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Dear friends and family,

A few months ago we discovered the 'Father Brown' detective stories. Their author, G K Chesterton, also wrote on Christian apologetics and was influential in the conversion of C S Lewis. During our summer vacation I (Philip) read through Chesterton's book: 'Orthodoxy'. Here are three



thoughts. You may wish to pick on one and chew it over:

(1) About the past: modern man, including the modern Christian, is prone to consider himself superior to those who have gone before him. Chesterton, a strong supporter of democracy, reasons: "Tradition means giving votes to the most obscure of all classes, our ancestors. It is the democracy of the dead. Tradition refuses to submit to the small and arrogant oligarchy of those who merely happen to be walking about." Elsewhere he wrote, "Don't ever take a fence down until you know the reason it was put up". There is no virtue in being

tied to the past, but neither is there virtue in ignoring its valuable contribution.

(2) About happiness: Humans long to be happy. Some make happiness their life goal. Chesterton relates happiness to thankfulness: "The test of all happiness is gratitude". To be grateful, we must acknowledge the existence and the generous action of a giver. How does your happiness differ from that of an atheist? Holy Scriptures exhort us to be both thankful and happy: "Be *joyful* always; pray continually; give *thanks* in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (1 Thes. 5:16-18). Perhaps thankfulness is the door to happiness. To enhance your joy, choose to be grateful!

(3) About desire to grow: Some people see Christians and the Church as sustainers of tradition, photocopyers of the past, guardians of museums. Chesterton argues that "the man who lives in contact with what he believes to be the living Church is a man always expecting... to see some truth that he has never seen before." Some read Scripture only for comfort – seeking to confirm their theological position. Others



read Scripture with hunger and expectation – seeking to hear God's voice, open to some truth they have never seen before. When you read it, *how* do you read it? We are told that God's Holy Spirit works as we read His word, "For the word of God is *living* and *active*" (Heb. 4:12). And those who have children have learnt to expect surprises from all that is *living* and *active*!

Family matters

Edward, now 19, finished high-school and last week left home to live and study at the EH for a year in Amersfoort. **Julie** celebrated her 15th birthday by going alone for a week to a Spanish speaking Christian camp in Mallorca. She loved it!





A milestone year: 2012

Last year was very significant for us as a couple: we both celebrated our 50th birthday, we celebrated 25 years of marriage, and recalled the Lord's goodness and faithfulness to us over 20 years of full-time Christian work. Our sincere thanks to those of you who have faithfully prayed for us and supported us over the years. To mark this special milestone in our life, we decided to engage in some mind stretching further studies. **Anneke** has now completed her first year of a 3 years pastoral counselling course. It involves visiting CPC in Dordrecht one Saturday per month. **Philip** has now completed the first year of a 2 year part-time Master's course at Tilburg University titled 'Christianity and Society'. It involves visiting the university for lectures one day a week. We both enjoy the challenge and notice we are not as young as we used to be!



Ministry: 2013

As a couple we seek opportunities where we can serve *together*. This year we enjoyed being part of the organising teams for a married-couples weekend in January, a youth event 'Meet and Discover' in March and a Missionary Retreat in France in July. Being part of an active assembly here in Eindhoven also demands our time and attention. Where possible, we enjoy doing pastoral visits together. The effects of Anneke's burn-out are still felt, requiring a calm pace in the work and occasional full stops. Philip has had the privilege of helping with some Bible teaching in some assemblies here in Holland, also making a contribution through short visits to Belgium, Switzerland, Germany, England, Myanmar and Norway. A new experience last month was to teach 8 hours to a group in Colombia via Skype. In April Philip completed a short book addressed to young people who have interest in finding a life partner: 'Pre-Marriage relationships'. The English and French versions are now freely available in pdf format. We expect the Dutch version to be published by Grace Publishing House later this year. The German version is nearly ready - and we are looking for a publisher.

Again, our sincere thanks for taking the time to read this, and to those who regularly pray for us and support us. May you, in your corner, also continue to grow and serve the Lord.

- Philip & Anneke