

TO KNOW CHRIST AND MAKE HIM KNOWN

SERVANT



**CHRIS
FABRY**
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Storyed Life

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WICKHAM**

ON 25 YEARS OF LEADING WORSHIP,
THE DOWNSIDE OF FAME, AND A
HOPE THAT'S OUT OF THIS WORLD

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Honor Roll

In September, at a Prairie College chapel, we had the great privilege of recognizing three couples with Distinguished Alumni awards. Where I live, it's the closest we get to the Grammys. These six are diverse in age, nationality, personality and giftings. But they share in common a deep love for Jesus and a lifetime of serving him. First up were Christian and Kristyn Mogler. You can read their story of taking risks and trusting God with the unknown (p. 12). Sharon and Jim Janz have been highly successful in business, but Jim is really an evangelist, having spoken to almost two million people with a message of hope, and seeing many come to faith in Jesus.

Our third couple, Nelson and Linda Reed, have served in missions for forty years, ten of those directing Action International. Linda told the students, "We are so humbled today. We're just ordinary people whom God for some reason has allowed the great privilege of serving him. He has done great things with the little we have given him. He has used us as we have placed our hands in his."

Some find it ironic to honor servants of Christ; we see it as biblical and instructive. A culture of honor celebrates virtue and nurtures future generations by modeling what is truly honorable.

God's kingdom seems upside down. Honor is not reserved for the wealthy and powerful. Honoring others is an act of gratitude to God for the work he has done in and through those who live with faithfulness and integrity. The same day we honored these couples, twenty graduates returned to Prairie for a fifty-year "re-graduation" celebration. Someone pointed out that together they represented one thousand years of walking with God!



Celebrating "1000 years" of service: Class of '73 president Dave Cook and his wife Cathy, with Mark Jonah (Academic Dean) and Mark Maxwell, president of Prairie College.

I believe we learn much about ourselves by honestly examining what we honor. The same goes for a church, a country, a culture.

"Pay to all what is owed to them," says Romans 13:7, "taxes to whom taxes are owed...respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed."

In the midst of despair, Pastor William Stidger decided to honor someone from his past by writing a letter of thanks

"I believe we learn much about ourselves by honestly examining what we honor. The same goes for a church, a country, a culture."

to his English teacher who had given him a love of words and the desire to be a pastor and writer. A letter came in return. "My dear Willy, I can't tell you how much your note meant to me. I am in my 80s, living alone, lonely, like the last leaf of autumn lingering on. I taught in school

for more than fifty years; yours is the first note of appreciation I have ever received. It cheered me as nothing has done in many years."

William smiled as he read the letter, and a kindly old bishop who guided him in ministry came to mind. He wrote him a note too and received one in return. It said, "Your letter was so beautiful, so real, that as I sat reading it in my study, tears fell from my eyes, tears of gratitude. Before I realized what I was doing, I rose from my chair and called my wife's name to share it with her, forgetting she was gone. You'll never know how much your letter has warmed my spirit."

Is there someone you could honor today? It may be publicly, but more often it's in the form of a note, a phone call, or an email which might mean the world to them.

Romans 12:10 instructs us to, "Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves." The ESV says, "Outdo one another in showing honor." I like that. Finding what is wrong is easy work, but there is great joy in finding what is right and pointing it out.

God is honored when we honor one another. What could be more honoring to God than honoring those who bear his image well? ❏

Inside 05



Whether she meant to or not, Chris Fabry's mother raised him to be a writer. Sample this sweet tribute to her lasting legacy.

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Our "Innerview" features Phil Wickham on marriage, parenting, and the call to worship.

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What happens when God interrupts our orderly lives with an out-of-the-box invitation? "Mogi" and Kristyn Mogler explain.



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A little girl introduces her grandpa to an unexplored world of bugs, laughter and wonder.

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EIGHT QUESTIONS DR. TYRAN LAWS

Tyran Laws is Professor of New Testament at Prairie. He spoke with Servant about his sixteen-year marriage to Dr. Marcella Laws, missing cologne, and teaching on a white-majority campus.

WHAT DO YOU MISS ABOUT CHICAGO?

Two things in particular: African American Christian worship style—its ability to exegete the text and the culture simultaneously with precision and passion. And my access to designer cologne oils. I love to smell good! In Chicago, “street chemists” can make your favorite cologne into an oil. They usually sublet a booth in a beauty store or barbershop. My go-to-place was on 95th and Halsted.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT THREE HILLS?

I never imagined we would live this far north. My wife did, though. Upon our decision to come here, she said that she thought about moving to Canada years ago but never shared that with me. Living in a small town affords our boys some freedom and mobility that they did not have in Chicago.

WHAT ARE A FEW SECRETS TO YOUR SIXTEEN YEAR MARRIAGE?

Marcella and I never really had a honeymoon period. There was tension (and stressors) from the beginning. One secret to a strong marriage is being emotionally literate as couples. Awareness of one’s emotional deficiencies, articulating one’s emotional difficulties, and one’s ability to forgive and invest in your marriage make all the difference. Marriages bring with them unique pressures that incite every emotion on the spectrum. The better equipped we were for navigating this spectrum, the better we were with succeeding in our marriage. Looking back, I’d say we’ve learned how to “fight the good fight” as partners and not as enemies.



Tyran and Marcella with Christian, Caleb, and Cameron: “We’re a close-knit family that thoroughly enjoys each other’s presence. In our home, you’ll hear us cracking jokes, singing praise songs and enjoying life together.”

WHAT DIFFICULTIES HELPED SHAPE WHO YOU ARE?

In short, I’m one whose gifts and faith contributions have been forged in the fire of dissident experiences of systemic and interpersonal racism alongside the dangerous encounters of the inner-city life of America. I’ve had to navigate the challenges between everything from constructing a healthy self-identity as a Black Christian in majority-white spaces to seeing firsthand how the crack epidemic could rip a family apart. Somewhere in the midst of that God has raised up a preacher/scholar to speak to those realities.

HOW DO YOU SEE YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH RACISM CONTRIBUTING TO YOUR TEACHING MINISTRY ON A WHITE-MAJORITY CAMPUS?

I see myself as a catalyst for conversation. Sometimes non-white students struggle with having certain conversations for the fear of backlash. Sometimes white

empower the white-majority campus to competently have those conversations, even when I am gone.

WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT TEACHING?

In teaching, I get to do battle for the Lord in the realm of ideas. Teaching affords me the unique opportunity to shape minds.

WHY IS IT SO VITAL THAT THIS GENERATION UNDERSTAND AND LOVE THE NEW TESTAMENT?

Without it, we are missing an integral part of God’s love affair with humanity. The New Testament captures, in the Incarnation of Christ, the time in history when the Creator of heaven and earth had a physical “address” here on earth. The New Testament has as its bookends the memory of God temporarily moving into the neighborhood, “going away” for a while, and finally returning to stay for good (Revelation 21). What’s not to love about that?

“I’ve had to navigate the challenges between everything from constructing a healthy self-identity as a Black Christian in majority-white spaces to seeing firsthand how the crack epidemic could rip a family apart.”

students and personnel want to have these conversations but are afraid of saying the wrong thing and being thought of as racist. As a professor, particularly one with my lived experience with racism, I have a moral responsibility to say things that need to be said and to consequently

WHAT DO YOU HOPE STUDENTS WILL SEE REFLECTED IN YOUR LIFE?

I hope to model to my students someone who passionately and critically thought about the world around him and sought to boldly and gracefully change that world to a “Thy-Kingdom-Come-Reality.”

Recipe for a *Storied Life*

CHRIS FABRY

Somewhere in heaven my mother is baking. Cakes were her love language. One Sunday morning we had a conversation about that. She had perfected two recipes, a rum pound cake that was so moist it melted in your mouth, and her signature crispy carrot cake that weighed about ten pounds.

She had asked me to call her on Sundays instead of Saturdays because her Saturdays were “busy.” She was 94 and spent her days with Dr. Phil, Adrian Rogers, her favorite Southern Gospel recordings, and baking.

“I feel like baking the way you feel about your writing,” she said.

I had told her that when I was working on a story I awakened early and couldn't wait to get into my office, make coffee and get into my story. “I come alive when I write.”

“That's exactly how I feel,” she said, her voice animated. “When it's my day to bake, I get up early and get all the ingredients together and warm the oven. I

just have the best time.”

She also enjoyed the response of those who sampled her creations. Visitors often walked away with a whole cake—two if she had one in the freezer.

“It's just taking up space,” she would say.

Whether she meant to or not, my mother raised me to be a writer. Books everywhere. Magazines. A dictionary the size of Alberta. If she heard or read a word she didn't know, it was off to that behemoth to discover its definition, etymology, pronunciation and how to use it correctly in a sentence.

She kept other art in the house, mainly classical music. On Saturdays when I would want to watch the baseball game of the week, she would be playing live music from the Metropolitan Opera. She knew no other language but English, but she drank in that music like barn cats drank warm milk.

Her love for words and her penchant for stories propelled me. I began writing

for publication in the 1990s and had my first novel for adults published in 2008. I've written more than 80 books now and I could have dedicated every one of them to her—perhaps I should have. I have yet to write a novel that didn't in some way pay homage to her life and spirit.

The Mama Whisperer

I once told the story of an older woman, Ruby, whose children are trying to take her car keys from her. They're afraid she'll have an accident on her way to buy sugar and flour for her baking needs.



“Am I Ruby?” asked Mama.

“Yes, Mama, you’re Ruby.”

After my father died in 2011, she remained alone in the house on the hill where I grew up. She made it abundantly clear that we would have to pry her from that place with a crowbar. She was good to her word.

Enter the “Mama Whisperer.” My brothers and sisters-in-law called me that because of our connection that transcended time zones and her unconquerable stubbornness. When she fell in her kitchen, blacking out as she pulled another cake from the oven, and hit the back of her head on the linoleum, I was asked to intervene.

Everyone agreed it was time for Mama to stop baking and to stop living alone in that old house.

Everyone but Mama.

“I am not moving and that’s that. I won’t live in an old folks’ home. I’m going to die right here and there’s nothing you can do about it. It’s my decision.”

“Well, Mama you almost died in the kitchen. Remember?”

Her voice became soft. “Sometimes I wish I had. I’m ready to go home.”

And so, we began our long Sunday conversations about stories we shared, jokes remembered that only needed one line to elicit laughter, everything but the elephant between us. I wanted desperately to keep her safe. She desperately wanted her freedom and dignity.

“Mama, at Paramount, (a senior living facility) you’ll have your own room, your meals will be prepared, there’s someone to look in on you and help with your medication.” (We discovered she was mixing her meds and taking too much of some and not enough of others.) “You could even bake there. You could teach others how to make that carrot cake of yours.”



She did not budge. She didn’t want to hear of our concern. She changed the subject and said, “Remember the one about the school teacher who asked little Johnny...”

Change of Heart

In December of 2021, I saw something online about a mutual friend of hers. I called but there was no answer at the house. I called the next morning. No answer.

becoming more firm this time. I made notes and read from a prepared script, praying she would listen, my voice shaking. I came up with biblical analogies and tried to find the right word picture.

“I’m not going.”

But something changed. And I wonder now if it was some story we shared that knocked on the back door of her heart, that showed her we wanted her to have her freedom but also to be safe.

On the Sunday before Christmas, in

Everyone agreed it was time for Mama to stop baking and to stop living alone in that old house. Everyone but Mama.

My brother and his wife found her on the floor of her bedroom, unresponsive and cold. She had turned the thermostat down and fell in the night. An ambulance rushed her to the hospital. Later she said, “They warmed me up.” She passed the episode off as “just a setback.”

I tried again to talk with her,

a mousy voice that signaled a change of heart, she said, “Would I be able to wait until after New Year’s to move in?”

My jaw dropped. Quickly, before she could change her mind, I said, “Of course, Mama. I think that would give you time to get everything together.”

I wasn’t there when my brothers

moved her loveseat, bed and dresser and a new TV from my sister-in-law into a one bedroom suite with a small living area and kitchenette. And because the facility had Wi-Fi, my mother could finally hear my radio program live every day, something she'd never had in the old house.

We wondered if we had done the right thing. Would she shut down now? Isolate herself?

Two weeks later, on a Sunday morning, she talked about the birds she could see out her window in the feeder. She mentioned by name the people who gave her medication and meals. This woman who had been so stubborn about dying in that old house said, "Chris, I think this the best decision I've ever made."

We laughed about that for weeks.

Novel Ideas

For the next six months we had our Sunday conversations. She was a fan of my novels and couldn't wait for me to send a box of them for her to pass along to neighbors and relatives and friends.

All my novels have included my mother in some way, her personality, her

murdered. His goal was to return there to solve the mystery as his final literary act.

"How's Grayson doing?" she would say.

I would tell her the latest scene, his quirky ways. I would read short sections I thought would make her smile.

"You know, Mama, the more I write, the more I think this is less about a Dementia diagnosis and more about the people around him who are trying to love him well."

"Is that so?"

"Yeah. See, Grayson has always tried to earn favor. He's always done things on his own, in his own power. I think the novel is more about his struggle to accept love from the people who care."

She was silent a long time, as if processing her story and Grayson's. "I can't wait to read it."

But she didn't get to.

In July of 2022, her oxygen levels fell dangerously low. I caught a flight from Tucson and arrived late to hold her wrinkled hand in a hospital exam room.

"Mrs. Fabry, we need to do a procedure," the young doctor said in the wee hours of the night. "You have fluid next to your lung—"



I got there early Sunday morning and our conversation was one-sided. Over the next few days I played her favorite song, the Booth Brothers' *Look for Me at Jesus' Feet*. She never woke up. And on a Thursday in August, 2022, she died.

Years earlier she had asked me to officiate her funeral. "Mama," I said, "I'll make a deal. If I agree to officiate your funeral, you have to do mine if I go first." That made her laugh.

We had a small graveside service. I talked about her rock-ribbed trust in the grace of God and the love of Jesus. I talked about "the best decision she ever made," and, of course, her carrot cake.

They covered her grave, but there is a hole in my heart, and in my Sunday mornings.

In November, when *Saving Grayson* releases, I will give thanks for the way stories help us process the pain and struggle of life. It is one I could not have written without my mother. ❧

Chris Fabry is an award-winning author and radio host of *Chris Fabry Live*. He and his wife, Andrea, live in Arizona. *Saving Grayson* is available online.



But something changed. And I wonder now if it was some story we shared that knocked on the back door of her heart.

quirks, humor, fortitude and history. She gave an endless supply of material. From her poverty-stricken youth, the loss of her teeth as a young woman because of poor nutrition, to her military service as a WAVE, to the long marriage to my father, everything I've written I owe to her indefatigable spirit, which is a word she would have looked up.

I was struggling with a story about a man named Grayson Hayes who had been diagnosed with early-onset Alzheimer's. He was a former English professor and writer who had a recurring dream about a woman in his hometown who was

"I'm not doing any procedure," she said vehemently, her brow furrowed. "I've lived a long life. I'm ready to see Jesus."

The doctor glanced at me. I gave him a look that said, *You're on your own, Pal*.

After he explained the procedure and how it would allow her to breathe easier and that this was the path back to her apartment, Mama agreed.

She improved and was taken to a step-down unit, but every time they tried to lower her oxygen, her levels fell. She valiantly tried doing the exercises the physical therapist suggested, but one Friday night she fell asleep.



ENHANCING CAMPUS LIFE

Since the spring, progress has been made in **Prairie's Campaign for Greater Impact** as we identify key priorities to update our campus, programs, scholarships and technology. At the top of that list is the improvement of residence life for our students.

As costs are equal and our 50-year-old facility is well below standard for current student expectations, Prairie's Board of Directors and leadership team have determined that we need to shift plans from renovating the existing structure to replacing it altogether.

The new building would be constructed in apartment-style pods of eight students sharing two washrooms (rather than hallway rooms with collective washrooms). Operating costs would drop by an estimated 30% per foot and the size of the new residence would be 40% smaller than the current building.

The need is great and, as we take this step of faith to significantly improve community life, **we invite you to partner with us.** Our desire is to make Prairie's home-away-from-home a place that helps students focus on their purpose to **grow deeper in their relationship with the Lord.**

To help achieve the goal of raising \$16 million to construct a greatly improved living space, would you consider pledging a gift to Prairie of \$25, \$50, \$100, or even \$1,000 per month for four years? Your gift will impact the lives of students for decades to come, as Prairie continues to train missional professionals to know Christ and make him known.



To learn more about the campaign, here is an update from Mark:

Thank you for your support of SERVANT over the years!

We hope the stories and interviews continue to challenge and encourage you.

As our printing and mailing costs have tripled in the last eighteen months, we have sought ways to reduce our expenses. In an effort to be good stewards, we will **NO LONGER BE INCLUDING RETURN ENVELOPES** in the magazines.

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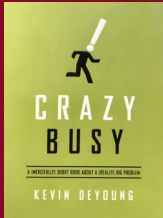
DIETRICH BONHOEFFER

"I believe that God can and will bring good out of evil, even out of the greatest evil. For that purpose he needs [those] who make the best use of everything. I believe that God will give us all the strength we need to help us to resist in all times of distress. But he never gives it in advance, lest we should rely on ourselves and not on him alone. A faith such as this should allay all our fears for the future."

G.K. CHESTERTON

relied on his wife in all practical matters. Once on a lecture tour he sent her the following telegram: "Am in Birmingham. Where ought I to be?" She wired back: "Home."

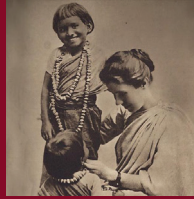
KEVIN DEYOUNG



"[T]he longer I parent the more I want to focus on doing a few things really well, and not get too worked up about everything else. I want to spend time with my kids, teach them the Bible, take them to church, laugh with them, cry with them, discipline them when they disobey, say 'sorry' when I mess up, and pray a ton. I want them to look back and think, 'I'm not sure what my parents were doing or if they even knew what they were doing. But I always knew my parents loved me, and I knew they loved Jesus.'"

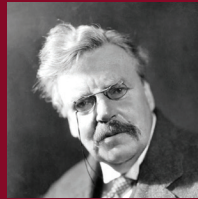
ELISABETH ELLIOT

In A Chance to Die



"[Amy Carmichael] became for me what some now call a role model.... For a time, I suppose, I

thought she must have been perfect, and that was good enough for me. As I grew up I knew she could not have been perfect, and that was better, for it meant that I might possibly walk in her footprints. If we demand perfect models we will have, except for the Son of man himself, none at all."



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This year, 93 million copies of the Bible will be printed, up from 54 million in 2000 and 5 million in 1900. *Lifeway Research*

Unmarried people are more likely to fall downstairs than married people. Previously married people fall more than both of those. *Bill Bryson in At Home*

Loneliness affects 1 in 2 Americans. Lack of social connection is as dangerous as smoking 15 cigarettes a day. *U.S. Surgeon General*

Cost per hour to hire an "on-demand walking partner" from The People Walker: \$30. *thepeoplewalker.com*

Human trafficking is the world's second largest and fastest growing criminal industry, second only to drug trafficking, generating \$150 billion a year.

International Justice Mission

Evangelical Christian men have the lowest rate of domestic violence of any group in America. *Nancy Pearcey, The Toxic War on Masculinity*

Globally, there are fewer atheists today (147 million) than in 1970 (165 million). *Status of Christianity report*

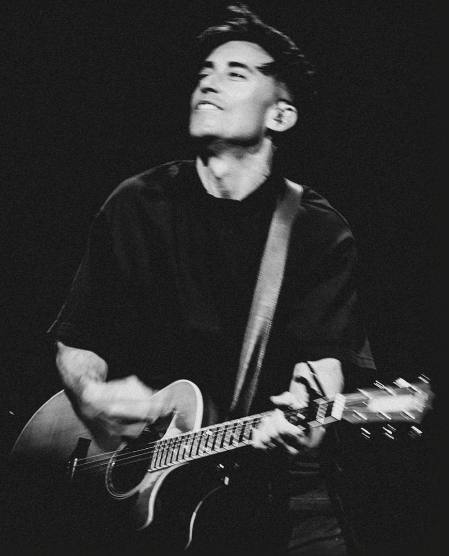
Chance a millennial has voluntarily left a job for mental-health reasons: 1 in 3. That a Gen Z-er has: 1 in 2. *Qualtrics (Provo, Utah)*

CHURCH ATTENDANCE DROPS

There was a time in Canada when 75% of the population was in church on any given Sunday. Those days are long gone, as church is pushed to the margins. While a 2021 census Research Co. and Glacier Media reports that "spirituality" is up, Canadians who identify as Christian now number 53 percent, down 14% since 2011. Weekly church, temple or synagogue attendance stands at 11 percent. In the United States, 63 percent identify as Christians, but weekly church attendance is at 18 percent. Dr. James Enns, Anglican minister and Professor of History at Prairie College believes that there are also encouraging signs. "There are surveys which indicate that 80 percent of non-Christians will come to church if invited to do so by a friend," he says. "That should encourage us to invite our neighbors as we have opportunity to do so. Perhaps statistics of decline should cause us to do some serious collective soul searching to see if our weekly worship is about gathering around Christ in Scripture, prayer and sacrament."

Out of this WORLD

PHIL WICKHAM



In 2015, Phil Wickham was told he may not sing again professionally. Months of concerts were canceled and surgery performed for polyps on his vocal chords. Uncertain and anxious, he knelt, asking God for direction and peace. “Only a few times have I undoubtedly felt the presence of God,” he recalls. “He spoke directly to my heart: ‘Phil, you’re my child. I’m your Father, trust me.’” Doctors were “blown away” by his miraculous recovery. He told them of the thousands praying for him and of God’s power. Today, Phil’s vocal chords are humming, his songs are resounding in churches worldwide, and his album “I Believe” is number one on the Christian charts. Phil and his wife Mallory live in San Diego, California, with four kids and two dogs. Here he speaks with *Servant* about ego, joy, temptation, and a hope that’s out of this world.

WHEN YOU WERE 18, WHAT DID YOU HOPE TO BE DOING AT 39?

This. Since I was thirteen, I was a worship leader at church. At eighteen, I was leading worship and making sandwiches at a cafe. I’d get fifty bucks and think, *I’m a rich man.*

WHAT’S SOMETHING MOST PEOPLE DON’T KNOW ABOUT BEING A MUSICIAN?

On this tour, we’re averaging 9,000 people a night in arenas. Sounds glamorous. But backstage there’s no hot water for showers. We cram twelve guys into a bus and try to sleep. This morning I got out of my bunk and stepped on a rotten banana. I had rotten banana all over my foot. [Laughs.] Someone had one in his bunk and it fell out and now it’s all over my foot.

LIVING THE DREAM.
[Laughs.]

WHAT IS THE FOUNDATION FOR YOUR JOY?

I’ve got four kids. They bring me joy and there’s plenty of comedy. My wife is my best friend and I love her more than ever. I just can’t believe she chose me. All that brings me happiness and joy. But Jesus gives me purpose. Life seen through him takes on this bigger, deeper, eternal meaning. Marriage shows me what he feels about me and how

he views the church. Kids show me his heart as a Father more and this beautiful truth that he wants me a part of his family. He gives joy that can’t be stolen. Marriages and kids and health can get shaken. But the meaning he gives can never be shaken.

“I don’t write songs to make money. I write them because I love Jesus.”

YOU’VE BEEN MARRIED 15 YEARS.

WHAT’S HELPED?

We’d known each other since she was eleven and we started dating when she was 17 and I was 20. She’s my first girlfriend and the first girl I ever kissed. She can say that about me. She is relentlessly communicative. She does not let the sun go down on anything that needs talked about. She’s unafraid of confrontation. I’m the opposite, but I’m learning to be open, to be gracious and to take a second before saying all those things. If I think about her first, I am blessed and happy.

DO YOU HAVE ADVICE FOR THOSE HOPING TO BE HAPPILY MARRIED?

If you want someone wonderful, full of life and full of Jesus that person isn’t gonna marry someone who’s not like that. So make the soil of your heart full of Jesus. Be a thoughtful person, selfless, pure. Say no to things that bring death. And watch how God blesses that. It really brings life. Be disciplined in the Word. Be disciplined in Jesus. Follow him. Be that someone you would want to marry.

YOU HAVE FOUR KIDS.

We’re in a really sweet time. Our kids can’t drive. [Laughs.] They have phones, but the phones can only call me and Mallory and my parents. We’re taking advantage of it right now. It’s the first time the kids got to be out with me on the bus on this tour and they killed it. They slept great. The crew loved them. They were so polite. We had a great time.

WHAT GIVES YOU HOPE AS A DAD?

That Jesus is bigger. He has overcome the world. Our world is crazy and it will get crazier. But I can’t freak out when I think of my kids and the problems they face and will face. Nothing can thwart God’s plans. He is in control. He is king. That gives me hope.

THERE’S NOTHING ABOUT THE SPOTLIGHT OR NUMBER ONE SONGS THAT ENCOURAGES HUMILITY. HOW DO YOU FIND PERSPECTIVE?

I’m not without my pride, but I’ve been doing this since I was thirteen and in a professional sense for almost two decades.

I know people have connected with these songs, but clearly this is about the gospel, about Jesus, about who God is, what he's done for us, who we are in him. That's all I sing about. There's no room to sit back and say, "I'm pretty great." I see people responding to him and his truth and the hope of heaven and everything he's done for us to take us there. It feels like yesterday I was in some stinky youth group room singing to twelve kids and they were throwing their gum at me. That's still how I feel. When did this all happen? I thank God for giving me the option to say "yes" to this, because this is amazing. It's all about him. The bigger things get, the smaller I feel.

"I thank God for giving me the option to say 'yes' to this, because this is amazing. It's all about him. The bigger things get, the smaller I feel."

I'M HEARING GRATITUDE. HOW DOES THAT CHANGE THINGS?

Gratitude is such a powerful weapon against darkness and depression. How powerful is it to spend five minutes even if you're not feeling it, to speak out loud: "Thank you for this new day. Thank you for the cross. Thank you that my sins are forgiven." God deserves all praise. We get to work alongside of him to build his kingdom, and my heart just wants to sing about it.

WHAT STEPS DO YOU CONTINUE TO TAKE TO MAKE SURE YOU'RE REMEMBERED AS ONE WHO LIVED WHAT YOU SANG?

First of all, I'm very open with my wife about all things, including my phone and computer. There's software that shows seven guys everything I look at. I've got a group of four leaders, and pastors, and really close friends. We're in contact all the time. I never travel alone and never with females. I have a church community, a pastor over me, great friends. I've got a wife who loves Jesus. I still mess up, but I view what I do with so much joy and gratitude. I get to do this. There's a responsibility when God gives you a voice to lead people in worship outside the walls of my church and I want to do all I can to protect it.

CONGRATULATIONS ON THE CD "I BELIEVE." TELL US ABOUT THE SONG.

It was written to help us shout about Jesus from the rooftops. These are truths believers can unite on and say with joy in our hearts that we believe in the mighty name of Jesus! I think the world is desperate to see and hear people who are full of hope, joy, and love tell about how Jesus changed their lives.

WHAT SONG WOULD YOU PLAY ME IF WE WERE DRIVING ALONG IN YOUR CAR?

"Sunday Is Coming." It's hard to tell the story of Easter in only so many words, but I looked at it thinking: *this is not the end. Let me tell you what happened next.* "The women came before the dawn to find that stone

already gone. When they looked inside, the angel said, why are you looking for the living among the dead?" He's alive! In concert, people stand and cheer because they are reminded of the victory we have in Jesus.

SOME SAY THAT THE HYMNS WERE WRITTEN TO INSTRUCT IN THEOLOGY; WORSHIP SONGS ARE WRITTEN TO MAKE MONEY.

I understand. Sometimes people say, "This is gonna be a hit on radio." I get it. But I also think it's a critical and jaded thing to say. It's amazing to hear a song you wrote in a little room with friends go on to become a prayer that people sing to Jesus without any idea that you wrote it. You hear that a song has been translated into Portuguese and is being sung in Brazilian churches; they don't know who we are. In the early church they were teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. It doesn't just say, teaching one another in hymns. Some songs are an overflow of people's lives that others want to sing. There's teaching and admonishing and encouragement. I don't write songs to make money. I write them because I love Jesus. And I know others want to sing about our living hope and how he came into the darkness to the underserving and his blood was the propitiation for our sins and by his stripes we are healed. So that's a big generalization.



Now and Then: Phil Wickham at 12 and at 39 (facing page). "I thank God for giving me the option to say 'yes'...The bigger things get, the smaller I feel."

MY FAVORITE SONG OF YOURS IS "HYMN OF HEAVEN." C.S. LEWIS SAID, "...THE CHRISTIANS WHO DID MOST FOR THE PRESENT WORLD WERE PRECISELY THOSE WHO THOUGHT MOST OF THE NEXT." HAVE WE FORGOTTEN OUR NEED FOR THAT HOPE?

Heaven should stay in the forefront of our minds. It's one of my favorite subjects. Paul talks about comforting each other with the truths that we will all be changed in the twinkling of an eye, the dead in Christ will rise, we will see Jesus face to face. What a moment! Every tongue will confess that he is Lord—all the rulers you can think of will bow. Heaven isn't some ethereal place where we float around on clouds. God will resurrect and renew all things and heaven will come to earth in one amazing holy matrimony. We'll be together forever and he will be King. I can't wait. We need to pray for the battles we're going through now. God tells us to. But sometimes we forget the bigger story. We know the end. Healing and restoration, resurrection and glory, life and renewal—all the things our hearts long for.

HOW DO YOU WANT YOUR KIDS TO REMEMBER YOU?

As someone who really loved Jesus. As someone who was accessible and listened. Someone who didn't prioritize my work over them, however big or important it seemed. Someone who loved their mom.

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE ON YOUR TOMBSTONE?

See you in heaven. See you later. ☞



To receive a copy of Phil's new CD "I Believe," clip and mail the form on page 8.

The Invitation

Our steps of faith on an uncertain path

CHRISTIAN AND KRISTYN MOGLER
WITH PAT MASSEY

Refugees. To the young couple awaiting their arrival, the very word conjured up stereotypes of people escaping war zones with only the clothes on their backs, poor, illiterate, in search of a better life where they could begin again. It soon became apparent that those flooding into their hastily assembled sanctuary did not fit that picture. Although weary from spending weeks in underground shelters and traumatized by the loss of home and livelihood, many were well-educated professionals arriving with carefully chosen personal belongings and multiple heavy suitcases. This was a stopping point for most, not a new start. To their hosts who were accustomed to normal, orderly lives seldom interrupted by global affairs, the sudden influx of foreigners was startling. How, they wondered, had they ever become involved in the terrible tragedy these families represented?

In 2005 young Christian Mogler left his home in Germany in search of a deeper knowledge of Christ and his Word. At Prairie College in Canada he found what he was looking for, even though the wide open farm lands surrounding the school stood in sharp contrast to the clustered villages of his homeland. That didn't matter; he just wanted to know Jesus better.

It would not come without challenge. "Mogi" as his new friends now called him, had limited funds to cover his school expenses and sometimes it was hard to believe that God would come through.

"Trust was something I struggled with," he remembers. "Friends and churches helped support me but some semesters I couldn't pay what I owed

until the day before I had to fly home to Germany. It was a hard lesson to learn, but God was teaching me that he is my provider."

That provision wasn't only financial. Through classes, student government, chapels, and other campus events, he became acquainted with a personable young Alberta girl named Kristyn Graber. As she witnessed Mogi's genuine faith, passion for the Lord, humour, and ability to connect with others, she began to think that perhaps they could become more than friends. Sure enough, despite their cultural differences, the two became inseparable and soon were making wedding plans.

They were married after Mogi graduated in 2010 and when Kristyn finished school in 2011, they faced a decision: should they seek out ministry opportunities in Canada or go back overseas? After receiving a personal message from a godly speaker and hearing the news that Mogi's mother had suffered a stroke, the choice was clear. His family needed them.

“When we first moved to Germany,” recalls Kristyn, “I was ready to change the world, eager to implement all I had learned at Prairie and jump into some type of church ministry. Little did I know that although I had just spent four years at a Bible school, the next four years would be a daily discipleship school. As I spent time learning the German language, caring for my ailing mother-in-law, and carrying out mundane household tasks, I experienced many highs and lows. God showed me that any time love is put into action, it’s an act of worship unto him. Ministry isn’t about a stage; it’s a posture of the heart. I am extremely thankful for that time of meeting new friends, adjusting to a new culture, and watching God prove his grace sufficient in my weakness.”

The couple had barely settled in when they sensed God nudging them to become self-employed—even though they had no business experience or savings. Intending to impact employees and customers alike with his gentle witness, Mogi started a landscaping company. The bold move seemed risky from a worldly perspective, he remembers, “but once again God proved himself to be our provider.” As the business grew and thrived, it seemed their need to depend on their Heavenly Father

They had no idea what the vacant space could be used for, just the persistent conviction that God was inviting them into a venture of faith.

was subtly becoming a thing of the past.

“I began to wonder,” recalls Mogi, “how I could still live in dependence on God and step out in trust if there was already provision for all of our needs. How could my faith still be relevant?”

God had an answer waiting.

In the village an old pizza restaurant with hotel rooms on the upper floors had stood empty for over a decade. Though it was a big financial commitment and, with a growing family they had little time to take on a big project, in 2021 they felt strongly that they should purchase it.

One night, not long afterward, Kristyn dreamed of a war. It seemed irrelevant—until six months later when hostilities in Ukraine exploded and terrified refugees began fleeing across

Europe’s borders. Germany was one of the countries that opened its doors to thousands of displaced families and the need for emergency shelters became critical.

“We knew we had an empty building that could provide a safe living space for those fleeing the war,” says Mogi, “but it was so old, the heating and water systems were unreliable, there was no furniture, nothing. God put it on our hearts to help anyway and promised that we wouldn’t have to do it alone.”

To their amazement, in just a few weeks, nearly two hundred people volunteered to help make the building liveable. They cleaned, painted, installed kitchenettes, and donated furniture, and supplies. In just three weeks the *Westheim Lighthouse* stood ready to welcome families in crisis.

“We felt so unprepared,” Mogi admits, “but suddenly we were operating our own non-profit ministry, thrown into leadership under pressure. There was no time to prepare or come up with concepts; we just had to get started and learn by doing.”

It was soon apparent to Kristyn and Mogi that people don’t become saints just because they have experienced tragedy.

Quarrels, complaints, trauma issues, and addictions surfaced. Families had been torn apart as husbands, sons and brothers stayed behind to fight. The elderly were finding a new culture and language especially challenging. And so volunteers came forward to assist with paperwork, medical appointments, translation and German lessons. The Moglers offered them more than a refuge where hurting people—desperately needing the comfort only God could give—were welcomed into a place of peace.

For Mogi and Kristyn, the journey of trust had been a constant through the years, only now the implications were so much greater. From student days to building a business and now a refugee centre, they have often wrestled with the



“Mogi” and Kristyn: One night Kristyn dreamed of a war. It seemed irrelevant—until six months later.

tension between a desire to step out with God and wanting to stay in a comfortable place. The story of Peter walking on the water in Matthew 14 has been a challenge to them. It was impossible in human terms, but he stepped out in faith in the Master he had learned to trust.

“I want to be like that,” says Mogi, “but I don’t want to step out of the boat. Since we started this project there have been many times when I felt like I was sinking, just as Peter did when he looked at the waves instead of keeping his focus on Jesus.”

The waves in our lives are high: financial needs, red tape as we prepare to renovate, wondering how to find the right partners who can help us run the ministry long-term. These waves represent the visible obstacles that seem more real than the invisible truth of the promises of God that we haven’t yet seen fulfilled. When we focus on the waves, we start doubting and we sink. We can’t walk on water unless we fix our eyes on Jesus.”

The Moglers have no doubt that God has more surprises in store for them. But they have come to realize that he will not leave them alone, that he makes the impossible possible, and that he invites them to grow in faith by leaving the familiarity of their comfort zones and joining him where he is.

“When we’re willing to do that,” believes Mogi, “we will find ourselves walking *with him* on the water, doing things beyond our imagination as we accept his invitation and obey his voice.” ❧

You can connect with the Moglers at mogler.christian@gmail.com.

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PRAIRIE COLLEGE
prairie.edu

MEET THE STUDENTS



JAEI ROBLES *No need to struggle alone.*

The warm sunshine of Costa Rica seemed a distant dream as nineteen-year-old Jael Robles gazed over an icy winter landscape and caught her breath in the frosty air. Had God really meant it when he pointed her to the frozen prairies of Alberta, Canada?

Sensing from a young age that God was directing her into international missions, Jael searched the internet for training that matched her deep desire to help others. The Intercultural Studies program at Prairie College seemed the perfect fit. With her family's encouragement, she was soon winging her way north to face an environment rife with obstacles that would test her commitment.

Her arrival in Alberta in the bitter winter cold of January was "one of the hardest things I had to adjust to," she remembers. "I miss Costa Rican food and my supportive family. It's hard to have them so very far away."

Language was another challenge. Jael struggled with English and it seemed she had to study twice as hard as other students. She soon found, however, that there was no need to struggle alone since the professors were more than willing to help her succeed.

Another highlight was getting to know students from other cultures and, despite significant differences, being drawn together by their faith. "It's mind-blowing for me," she smiles, "how we come from different parts of the world and yet are connected by our love for God."

As a teen, Jael witnessed first hand the tragic plight of immigrants, especially children. She now has a deep desire to work with displaced people by teaching and creating schools as safe places for them to find hope and a future.

"Coming here to Prairie has been so reassuring," she says. "It's encouraging to know that others believe in my dreams and I've been overwhelmed to see how God is lining up the details of his purposes for my life."



KORBAN MILLER *"I can trust him with my life & future."*

WHAT'S SOMETHING THAT MAKES YOU LAUGH?

A joke like, "How do you get a farm girl? A tractor."

A FAVORITE SONG?

"Remember This" by Home Free, and the words, "Some people look back and all they're left with / Are could haves, and should haves, and what ifs." Its theme of not wasting your life spurs me on to do something for God so I won't look back on life and regret what I've done. The memories aren't the only thing we have left, because we have Jesus and eternity to spend with him. When I'm discouraged and missing certain friends (as a missionary kid friends often come and go), I know I'll remember them and see them in heaven one day.

WHAT'S SOMETHING GOD HAS BEEN DOING IN YOUR LIFE?

He keeps reminding me to rely on him and not my own understanding. Often

I'm worried about what will happen in my first year at Prairie, but God has been slowly hammering into my thick head that I can trust him. Since grade six I have loved working with younger kids and youth. In grade eleven it clicked that I can serve God with that passion. My dad says that not many have that love for younger kids, and it's usually a sign that God has gifted you with something.

WHY PRAIRIE COLLEGE?

I always figured I would go to Prairie College because my parents went here. But more recently I realized I want to attend because it has a good reputation, I know the location, and most importantly, I know it is a place where I can grow in my faith while learning how to be a man who serves God in whatever ways he wants me to. For now I feel like he is leading me into youth ministry, and I will serve him there until he wants me to do something else. I'd like to develop the gift God has given me in a place where students and staff will help me along the way. **IS**

Of Bugs and the Wonder Girl



In three years Clairra has experienced a radical transformation. Once prone to coating our entire kitchen table in maple syrup, this former cyclone just helped me do the dishes. “Don’t leave on that trip, Grandpa,” she said, hugging me tight. “Stay here. I love you.”

Clairra is seven and lives life in wonder. She loves bugs. She collects bugs. She talks about bugs. When Clairra meets a new bug her eyes light up like Christmas morning and she introduces it to the entire family. Her interest in the creepy crawlies has me interested, and the more she teaches me about bugs, the more flabbergasted I am.

Did you know that spider silk is stronger than any man-made or natural fiber on earth? It’s true. The webbing of the Bark Spider is twenty-five times

powerlifting champion of the world is the horned dung beetle. It can hoist 1,141 times its own body weight. The reigning long jump champ is the humble flea, able to leap 150 times its body length—picture me hurdling three football fields in one hop.

Hearing about the planthopper causes my eyebrows to jump. When hopping, its long hind legs extend in a millionth of a second. If these legs don’t fire at exactly the same millisecond, the bug will spin wildly off course, like characters in a Bugs Bunny cartoon. So how are its legs timed so intricately? Researchers found at the base of each hind leg a gear with microscopic teeth. These gears interlock perfectly. As the bug pushes off, the gears spin at fifty thousand teeth per second, forcing each leg to move

itself into new cells that group into tissues, organs and body parts. And when that new creature—that stunningly beautiful butterfly—emerges, it is nothing like the leaf-chomping-worm-with-legs it was in a previous life. Guided by a brain the size of a pinhead, the majestic monarch butterfly will flutter 3,000 miles to Central America, often ending up at the same tree its parents landed on a generation or two earlier.

This great wonder of the world reflects the heart of its Creator who offers us the same thing: “...anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone, a new life has begun!” (2 Corinthians 5:17). It’s slow going at times, but because of Jesus’ finished work on the cross, by grace through faith we receive new life; we are being transformed—metamorphosed—into his image. The process may be messy, but the final product will be magnificent. And one day soon, we’re gonna fly.

Before I left on my trip, Clairra gave me two kisses, clasped her hands and prayed, “Dear Jesus, help the pilot not to crash Grandpa’s plane into the water. And help Grandpa have a good life up there. Amen.” Her love of life and her sadness at my leaving filled me with childlike wonder. So I kissed her twice and told her what is now her favorite joke: “Don’t eat caterpillars. You’ll get butterflies in your stomach.” ❧

Phil Callaway is a Prairie alumnus and host of Laugh Again Radio. His latest book is Jake and the Christmas Surprise. Visit him at laughagain.org

“Clairra’s interest in the creepy crawlies has me interested, and the more she teaches me about them, the more flabbergasted I am.”

stronger than steel. And the cockroach? It may be disgusting, but it can live a month without food, hold its breath for forty minutes, survive a week without its head, and withstand high doses of radiation. Therefore, in a nuclear apocalypse, most countries would still have fully functioning governments. (Pardon me, I couldn’t resist).

Pound for pound, insects are the strongest creatures on earth. The reigning

in exact unison, ensuring the planthopper a straight jump each and every time.

Clairra’s bug of the week is the caterpillar. This squirming eating machine consumes many times its body weight each day. Then hangs upside down from a twig or leaf, spinning itself a silky cocoon or molting into a shiny chrysalis. Inside its new home, the caterpillar releases enzymes that melt its tissues to mush. And then! The caterpillar soup arranges



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