha Shepherd (and Chaz) who will be going to the Ukraine summer '06 and Bill and Jeanine Allen (and Noelle and Sarah) who are ministering in Cusco, Peru. **

MOM GRACE (CONTINUED)

books suggest. Surprisingly, it has been in the wake of missed naps, fast-food dinners, and confused priorities that my children have changed from projects to people. People who understand grace.

Here's the deal. As soon as Dr. So-and-so comes out with the latest perfect-solution-to-the-child-who-says-"no"-to-everything, Dr. Know-and-so comes out with a book that says not to do that, or you will damage the child for life! Ahhhh! What is a mother to do? How does she know she is not damaging the child for life? *By believing that God is bigger than you are, and He created the child, and He certainly wouldn't throw him to the wolves (aka Mom and Dad).* Dan Doriani says, "In actuality, no book of theories is thick enough to cover every riddle that parents face. . . Successful parenthood depends on who you are more than on the techniques you know." (pg. 84)

Challenge #3- Parents are People...are Sinners... are Saved

I have found the biggest challenge is to be who you are. Not that I am not naturally myself, just that "myself" naturally struggles with the following:

First and foremost, I really struggle with loving God. Mostly because I struggle with believing

that He loves me. After 25 years of trying, I'm just now realizing and truly believing that God loves my guts! The only way I can begin to comprehend this is by His gracious revealing of who He is in His word. All of His thoughts toward me are rooted in love. As I see His love more, it echoes back in a love for Him. "We love because He first loved us" (1John 4:19). *Knowing that He loves me has made it possible not only to love Him; but to trust, believe and know Him.*

Second, I struggle with loving my husband. This was very simple in the beginning. We had a "love at first sight- the rest is just details" beginning. Then came those details... one being my conversion after we married. The old bait-and-switch. He married a party girl, and then she got religion. Another detail: 1 sinner + 1 sinner= 6 sinners. That formula really complicated the love thing. As we have grown in the Lord together, the love part has changed in the way it looks and feels every day. This topic is truly a paper of its own, but a worthy topic of your time and devotion before you can ever hope to be the mom that God has called you to be. There is a great chapter in Brian Chapell's book, *Each for the Other/ Marriage as It's Meant to Be*, called "Each for the other as Parents" about this subject. *The best gift you can give your child is to love your husband.* If you want your child to love their heavenly Husband (as part of the church), then model

it by loving your earthly husband.

Last but not least, I struggle to love my children. Sometimes they do not seem lovable, and it is a determination of the will to love them. The love you have for your children cannot be a feeling provoked by a lovable worthy being. *The greatest way to love them is to show them who Jesus is.* That means I need to love Jesus. I need to know Him to love Him. He has made himself known in the Bible.

The above struggles reflect insecurities that affect the way I parent. The only foundation for parenting well is security in my relationship with God. *All things flow out of that.* It sets me free from my fears so that I can parent with confidence in God's grace and guidance. Even with God it is still perplexing and messy, but it is the most joyous and fabulous adventure He will ask you to steward over!

As simple as these parenting tips sound, we still can't and won't parent perfectly. How is grace looking now? Pretty amazing, huh? If you haven't grasped the wonder of being a sinner reconciled to God, you will see a picture of it by being a parent. Both in the receiving and extending of grace. You have heard it said, "it is all by the grace of God," – well, parenting falls in the "all" part. Thanks be to the Giver of all good things – including kids and the grace to raise them.

OUR DIACONATE

BY BEKAH STOLHANDSKE

The Bible does not ignore the fact that human beings need to eat every day. As important as prayer is, it will not stop a growling stomach. The list of human necessities goes on to include clothing, bathing, balancing the check book, and going to work. The church being made of human beings, has its own list of necessities. On January 15, 2006, Redeemer installed its first-ever diaconate to minister to the practical needs of the church. Practical needs are those day-to-day things that must happen for the church to fulfill its vision. Mothers call it "chores." Mechanics call it "maintenance." A deacon calls it "service."



Jake Gray

Jake Gray will serve as Chairman of the Diaconate and oversee Mercy Ministries & Financial Aid. This means that he will coordinate Redeemer's efforts to provide financial (and other) assistance and deed and mercy ministry to Redeemer members and people with whom we have a relationship.

"I am most eager to see how Redeemer's members - individually and corporately - will support our community and reach out to people outside the Redeemer community with deed and mercy ministry," said Jake.

"What is deed and mercy ministry?" Think of the last time you or

at Redeemer. We plan to organize this ministry in our church and coordinate *your* efforts, as members of the church, to meet these needs."

[Refer to Psalm 100:2, Zephaniah 3:9; Matthew 9:37; Mark 8:6, 10:45; John 14:18; Acts 6:1-7; Romans 12:10, 13:8; 1 Corinthians 16:14; Galatians 5:13; 1 Timothy 1:5, Hebrews 10:24 and James 1:27 for more insight into deed and mercy ministry.]

Bob George will serve as Treasurer to the church. He will monitor and oversee the finances of Redeemer. He reports on the annual and weekly giving, keeping the congregation informed to the



Bob George

someone you know was in a bind financially and needed help getting past a rough spot. Or that time when you were hurting or sick because of a broken relationship, the loss of a loved one or some health issue. Or perhaps you or someone you know has been between jobs, wondering when/how you or they were going to find the next job opportunity. Or your friend is a single lady moving from one apartment to another and needs help getting that sleeper sofa down (and then back up) three flights of stairs (ugh!).

"These are just a few examples, all centered on *service*. To the extent that we are able to come alongside and help someone in one of those scenarios...*that* is deed and mercy ministry. The Deacons want to establish and facilitate a mercy ministry *team*



Ken Harrison

receipt and disbursement of funds. "I would like to thank our Pastor, Tom Gibbs, and our Elders for their personal commitment to Redeemer and our Vision. Until now, I did not fully appreciate their efforts. I look forward to serving our Community and supporting our Vision and pray for God's Grace to guide my way." said Bob

Ken Harrison is the deacon entrusted with Worship Assistance. He oversees everything having to do with the facilities, including but not limited to: set-up, take-down and the numerous details involved in Sunday morning services. It would be easy to show up on Sunday and take for granted the coffee, banners, book table, plants, etc. However, those involved with set-up and take-down committee are well-aware of just how much time and administra-

tion goes into Sundays. "I am very excited to have been selected as a Deacon," Ken said. "It is an honor and a challenge especially with a young and growing church like Redeemer. Each of the Deacons has been given a special area to serve and mine is the Church Set up and Facilities. Ryan Froelich had been in charge of these areas before and did a magnificent job. As Redeemer grows in size we will need to involve more people to help in staffing for the various functions. Everyone has a special gift from God and we need to discover what they are and put them to work for his kingdom. Volunteers and suggestions are greatly appreciated."



Jason Register

Jason Register will be in charge of coordinating the ushers and greeters for Sunday morning services. It is his job to make sure that a smiling face meets each person as they walk through the door, and that no one is left wandering through the aisles looking for a seat.

"What an honor it is to be called to serve such a wonderful group of people as the Redeemer family," Jason said. "Kacey and I have deeply been blessed by living and worshipping with such a wonderful family as this congregation. We truly can not thank you enough for what you do and have done for our family while walking beside you in the pursuit to grow closer to our Lord. We really do feel loved and redeemed when we worship at Redeemer!"

In 1 Timothy 3: 8-13 we read a list of qualifications for those being considered for the diaconate. This list and its striking similarity to the qualifications of those who would be elders, highlights the importance that God places on the deacon's service. God created the whole man, and he cares a great deal about not only our spiritual concerns, but our material needs. Each of these men went through extensive training and examination to ensure that they were prepared for the high calling of leadership in the church's most "hands-on" areas of ministry. They then stood before the congregation for approval, and were received wholeheartedly.

The diaconate of Redeemer is made up of Jake Gray, Bob George, Ken Harrison, and Jason Register.

Join us
at our worship
location,
The McAllister
Fine Art Center
on Sundays
at 9:30 a.m.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| March 3 & 4 | Men's Winter Outing |
| March 9 & 10 | Crisis Pregnancy Counseling Training |
| March 16 | Men's Fellowship Night |
| March 26 | College Sunday Lunch |
| April 4 | Newcomer's Dessert |
| April 20 | Men's Fellowship Night |

*** EXTRA...EXTRA ***

Want to go build a church in the beautiful and historic Andes of Cusco, Peru? Redeemer is going to Cusco, Peru for 10 days between June 10th and 25th. In addition to building a church the team will minister alongside the Allens and their Hinderlands Health Ministry.

If you are interested or have question, contact Jake Gray or Sheldon Fitch.

MAP



+ Sunday Morning Worship Services are held at the McAllister Fine Arts Center