

The Olive Press

May 2016

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Editor's Letter

With spring on our doorsteps and summer just around the corner, we're enjoying some welcome relief from those dark winter days. Our senses are stirred by the blooming cherry blossoms and the wafting fragrance of flowering bushes. The dormant world around us is waking, preparing to fulfill the purposes for which it was created; and one can't help but feel just a little bit revitalized.

Even now, I'm sitting on the balcony in the spring sunshine, with my cat lazing on the patio table next to me, and I'm noticing how rapidly my plants are growing. The perennials rebound every year, but I still need to make sure they have access to the elements over winter to ensure their dormancy isn't permanent.

This year, I also want to plant a small veggie patch. I've bought the seeds, read the packet instructions, and planned out the best location for the planters. If that's as much as I do, I'm pretty sure my harvest is not going to yield much, if anything.

Planting the seeds is one thing, but I've got to tend them if I want to see them mature into healthy, fruit-bearing plants. It takes nurture to ensure that my plants not only survive, but that they thrive!

Inside this issue of *The Olive Press*, you'll find features on the theme of 'sowing and tending the seed'. Read about the experiences from the YUGO mission team lately returned from Mexico; get the latest news from our missionaries responding to their call to serve Jesus; discover ways to ensure a lasting, abundant marriage. And don't miss the amusing wildlife tale from one of our members.

We pray you will find this issue restorative and motivating, spurring you on in your spiritual growth; affirming and encouraging you in your daily walk with Jesus.

Karen

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The Lord's Supper:

We celebrate the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper on the first Sunday of each month: May 1st, June 5th, and September 4th, during the 9:15 and 11:00 AM services. During the months of July and August we will have a combined service at 10:00am.

Vision:

To be a God-Centred, Christ-Like, Spirit-Filled community church, actively serving and nurturing one another and our neighbours.

We seek to **Invite** people to enjoy the riches of Christ's grace, **Grow** in Christ together, and **Serve** with our passions and talents in Christ's Name.

Faith Fish Collection:

The next Faith Fish collections will be:
May 22 and November 27.



“Lord of the Dance”

On April 30, 1994, over 300 million people tuned in to their televisions, all over Europe, to watch an annual extravaganza: The Eurovision Song Contest. That year it was being held in Ireland, at the Point Theatre in Dublin. Twenty-five countries participated and, lo and behold, Ireland won. (*As an aside: they’ve won it seven times – more than any other nation.*) Paul Harrington and Charlie McGettigan sang a song called ‘Rock ‘n’ Roll Kids’.

Ask the majority of the 300+ million if they remember the winning performance, or if they’ve heard much from these two artists since that night? Their answer, I’m certain, would be “no.” *Why?*

Because the main show was eclipsed by what happened during the interval; between the artists performing and the results part of the show, we witnessed the birth of a phenomenon. The act began with the haunting choral group, *Anuna*, followed by an amazing dance routine by Jean Butler and Michael Flatley. Joined later by a dance troupe, their magical performance would go on to be part of an inspiring musical that has broken theatrical records all over the globe: ***Riverdance***.

I’ve seen *Riverdance* three times and I would go three more times, no question. It is breathtakingly brilliant.

However, having burst onto the world stage in 1994, by the following year one of the main dancers was arguing about royalties and creativeness. The producers of *Riverdance* parted

ways with Flatley, who was cast as being arrogant and pompous; but Flatley was not done for long. He soon created his own phenomenon: ***Lord of the Dance***, and now almost two decades later I got to see it for the first time, in the Abbotsford Entertainment Centre. Its story follows the character ‘Lord of the Dance’ and his fight to prevent the evil dark lord ‘Don Dorcha’ from taking over Planet Ireland. The ‘Lord of the Dance’ defeats the dark lord’s invasion with help from a little spirit and her flute. Part of that larger story involves the theme of ‘love vs lust’ expressed through dance: ‘Saoirse, the Irish Cailín’ fights for the love of the Lord of the Dance against the wicked ‘Morrighan, the Temptress’.

The show was breathtakingly brilliant. I am so proud to be Irish. There was one aspect of the show, however, that I found questionable.

It began with a short video in which Flatley basically said that no-one had believed, “but now, 20 years on, I’ve shown them.” I wasn’t sure what that had to do with the performance. Then, after the finale, a second video was shown; this time you saw three Flatleys, dancing side by side, all trying to out-dance each other in some way, or at least show how good they each were. Then all of a sudden the two outer Flatleys seemed to jump and morph in to the central Flatley, who – having danced some more – clicked his fingers and vanished like a spirit.

I turned to Heather and said, “I’m not sure about the whole Flatley Trinity thing.”

It seemed to me that Flatley had bookended the show with himself, showing his brilliance, and no matter who the lead dancer of the show was, Michael Flatley – and only he – was the one true ‘Lord of the Dance’.

The musical itself clearly has biblical references; the imagery alone depicting good and evil clearly illustrated that the Lord of the Dance was moreover Lord of the World.

Having seen the musical and having re-read the lyrics in the hymn itself you can so easily see the symbolism of the Lord of the Dance being The Lord.

***I danced on a Friday when the world turned black
It's hard to dance with the devil on your back
They buried my body, they thought I was gone
But I am the dance, and the dance goes on***

Does Michael Flatley really think he is The Lord? Does he consider himself to be like a god; The God, the God of the entire world? No, I doubt it, but as harsh as it may sound I do think he considers himself to be a god when it comes to dancing, particularly Irish tap dancing.

I do think he sees himself as the Lord of the Dance.

Is he, though? NO!

There is only One True Lord of the Dance, but we know that – so why am I writing this article? Because at times all of us, whether we like to admit it or not, have lived our lives as if we were Lord of the Dance. We want the world to sit before us and worship us. We want to have the attention, to receive the acclaim, to be in control of our destiny, to make a name for ourselves. We want people to know us as Lords.

Jesus once said [to paraphrase], "I am your Teacher and Lord, and so because I am you should follow my example and WASH ONE ANOTHER'S FEET."

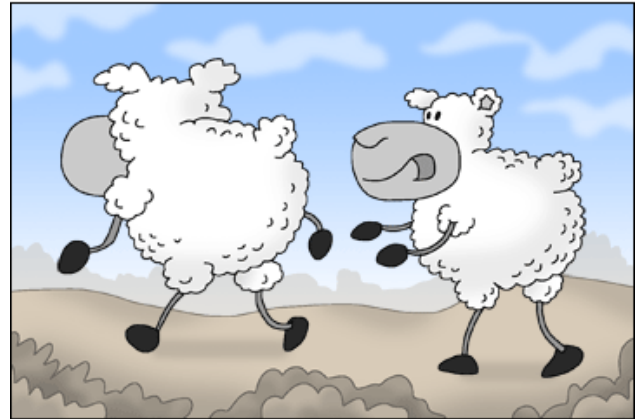
I wonder how many feet Flatley has washed? How many have we washed?

***Dance, dance, wherever you may be
I am the lord of the dance, said he
And I lead you all, wherever you may be
And I lead you all in the dance, said he***

In His service,

Martin

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(See Isaiah 53:6)

12-01-2014

**IT'S OBVIOUS THAT WE'RE ASTRAY ...
CAN WE PLEASE STOP AND ASK FOR
DIRECTIONS?**





ATTACK OF THE ROBINS

Submitted By Margaret Faris

On a beautiful summer day last year our household had an interesting adventure. It was about nine o'clock in the morning, the patio door was open as it is on warm days, and I was sitting at the kitchen table after breakfast reading the Vancouver Sun. All of a sudden Mitzi, our cat, comes streaking in from the patio followed by two screaming robins. I immediately bring this situation to Don's attention by yelling, "Birds in the house!" and race from the kitchen to the downstairs bathroom to get a towel. Meanwhile, Mitzi is sprinting across the living room and up the stairs followed by the screeching birds. Or at least I thought they had both followed Mitzi.

At this point, Mitzi is headed for our bedroom (always her safe refuge), but one of the robins stops halfway up the landing, fluttering in mid-air at the entrance to our den. Perhaps the bird has lost sight of the fleeing Mitzi?

Here's where Don sees the robin. It, in turn, sees Don and twirls around, heading into our bedroom. Meanwhile I, with towel in hand, run after them. The robin has stopped scolding Mitzi and is now more afraid of being in our house. It heads for our big bedroom windows, banging helplessly against them. Don takes the screen off one and opens it. With the towel that I pass to him, he covers the robin and lifts it up, allowing it to fly out the window.

But there's no time to relax and I remind Don of this. "There's another robin somewhere up here," I say. He has only seen the one and questions where the other might be. To be on the safe side, we search the upper floor, but there is no bird lurking anywhere.

So, we head back downstairs and as we near the dining room we hear rapid fluttering. Apparently, our second feathered friend has made a 90-degree turn at the living room and headed back to the dining room, where at this moment it is trying to fly out the big bay window, *which is closed*. And the robin we've *just* liberated is banging against the outside of that window trying to help its mate to freedom!

The towel comes into play again as Don wraps it over the fluttering robin, and opening the side window lets it fly away into the forest. These two have a nest somewhere in the woods behind our house as we've heard them chattering for days.

We guessed that the eggs had hatched and they were protecting their babies, like all good parents! They'd been chasing other birds away and Mitzi must have seemed like a threat. From spring to fall, when the weather is nice, we leave the patio door open so Mitzi can go in and out at her pleasure (yes, another house ruled by a cat). She likes to sit or sleep out on the patio in a deck chair but she's an old cat so doesn't climb trees, or even the fence. To the robins, however, she was a danger.

Anyway, the "Robin Attack" was quite a wildlife adventure and we've had a good laugh about it. Too bad I didn't get a photo but we were so focused on getting the robins out of the house that I didn't think about it until it was all over. Needless to say, for the rest of the day Mitzi stayed close to us when we were out on the patio!



Speaking the TRUTH in LOVE

Thinking together about
human sexuality and
sexual orientation in
The Presbyterian Church in Canada

**MAY
29th
2016**

5:30 - 9.00pm

On **May 29 2016** we invite you to “Speaking the Truth in Love.”
After a short introduction to the evening, by **Rev. Dr. Richard Topping**,
who has agreed to moderate our event, we are going to listen to two
voices who have graciously agreed to present
two viewpoints on the area of human sexuality.

Speaking on behalf of the “traditional” view –
Rev. Dr. Jason Byassee,
Professor of Homiletics, Vancouver School of Theology.

Speaking on behalf of the “revisionist” view –
Rev. Dr. Richard Geoffrey Leggett
(Rector, Saint Faith’s Anglican Church & Professor Emeritus of Liturgical Studies VST.)

St. Andrew’s & St. Stephen’s Presbyterian Church



*“Restore us, O God; make your face shine upon us,
that we may be saved.” - Psalm 80:3*

Spring Tune Up

The spring season is a good time for reflection and restoration for all Christians; it's an opportunity to provide a TUNE UP for the SOUL.

As we contemplate on renewal, the Library Team invites you to take the “TUNE-UP CHALLENGE.” Try out some new resources that can put some OIL of JOY in your HEART. Find an author who can challenge you to see life's BREAKDOWNS as opportunities to fix your wagon so it rolls along more smoothly. Maybe you think this is PIE-IN-THE-SKY, but it could be a step towards LEARNING HOW TO FLY!

We have many resources by well-respected authors that can be of help. Come in and make your own choices or ask the librarian for assistance. We look forward to seeing you there.

You can participate in the “Tune-Up Challenge” by sampling works from the following writers whose titles are found mainly in the “Christian Living” section: Timothy Keller, Max Lucado, Robert T. Kendall, Joyce Meyer, Grace Fox, Stormie Omartian, and Rick Warren, to name but a few.

All the authors in this section write from personal experience of the struggles they, and people known to them, have faced in life. Some have issues they are still dealing with. They have learned to rely on the words and promises of the Holy Bible to help them deal with, and even overcome, life's challenges. Look for the numbers 248.2 to 248.9, followed by the first three letters of the author's last name, on the spine of the book (e.g., 248.4 LUC).

We also recommend books from the “Family Matters” shelves on the window wall. These books deal with love and marriage, raising children, dealing with teens, divorce, single parenting, caring for sick or aging family members, money matters, bullying, and many more facets of life.



Spring Cleaning

Once the Advent and Christmas resources were back and stored again, we decided it was time to move ahead with some changes. As usual, we started with the annual “weeding” of books and other materials that were in poor condition or had outlived their relevance. We added new shelving to the “Youth” section and re-arranged many of the books there.

The slatwall area in the alcove will now be used for displaying new or topical books, DVDs, and CDs. Most of the DVDs and CDs for youth and adult borrowers have been placed in baskets on these shelves so you can flip through them easily. The areas for non-fiction and fiction books for adult readers are clearly identified with signs and shelf markers. The non-fiction shelves have books arranged according to the Dewey System, so you will see a number and a topic on the shelf markers (e.g., 242 PRAYER; 266 MISSIONS; 920 BIOGRAPHY). Within each topic area, the books are arranged in alphabetical order according to the last name of the author.

We also have a new notice board in the church hall near the kitchen. Look there for updates on new books and DVDs.

In His Service,

The Library Team

A Note from Winnie Bradford

At the annual congregational meeting in February I announced I would be giving up the leadership of the Library Team by October of this year. I am convinced that if the Library is to continue serving the congregation well, the time has come for me to pass the leadership on to a person in a younger age group. The present staff members are very capable and remain able to help in any way they can. Please contact me, or leave a note in my mail slot in the church hall, if you are interested in this position, a post that could be shared by two or more people.

Sincerely,

Winnie Bradford

Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Write them on the door frames of your houses and on your gates. – Deuteronomy 11:18

rightnow MEDIA

Have you heard of Netflix?
RightNow Media is a “Christian” Netflix

Over 10,000 Discipleship videos for kids, youth, and adults

SASS has signed up for RightNow Media until June 2017 and everyone in our church will be able to use this amazing resource, **if we have your email address**. *If you do NOT receive an email from us before Friday, April 22, and would like access please contact the Church Office.*

Once we add your email address to the RightNow Media server, you will receive an email from “Martin Baxter” saying that you have received a GIFT from St. Andrew’s & St. Stephen’s. That gift is access to RightNow Media and there will be a link inviting you to **GET STARTED**.

When you click on the link, you will be taken straight to your personal profile page where it will ask you to enter your name, a password, and some other details.

1. Your gender
2. Your birth year
3. Whether or NOT you are on staff in this organization – CLICK NO
4. You will be given FOUR options, which look very strange – caretaker, employee, manager, and CEO. Choose “employee” and click that this organization is Christian (I hope this last field appears!)
5. Once you confirm this, it will then prompt you to ADD/INVITE others – **PLEASE SKIP THIS STEP**

The profile setup may alarm some folks because it looks like it will open you up to receiving online marketing information from RightNow. The only thing we are aware you will receive is promotional email about RightNow resources.

Once you have set up your account you have **UNLIMITED ACCESS** to thousands of biblical resources. Access RightNow Media from your computer, iPad, Android, or Apple TV (4th generation).

More information about RightNow Media will come in the next few weeks. For now we want to encourage you to login and start watching.

Pastor Martin

For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love, and self-discipline. - 2 Timothy 1:7



GOD, ARE YOU REALLY THERE?

One question often asked by our young people concerns the relationship between God and suffering. In one of our Breakfast Club sessions, we discussed the many ways in which we see suffering in the world: natural disasters, war, terrorism, sickness, etc. One theme that came up several times was, where is God in all of this? God, are you really there? Is it possible to see God in the midst of tragedy and suffering? Is God a distant being that is not affected by our circumstances?

Jewish theologian Abraham Heschel has written about the relationship between God and suffering. He develops the idea of the “Theology of the Pathos of God.”¹ In his book on the prophets, Heschel affirms that the prophets experience an “overwhelmingly real and shatteringly present” God.² Israel's God is not far way from the world; on the contrary, He is present, sustaining His creation, and constantly involved in the history of His people. The prophets of Israel experience the world of the Covenant, where God is essentially a relational being who participates in the life and fate of Israel. As a result, God is moved and affected by what happens in the world. Human behaviour can produce a reaction from God because He does not only possess intelligence,

power, and will, but also pathos; a deep feeling and a heart for the creation and His people.

Another important theologian that develops the idea of the suffering of God is Jurgen Moltmann. For him, “the Cross of Christ must be the center of all Christian theology and the test of everything which deserves to be called Christian.”³ The starting point to explain God must be the passion of the Son of God. God does not define Himself from the power or from the otherness, like the gods of the Greco-Roman world or the god of the Greek philosophers. God is not a distant being living on another planet that visits us sometimes in order to show us that He is real. On the contrary, the heart of the divinity is portrayed on the cross of Christ. Consequently, Moltmann explains that any definition of God and all Christian discourse about the divinity must begin with the self-giving love presented on the cross. The crucial point, Moltmann explains, is that the Christian God is not any god, but the God of Jesus Christ, who fully revealed Himself on the cross of Christ.

Why is this discussion relevant today? Our understanding of God will have a direct

¹ Abraham Heschel, *The Prophets II* (New York: Harper Colophon, 1975)

² *Ibid.*, 1.

³ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God: The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology*, trans. R.A. Wilson and John Bowden (London: Harper and Row publishers, 1974), 7

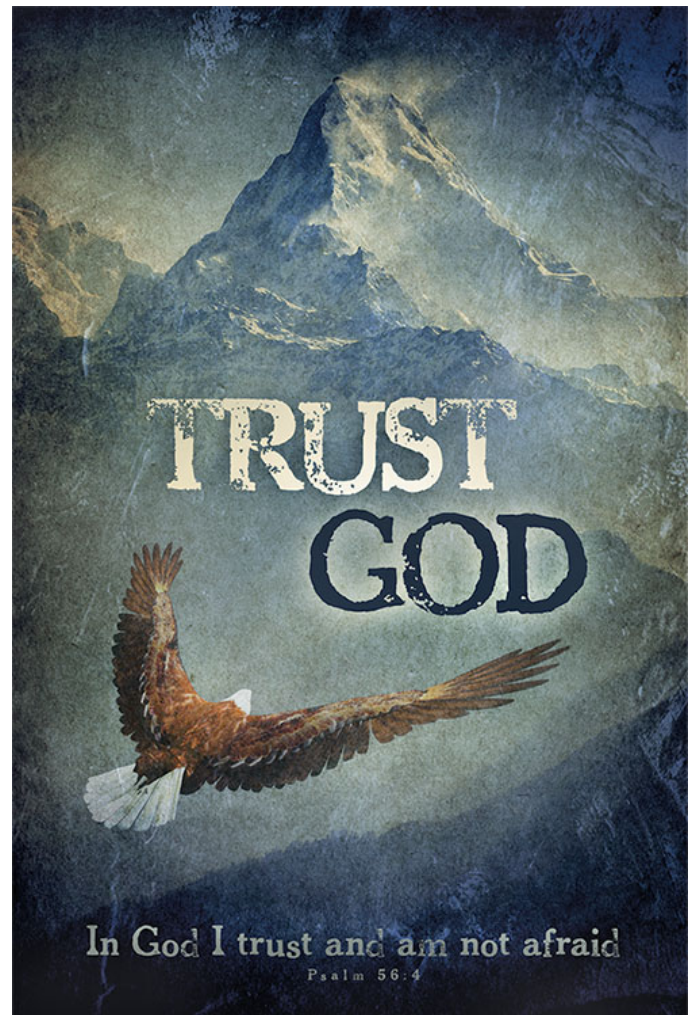
implication in the way we live our faith. If our God is a distant being that does not have any connection with our suffering, why would we, as Christians, care about the suffering people of the world? An understanding of God that presents Him as distant and not engaged in history will create a distant church that lacks the compassion and love of God for the world.

Some time ago, I was present in a worship service where everyone was singing a nonsensical song that repeated several times “take me away, take me, take me...” Whoever wrote that song wanted to be taken away from this world so he could be with God. That’s a non-biblical understanding of God. As Moltmann points out, “Christian identification with the crucified Christ means solidarity with the sufferings of the poor.”⁴ The God of scripture is the God of Israel, who is with and for His people. This is also the God of Christ, who suffers with Him and embraces our sufferings on the cross.

I would argue that we do not need to see God in our sufferings. He is with us. Our understanding of God does not come from a dictionary or a systematic theology book, but from a story. In this story, God has always been involved in our world, in our history, and in our lives. He is fully present.

Finally, in our interaction with a suffering world we are to reflect this God, the God of the cross. Here relies the relevance and importance of a biblical and Christological understanding of the relationship between God and suffering.

Daniel



God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. -Psalm 46:1

⁴ Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 25.



BUILDING A LIFELONG LOVE

Submitted by Gray Finlayson

On March 8th, several members of SASS attended a marriage talk at the Alliance Church given by Gary Thomas, a best-selling author and international speaker. One member shared this extract from his notes.

You can't stop building a house and hope it will finish building itself. Nor can you expect your marriage to continue growing when you stop feeding it. Instead, it will die from any number of reasons: money troubles, in-laws, or just plain boredom. We romanticize each other during the dating period and make excuses for each other; but after the honeymoon is over you hear people complaining that he (or she) "is just not the person I thought he was." Satan says: "Kill the marriage. You are still young. You can start again." But where Satan says "kill," Jesus says "live, and live more abundantly."

So how can we continue to build our marriages? Gary suggested there are three pillars of a Lifelong Marriage:

Pillar I - The Magnificent Obsession

Don't worry about falling out of love; worry about falling out of purpose. Matthew 6:33 says: "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things [our needs] will be given to you as well." So the purpose of marriage is to seek His kingdom and His righteousness.

When a person is seeking the kingdom of God, they are dying to the very things that destroy marriage: falsehood, bitterness, rage, anger, selfishness, greed... and developing the very things that build a lifelong marriage: gentleness, patience, kindness, forgiveness, love. Don't rely on your strength or beauty, because they will fade with time. Rely instead on the fruits of the Spirit, because they do not fade, they just keep getting stronger. It is better if both spouses are working together, but even if only one spouse is seeking the kingdom, it will bring the couple closer.

And don't forget repentance. Again, don't worry about falling out of love; rather, worry about falling out of repentance. If we look at the witness of scripture, we all deserve hell right now. We need to repent and be forgiven.

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. - Ephesians 4:2-3

Pillar II - Our Greatest Need

Our view of life is determined by what we perceive as our greatest need. It especially impacts how we treat others. Hollywood teaches us that our greatest need is to find love and be loved. When you are waiting for somebody else to love you, your days are filled with disappointment.

But Jesus gave us a new commandment (John 13:34): "Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this will all men know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." We need to accept this command. Our greatest need is not to BE loved, but to LOVE.

This leads to real love for our spouse, as well as generosity, fellowship, intimacy, and happiness. Satan can't compete against this command; God's reality is so much greater than Satan's perversions.

Pillar III - God is your Father-in-Law

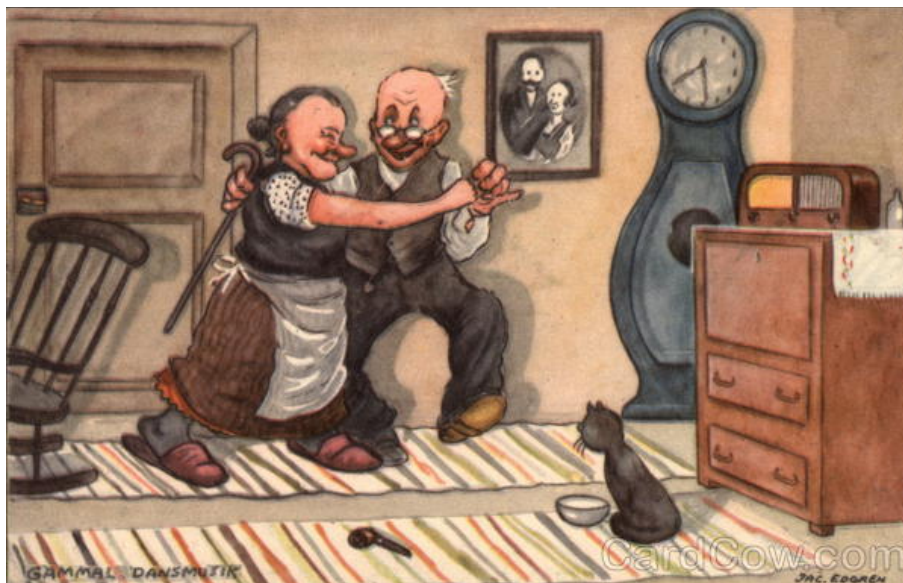
Gary Thomas was a pacifist until his daughter was born; then he became fiercely protective of her. Dads love their daughters and pray for them. She is precious and her dad likes to meet the guys who call to take his daughter out on a date. He wants to know that the young man will respect her and take care of her.

Now, your spouse's father is God, and He is even more protective. He cares deeply for your spouse. Imagine Him weeping tears of joy and celebration when you were married and He knew she had found a good partner. And see how terribly grieved He is when you don't take care of her as you should. If you are mistreating or disrespecting His little girl, don't try to buy Him off with money or good works or prayers. He just wants you to take care of her - even when she is 86 and an Alzheimer patient.

And the same goes for wives. They need to remember that their husband's dad is also our Father.

Conclusion

Reconnecting with your spouse is about selfless love; working together to show love to others; growing together in His righteousness. Learn how to love each other extravagantly, as our Father loves your spouse; as our Father loves you. Build a marriage that reflects God's kingdom, and you will enjoy a lifelong marriage.





MEDICALLY SPEAKING

Pandemic or Pandemonium? The Zika story

In 1947, a virologist by the name of George Dick was studying the spread of yellow fever among monkeys in Uganda when he noticed that one monkey developed a fever without the other symptoms of yellow fever. George Dick had discovered a new virus; he named it Zika, after the forest in which the monkey lived. A few decades later, in 1968, the first human case of Zika was reported in Nigeria. From there, it quickly spread across Africa and Asia. By April 2007, the Zika virus had reached the Pacific Islands, and then Easter Island in 2013. From there, it caught a lift in the bloodstream of a group of paddlers heading to Rio for a canoeing competition and so arrived in South America in 2014. It is now fairly widespread throughout South and Central America.

In May 2015, a study was published that raised a concern over the number of babies being born in northeast Brazil with smaller than average heads, or microcephaly. Whilst microcephaly is, sadly, a well known congenital abnormality, the numbers that were occurring seemed abnormally high, and a lot of those babies had Zika in their bloodstreams. The WHO raised the alarm: maybe Zika is the cause of this increase in microcephaly? To play it safe, they issued a warning that any pregnant woman or woman considering pregnancy should avoid travel to areas with Zika. The world media spread the alarm, airlines refunded tickets, people cancelled holidays, and Zika became a household word. But what are we really up against here?

For healthy people, Zika has not ever been proven to cause any serious illnesses. Like most viruses, it

can give you a headache, a mild fever, sore eyes, and joint pains. It might, like many viruses, cause an autoimmune response, called Guillain-Barre syndrome, in a tiny minority of susceptible people. Up to eighty percent of people infected have no symptoms whatsoever – which is why Zika has travelled the world. Zika is passed from one person to another through the bite of an Aedes mosquito; as most people don't know they are infected, they continue to travel. As the travellers fly around the world and disembark in a new country, the Aedes mosquitoes there bite them, suck up some Zika virus and fly off to pass it on, with their next meal, into an unsuspecting national of the new country.

Zika is a flavivirus, in the same class as yellow fever, dengue, and chikungunya (say that one 20 times fast!!). But unlike those viruses, it seems to cause only a mild illness. So why is it being linked to the size of babies' heads? To answer that question we will need to become epidemiologists, have patience, and give ourselves some time.

Epidemiology is the study of the causes, effects, and patterns of diseases over time in human populations. It tries to confirm cause and effect so that preventions and treatments can be put in place. Let's consider smoking and lung cancer. We all know that smoking greatly increases your risk of lung cancer. But have we always known that? No – if we had, the tobacco industry would have got off to a rocky start! Tobacco smoking gained popularity in the 17th century, but it was only in 1940 that the convincing evidence was accepted. It took years of looking at the rise in lung cancer

rates and the increase in smoking habits around the world to make a link, and then more time studying the direct link between the two for us to be able to say, 'Tobacco smoke contains carcinogens that we know directly cause damage to lung cells, which increases your risk of lung cancer'. Did you hear the two steps there? Firstly, we have to take a trend in disease and consider all the options at play, and then we have to closely study every potential direct link. Sometimes we get a quick answer, sometimes it takes decades. Just this week a paper has been published showing that the removal of fluoride in Calgary's water system in 2011 has already caused an increase in dental caries in Calgarian kids as opposed to kids in Edmonton, where fluoride is still in the water - but I digress into another little hot topic of mine!

So, for Zika, what we know is that it is widespread around the warmer parts of the world and, until lately, seemed to do no more than require you to take a few days off work. Now we have some evidence that may link Zika with microcephaly. But why are those cases so localized to one part of Brazil? No other country with Zika is reporting an increase in microcephaly. Could something else be at play here? Why is Zika found in the blood of these babies? Is Zika causing the microcephaly, or, are babies with microcephaly more susceptible to Zika due to their underlying abnormality?

Research from Brazil is already coming out showing that even prior to Zika being recognized in that country, the number of microcephaly cases was on the rise. A Brazilian cardiologist with an interest in congenital abnormalities is urging health authorities to look more closely at drug use, malnutrition, and the use of agricultural chemicals. Maybe Zika is just an innocent bystander in the wrong place at the wrong time.

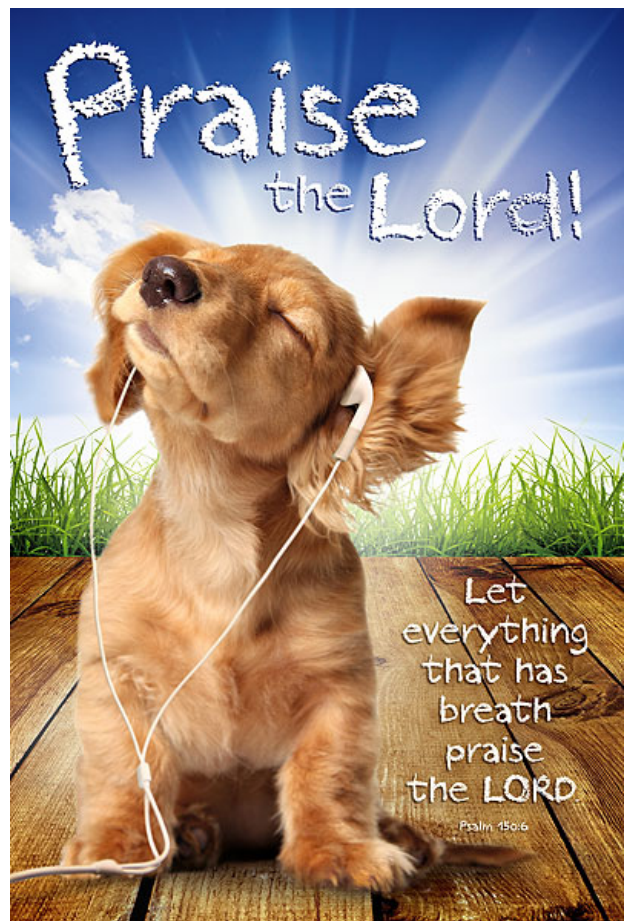
However, until we know the answers, and that may take more years, the WHO has a duty to protect the populations of this world. Nobody wants to see babies born with microcephaly. Better to be safe than sorry. Better to be overcautious than not advise and be left with human tragedy. This is especially true when the

advice is so easy to implement. For the full guidelines, see www.travelclinic.vch.ca – but unless you or your spouse are pregnant or hoping to become pregnant, standard mosquito bite precautions are all you need to implement.

Over time, we will be able to draw conclusions; for now, we live with limited knowledge so have to act appropriately. But then, that's the same as it is with our Christian faith:

For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.
-1 Corinthians 13:12

Dr. Nicola Walton-Knight





FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Sowing the Seed for Spiritual Growth

| HOME | COMMUNITY | CHURCH |
|--|--|---|
| <p>What you can do:</p> <p>Pray with your kids when ambulances, fire trucks, or police cars go past - this helps them to understand that we can care for others even when we're not directly involved in their difficulties.</p> <p>Choose a weekly Bible memory verse for your family. Put it up somewhere visible in the house and give the kids points for whoever has it memorized by the end of the week.</p> | <p>What you can do:</p> <p>Consider establishing a small group at work for regular Bible Studies. Avail yourself of the choices on RightNow Media.</p> <p>Walk through your neighbourhood or other areas of the city and pray for the people living there.</p> | <p>What you can do:</p> <p>Take up the library's <i>Tune-Up Challenge</i>. Check out their resources on Christian growth and family matters.</p> <p>Participate in CEMT-sponsored events, such as ReFrame. Explore how to connect faith with all of life.</p> |

DON'T FORGET!



WELCOMING OUR TWO NEW MISSIONARY FAMILIES

During 2015, SASS began to prayerfully and financially support two new missionary families: The Buss family with OMF and the Gonzalez family with YUGO Ministries. Following is an update from both partners.



The Buss family is hoping to move to Japan as soon as possible so that James can answer an urgent need for a financial manager in the Tokyo office of OMF. James grew up in a Christian home, but it was only after spending some time in Japan in his early twenties that he realized his need to have a personal faith and not just live the faith of his parents. Meanwhile, Maki was born and raised in Japan but moved to Canada in 1995 and came to the Lord through an outreach at Willingdon Church. Now, with their 13-year-old son, Matthew, they are preparing to move back to Japan.

Dear friends and family,

We'd like to thank all of you for your prayers, encouragement, and financial support during the last year. We visited various groups and met many people. We are so blessed to have faithful brothers and sisters who are willing to take part in this ministry. Now, our outgoing costs are covered (airfare, medical exams, vaccinations, training, etc.), and our ongoing monthly support is at 43%. Please pray that God will provide the remainder and we'll be able to leave for Japan as soon as possible.

Maki went to Japan in December to care for her mother and her brother, Keigo. Both are living on their own in the same town and they have been supporting each other. When Maki arrived, her mom was suffering from back pain and Keigo was very sick but refusing to see a doctor. He's lost his profession as a Japanese traditional dancer because of his health issues, caused by his lifestyle choices, and now seems to have lost his purpose in life. Now mom is coping with her pain, and Keigo is in a hospital getting tests and treatments for his diabetes, high blood pressure, and other illnesses. Maki was able to share about Jesus with them again, so please pray that God will open their hearts and they will accept Jesus.

During Maki's visit, her aunt in western Japan suddenly passed away, and Maki prayerfully attended her Buddhist funeral. She didn't participate in the Buddhist rituals but was quietly praying when others were participating in them. At the family dinner afterward, she was able to share with all that she is a Christ follower. The following day, Maki visited her uncle (husband of the deceased aunt) who was in hospital. She also told him that she is a follower of Christ and prayed for him.

One of Maki's cousins (son of the deceased aunt) is studying English for personal interest. Maki told him how her night school English teacher in Burnaby recommended reading the Bible to learn the context for lots of English literature and many idioms. On the following Sunday, she attended a service at a local church in Tokyo where the senior pastor was a former OMF missionary in Thailand. She found an English-Japanese Bible available there but wasn't sure if she had enough money to purchase it. She asked how much it was with tax and found out that she had the exact amount (and not a yen more) in her wallet! Maki sent the Bible to her cousin and asks for your prayers for him. His name is Tetsuo.

The passing of Maki's aunt was sad, but it opened the door to reconnect with cousins whom she hadn't

seen in 30 years. Please pray this will lead to opportunities to speak with her relatives about Jesus. It also served as a reminder that only about 0.5 percent of Japanese people are followers of Christ. We desire to be used of God to help spread the light of the Gospel in this spiritually dark nation.

While Maki was in Japan, I (James) was at home in Burnaby working full time, running the house, and volunteering for all seven Christmas presentations at Willingdon Church. This is not the first time Maki's been away, but whenever she is I am reminded about how challenging life is for single parents. Maki was away for 18 days, but we had only home cooked meals. Our fridge sure was empty on Maki's return!

We're looking for more opportunities to share about our call to missions and our future ministry in Japan. If you'd like to have us or know any groups or churches that might be interested in having us, please let us know. If you are interested in partnering with us in this ministry, let us know, or visit the OMF website: <https://omf.org>.

Thank you for taking time to read our update.

Blessings,
James, Maki, and Matthew Buss



James and Maki sharing at a small group



yugoministries

Last year's YUGO Mission team had the privilege of working alongside Jeremy Gonzalez on our house build. Jeremy and his wife Melody are originally from San Diego but have been in Mexico for nine years with their three children, Caleb, Eliana and Julia.

An Update from the Gonzalez Family

Well, 2016 is here and we have kicked off our new theme: Called. Romans 8:28 says: "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." If you haven't looked at our website explaining more of this theme, I invite you to do so. Visit yugo.org and click the link **to learn more about our theme!**



This year's theme is dear to my (Jeremy) heart because I can relate to it so well. I know I am called! Not just to "be a missionary" but to be an ambassador for Christ – as I believe we all are. I can remember back over 20 years ago on one of my first mission trips to Mexico as a youth and first receiving this "calling". **I knew then that God wanted more from me, and more for me.** At that time, I did not understand or know the journey would bring me back to Mexico. I studied to be a youth pastor and during my college years I worked at a church that took a yearly trip to Mexico with YUGO. That was about 15 years ago!

Now into my ninth year here serving full-time, I am even more convinced that I have been – no, that I **AM** – CALLED! Please pray with me for this year as we continue to share this theme with our teams: that God moves in others to know and believe that they have been called to be His ambassadors wherever He may have them. **Know that you, too, are CALLED to make a difference** in the lives of the people around you, by showing them Christ's love!



Last week I was blessed to capture this photo. It reminded me again of the huge difference we are making in the lives of the people here.

In His service,

Jeremy and Melody



Submitted by Colette Doan

“Each of us was God called, not called by man.” - Miriam Scott

After making a list of the God Sightings our mission team observed in Ensenada, Mexico, one is amazed by all that occurred in just one week. God took a group of people from SASS who didn't necessarily know each other well and formed us into a team, working together to build a house for the Martinez family: Jose Louis, Julieta, and their children Jose and Marilene.

Each team member expressed profound thoughts and observations of how he or she saw God at work during our time on the mission field. I hope the following allows you to be part of the great joy that our team experienced throughout the week at YUGO.

From our rough start with delayed flights and a missing van, God was with us. We pulled together to search for another vehicle and God led Peter to a van rental company, run by a Christian family, that provided us with the long sought after 15-person van. He continued to be with us as Esther eased our crossing at the Mexican border. We were able to cross with 100 shoeboxes full of gifts tucked around our feet and under the seats.

God was there as we bonded with the Martinez family. Jose Louis and Julieta took the whole week off work, at great personal expense, to labour alongside us. We thought we were going to build their house for them, but we ended up building their house with them. They were in with their whole hearts; even the children joined in after school each day. While we all shared lunches and conversations, God was with us. When Julieta prepared wonderful fish tacos for us, and the extended family, God was in the celebration. God allowed the Martinez family to feel comfortable enough to tease Kayleigh, who speaks a little Spanish; wash Yanic's hair before Juileta's cousin braided it; give Jacques rattlesnake to eat; engage with Daniel while he filmed them; and cry when Jose found out Chrissy made the quilt for him.

As jokes were cracked and nicknames invented, God heard our laughter. He was at the centre of our flexibility to try new jobs on the site. Darren, in his calm and confident manner, kept us busy and challenged, but not overwhelmed. God put people around us like Edouardo, our foreman, to fill in our areas of weakness. We had fun compromising and collaborating to build the house quickly, allowing us time to do more of God's work in Uruapan.

The fact that we had enough left over material to make a picnic table for the Children's Home wasn't a coincidence. We also had extra time to help put up the whiteboard in the kindergarten class and re-roof their storage shed.

Attending the kindergarten Spring Festival and running the Vacation Bible School at Pastor Carlos's church was a lovely conclusion to the week. To see Jose, Marilene, and all the other children from the kindergarten, elementary school, and Children's Home learn about and experience God's love was evidence of this love itself.

But the true heart of the whole trip was the Key Ceremony on Thursday afternoon. There are no experiences that compare to it. After spending four days working hard, connecting, and being part of a family, the key ceremony is the end. It's over and you leave. That is the hardest part of being on a short-term mission. We put in a lot of work, did a lot of extra things, and experienced an amazing amount of life in one week. So when the Key Ceremony time arrives, it's very emotional. Watching the Martinez family unlock the door to their new house was just this amazing moment. We have been forever changed on the inside, and even though there is a difference in our material belongings, at the core, both of our families share the same love. As Peter said, "Jesus taught us to love our neighbours; God bless them in their new home."

The bonds we forged in Mexico will last forever; literally forever, because God's kingdom is forever.

- Miriam, Esther, Kayleigh, Yanic, Peter, Daniel, Colette, Darren, Chrissy, Jacques



Jigsaw Pedro, Stain, Skunk, El Guapo, Estherceita (kneeling), Yaya, Jefe Grande, El Bano, Cinderella, Eddie's Mudding Queen



How We Met Dr. George Gushue-Taylor

Submitted by Leola Romain

Knox Church in Port Alberni, BC, was a “Mission Charge” and therefore we were fortunate to have “Overseas Missionaries” preaching in our pulpit and speaking to our Sunday School classes.

During 1951 and 1952, our pulpit became vacant. We developed a “Guest Speaker List” and volunteer drivers took turns picking up and returning the guest speakers to their homes.

One of our speakers was Dr. George Gushue-Taylor, who lived with his wife in Qualicum Beach, 42 kilometres from Port Alberni. Dr. Gushue-Taylor, a leprologist, was born in Newfoundland and assigned to Taiwan through the Presbyterian Church of England. He later built the Happy Mount Leprosy Hospital in Taiwan, which he ran until 1940.

One particular Sunday during our pulpit vacancy, Dr. Gushue-Taylor was the guest preacher and Henry travelled to Qualicum Beach as the volunteer driver. When they returned to Port Alberni, we listened to a spiritual sermon, then we all ate lunch together before travelling back to Qualicum Beach in the afternoon.

I would tag along for the return trip, enjoying great conversation, laughter, and many stories of their life in Taiwan.

Now you know how Henry and I met a famous Christian missionary by the name of Dr. George Gushue-Taylor.

IN MEMORIAM



Clarence Bertie London, born April 27, 1922, passed into our Lord’s loving arms on March 22, 2016. A memorial service was held in the sanctuary on March 30, 2016.

CRAFT CORNER

DLTK's Crafts for Kids

Canada Day Red and White Bracelet



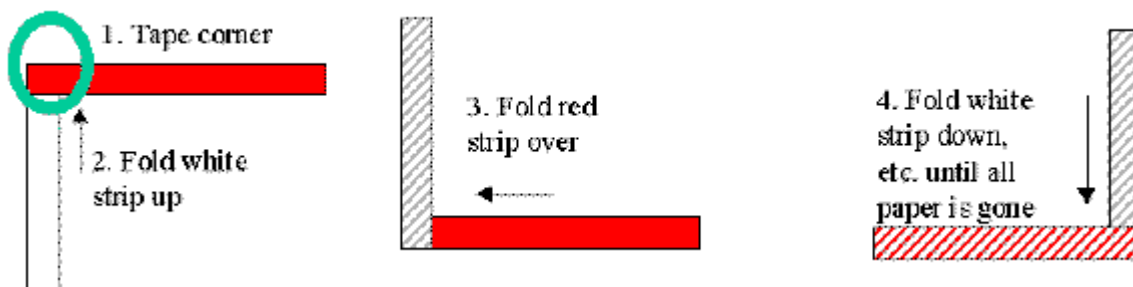
A simple paper bracelet. Make it a little bigger for a crown.

Materials:

- tape
- glue
- red and white paper

Instructions:

- Cut strips of paper that are 2 inches wide (thinner if you want a daintier bracelet) and 11 inches long (don't be too finicky about the measurements... just "ish" it). You'll need 4 red strips and 4 white strips.
- Now tape all the white strips together end to end (so you have one LONG white strip) and all the red strips together end to end (so you have one LONG red strip).
- Fold the strips and place them like an L and then fold over each other in an alternating pattern. See diagram below (solid colours are the front and slashed colours the back of the paper).

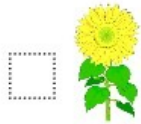


- When you run out of paper, trim ends as necessary and tape so it doesn't unravel.
- Roll into a circle and tape to form a bracelet (see photo for how it looks).

KID'S PAGES

Check off the following items as you go for a walk, play, or enjoy other outside activities. On a piece of paper, illustrate a picture that includes all the items you observed in your scavenger hunt.

Nature Scavenger Hunt



flower



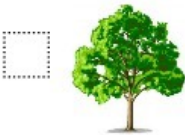
rocks



water



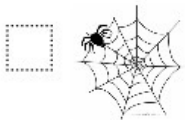
green leaf



tree



grass



spiderweb



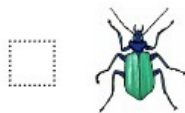
bird



sand or dirt



cloud



bug



ant



brown leaf



tree bark

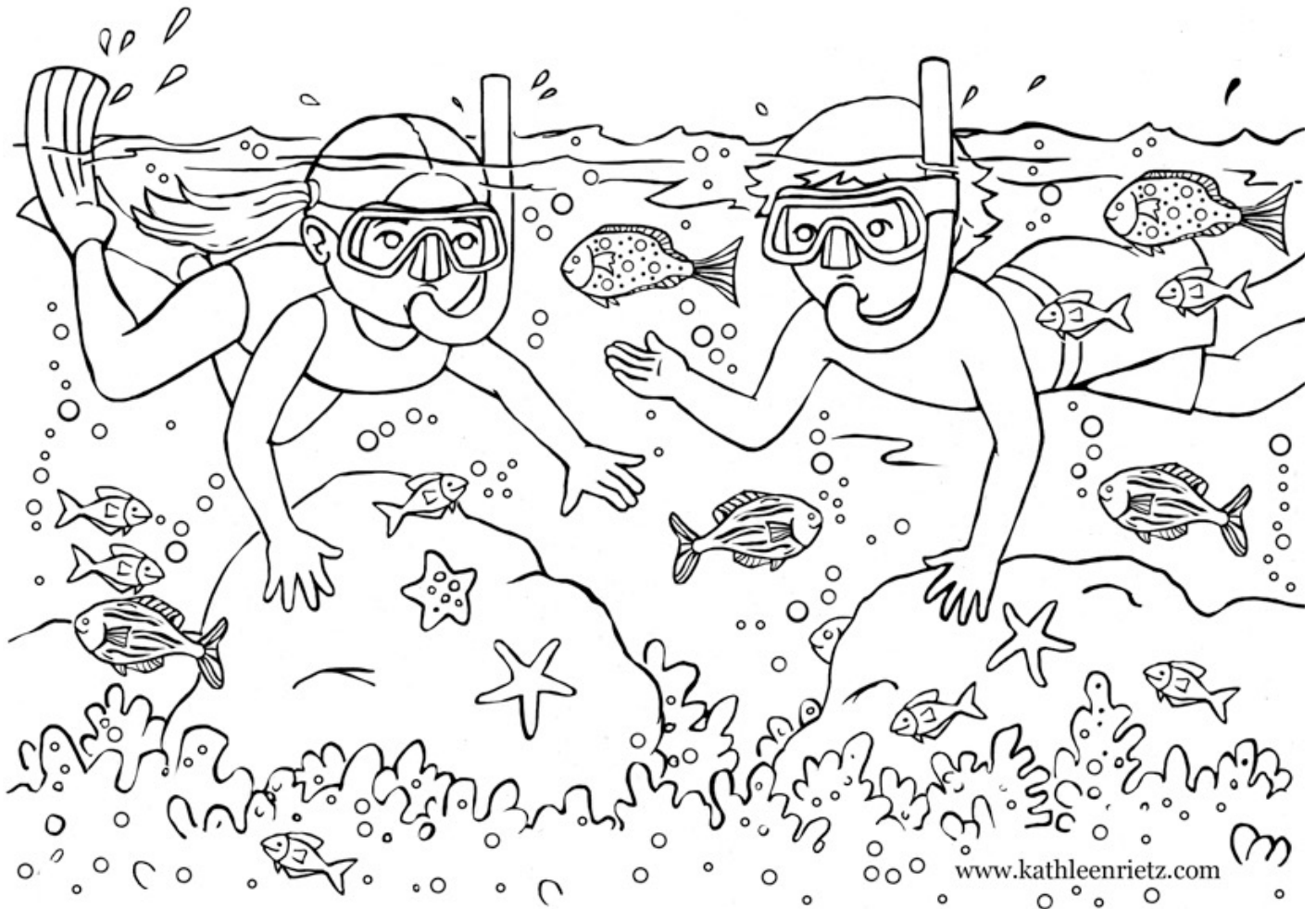


butterfly



fern

COLOURING CORNER



WORD CHALLENGE

Using only the letters as many times as they appear in the sentence below, make a list of as many words as you can:

SPRING IS HERE