

NEW HORIZONS

in the ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

3 The Usual Steps in OPC
Church Planting //
by *John S. Shaw*

July 2015

10 The Mother-Daughter
Model // by *Benjamin W.
Miller*



How We Plant Churches in the OPC



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New Horizons

in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church

Editor: Danny E. Olinger
Managing Editor: James W. Scott
Editorial Assistant: Patricia E. Clawson
Cover Designer: Christopher Tobias
Proofreader: Sarah J. Pederson
Editorial Board: The Committee on Christian Education's Subcommittee on Serial Publications

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MTIOPC Homiletics instructors and participants express their gratitude for the service of Mrs. Flo Warnack in providing meals and overseeing the hospitality at Franklin Square OPC to them for the week of May 12-15. From the left around Flo: William Shishko, Arthur Fox, Joshua Lyons, Jonathan Shishko, Mike Myers, Frank Liu, Robert Smith, Douglas Clawson.



THE USUAL STEPS IN OPC CHURCH PLANTING



JOHN S. SHAW // The Lord Jesus Christ has given great promises to his church. He told Peter: “I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matt. 16:18). He calls his disciples to disciple the nations, and he sends them out with his authority and promises to be with them “always, to the end of the

age” (Matt. 28:18–20).

Paul reminds us that the Lord is head over all things, and that he exercises his power on behalf of the church, “which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all” (Eph. 1:19–22). Later in that same letter, we see another big promise: the gospel is preached “so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places” (Eph. 3:10).

The Lord possesses a special love for his church, the apple of his eye. And he promises to do great things through the church, the special instrument by which he displays his saving power in the world. He sends his church to the ends of the earth with the message of the gospel, gathering every last sheep into the fold through her ministry. He promises to accomplish great things in and through his church. These many promises give us every confidence to pursue the work of planting new churches with expectation of the Lord’s blessing. For the Lord promises to build and gather the church, and he promises

to display his glory through the church.

Therefore, we pursue the work of planting new churches with great expectation of the Lord’s blessing. He will build his church. Yet we also approach this task with the sober realization that this work will be difficult. Church planting is spiritual warfare—an assault on the gates of hell—and Satan does not surrender quietly. Paul reminds us of the difficult task before the church: “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places” (Eph. 6:12). The ministry of the church is always difficult, and this is no different for the work of church planting. In fact, church plants typically face unique challenges. New church plants, just like new flowers or trees, require special care and nurture.

Yet the Lord provides exactly the weapons necessary to fend off the attacks of the devil. He gives us the whole armor of God, so that we might “stand against the schemes of the devil,” so

that we might stand “strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might” (Eph. 6:10–11). Elsewhere, Paul reminds us that the weapons of our warfare are different from the weapons of the world. In fact, the weapons the Lord gives to his church are greater than the weapons of the world, for these weapons “have divine power to destroy strongholds” (2 Cor. 10:4–6). The Lord equips us with his Word, with the sacraments, with prayer (may we never forget the power the Lord unleashes through the prayers of the church; see Eph. 6:18–20 and Acts 4:23–31), and with every weapon necessary to do battle. He promises: “I will build my church.”

Therefore, we enter into the fray with great expectation of how the Lord might build and establish new congregations through the ministry of our denomination. William Shakespeare wrote of one of his characters: “Though she be but little, she is fierce!” In the eyes of the world, the church appears little and insignificant (and how much more a small denomination like ours). Yet we enter the fray with ferocity

because we stand strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.

We have good reason to pursue the planting of new churches, because we go with the promise and power of the Almighty. But there are questions for us to answer concerning the work of church planting. In particular, we must answer the question: how do we go about the planting of new churches?

The “Normal Method”

In 2002, the Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension published a manual (revised in 2008) with the title *Planting an Orthodox Presbyterian Church*. This book describes “the normal method employed by us in our church planting efforts” (p. 5).

It is important to acknowledge that there is more than one way to plant a new Presbyterian and Reformed church. In fact, two other articles in this issue describe other ways that churches are planted in the OPC. The Lord has blessed and continues to bless these other models in the establishing of biblical, confessional, Presbyterian churches within our denomination. And that should be our ultimate goal: by the grace of God to establish congregations committed to the doctrine, government, discipline, and worship laid out in the Bible.

Yet, for the past twenty-five years, a majority of our new works have developed in similar ways. These works have followed a six-step pattern.

First, we start with a group. Paul used this method in his ministry. The apostle and his fellow workers looked for gatherings of God-fearers, whether in the synagogue (Acts 17:2) or by the riverside “where [they] supposed there was a place of prayer” (Acts 16:13). As believers gather into a group, there is evidence of God at work that gives us reason to believe “there might be a special need for this church in this place at this time” (p. 22). A sincere and committed core group provides a helpful foundation at the beginning of a church plant.

Second, we provide elders to over-



Off to a good start: South Austin Presbyterian Church in Austin, Tex.

see the group. Once again, it seems that Paul followed this pattern. The apostle began the hard work of evangelism in Corinth right away (Acts 18:1–4), but it was only when Silas and Timothy arrived that Paul was “occupied with the word” (v. 5). He travelled with other elders who participated in the establishing and developing of new churches. From the beginning, we provide elders to oversee a work, because we are committed to planting Presbyterian congregations. These elders provide maturity and stability—necessary components to support and protect new, fragile works.

Third, the presbytery calls an organizing pastor to lead, mold, and shape the new work. Paul left Titus in Crete to “put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town” (Titus 1:5). The church planter takes on a difficult and challenging ministry. He must be a man of faith who sees in this small, young group the beginnings of the church they will become. He helps to establish patterns and practices that should characterize a faithful church. He does the work of an evangelist as the Lord adds new families to the work. He is the Lord’s instrument in molding a new church from infancy to maturity.

Fourth, we take time to let the group mature into a local body of Christ. Paul describes this slow and difficult process, telling his “little children” that he is “in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you” (Gal. 4:19). It takes time to develop ministries of

spiritual growth, evangelism and outreach, mercy, and administration. This process requires patience, perseverance, and prayer. Yet, in the life of many new churches, the fondest memories come during this time, and the strength of congregations can be directly connected to the struggles of this process.

Fifth, the presbytery organizes the group into a new and separate church. This is the product of that patient process of growth and maturity. The group grows in unity (Eph. 4:1–6) and in maturity (4:11–16), and more and more displays the qualities of a faithful congregation. When the presbytery recognizes the qualities that should characterize a local church in this new body, they ordain and install officers to care for the church. And they celebrate with a wonderful service of organization that gives thanks to God for his work in this newly formed congregation.

Sixth and finally, we expect this new church to take her place among the other congregations that helped to establish her. We encourage our new works, from the beginning, to participate in the work of the whole church—to support the work of foreign missions, home missions, Christian education, and diaconal ministry by their prayers and their giving. The way a church is begun usually determines how she will function for a long time. So we challenge our new works from the beginning to participate with the rest of the denomination in the work of the gospel. When new works

are organized as particular churches, we expect them to become fully involved in the work of their presbytery and the life of their denomination.

Examples of Blessing

These six steps summarize the most common pattern for how new works develop in the OPC. There are many examples of the Lord blessing this model in the past, and there continue to be examples of the Lord blessing this model in the present:

Providence Presbyterian Church in West Lebanon, New Hampshire, began as a Bible study under the leadership of Tim Herndon. Now they meet in their own building every Sunday under his ministry.

Heritage Presbyterian Church in Royston, Georgia, began with several families meeting for Bible study and for worship with the guidance of Lacy Andrew, a regional home missionary. They continue to grow and develop under the ministry of Mike Myers, their church planter.

Anaheim Hills Presbyterian Church started with a Bible study led by Chris Hartshorn, a student at Westminster Seminary California. Chris was



Fellowship meal at Heritage Presbyterian Church in Royston, Ga.

installed as an evangelist after graduation, and he serves as the church planter for this growing young work.

Providence OPC in Tulsa, Okla-

ship of chaplain Tim Power and later approached the local presbytery about their desire for a new church. Now they are meeting for weekly worship with



Early core group at Anaheim Hills Presbyterian Church in Anaheim Hills, Calif.



Officers being ordained at Providence OPC in Tulsa, Okla.

the guidance of Dave Crum, the presbytery's regional home missionary.

There are many other examples of how the Lord continues to raise up groups, and how the presbyteries of the OPC serve and develop these groups. Church planting is a spiritual endeavor that depends on the gracious work of the Lord Jesus Christ. He promises to build and establish his church, and we look for opportunities to faithfully participate in that mission endeavor. Please pray that the Lord would continue to bless us with opportunities to establish biblical, Reformed, and

[Continued on page 8]

PARACHUTE CHURCH PLANTING



ERIC B. WATKINS // Church planters, through one humbling means or another, come to the realization that though God is pleased to use his servants, it is God who ultimately is the church planter, and any success is due to his grace. God alone gets all the credit and the glory. Only by God's grace are churches planted and

eventually become established congregations.

The story of Covenant Presbyterian Church in St. Augustine, Florida, is an unusual one. It does not fit the description of a mother-daughter church plant, nor did it begin with a well-established core group. It is what might be described as something close to a “parachute drop” or a “strategic church plant.” These terms are not frequently used in the OPC, and I certainly do not want to suggest that this paradigm is any better than the others. But I would point out that it is not as unfamiliar as it may seem.

If you were to peruse one of our history books, *The Orthodox Presbyterian Church 1936–1986*, you would find the stories of many of our older churches and their formation. It is encouraging to learn that many of our churches not only had fairly modest beginnings, but also began through the work of evangelism, Bible studies, etc. In other words, it could be suggested that in the past, churches were planted as small core groups, which grew through evangelism and outreach into what they are today. Prior to writing this article, I contacted some of our regional home missionaries, who confirm that such efforts in “strategic church planting” or “para-

chuting” certainly are a part of the story of church planting in the OPC.

When Heather and I moved to St. Augustine (just south of Jacksonville) in December 2007, we had a fifteen-month-old daughter and a two-month-old son in our arms. We unpacked boxes in between changing diapers and vice versa. A month after we moved into our rental home, we began a Bible study in our living room on a Friday night with the few contacts that we had. That Bible study grew quickly to about thirty people in a month and fifty or more within a few months. We held our first

worship service in May 2008, and by God's grace the church continued to grow to the point of becoming an organized congregation. As I write this, Covenant Presbyterian Church just celebrated her seventh birthday, and did so with a “picnic on the grounds” of the property we just bought: a beautiful six acres on a major highway with two buildings, one for a sanctuary and the other for Christian education and fellowship. We praise God for our new home!

There have been abundant joys and sobering challenges along the way.



A welcome sign in St. Augustine, Fla.



Covenant Church's new property (two buildings) shortly after closing

When the presbytery called us to this area and its Home Missions Committee began to discuss my job description, it was very clear that there was no church for me to pastor yet. I was being called as an *evangelist* and not as a pastor. I'd like to underscore this: when church planters are called, they are not pastors until there is an organized church; rather, they are *evangelists*. This became the focus of my work. Workdays were filled with trying to find different ways, not only to make new contacts in the community, but also to look for evangelistic opportunities with people. To be honest, I was terrified at first. There were many times when I wondered if I had lost my mind (others wondered the same), and yet God did remarkable things. He began opening doors to not only share the gospel with unbelievers, but also to discuss the beauties of the Reformed faith and the distinctives of the OPC.

Over the years, evangelism has continued to be an important part of CPC's identity. We have held evangelism classes for the congregation, and are about to start another. Seeing people come to Christ has not only been a tremendous encouragement to me, but has also greatly encouraged the body to engage the idea of being salt and light. To this day, we continue to have a fruitful ministry to a nearby secular college, from which we have seen not only new converts but also a few marriages. We

run a Bible program one afternoon a week at the public school where we currently meet for worship. I am involved in both ministries, and so are people from our church. Doing evangelism with the body is not only a great privilege for me as pastor, but also edifying to the members of Covenant. There is a man in our church with a jail ministry to imprisoned adolescents. There is a sweet, retired couple that loves going to Walmart and handing out tracts together. Others have simply been warm and enthusiastic about the church and sought opportunities to invite people to come and worship with us. The point is that the church as a whole has been involved in the work of planting this church, not just the church planter. Church planters need to reflect on this more and consider how to cultivate this as part of the identity of fledgling works.

Another joy has been the development of relationships with area pastors. When we moved here, we were eager for

Christian fellowship. It also meant a lot to me that we not "sneak into town," but rather get to know area pastors to talk about our church plant, ask for advice, and ask if we could pray for one another. To this day, I continue to meet with pastors from other denominations and am very thankful for these friendships, as they have meant a lot to my family and me.

One particular story is worth telling. Some time after we moved here, we got to know the local Evangelical Free Church pastor and his family. They are dear, godly folks with kids a little older than ours. The pastor invited me to preach at his church. After I preached and before I sat down, he came up and put his arm around me and prayed for my family and our church plant. He then went on to ask people in his church to pray about whether or not God might be calling them to be a part of our church plant—and if so, they should not feel bad about joining with us. It brings tears to my eyes to write this, as I was simply over-

whelmed by this expression of love, faith, and generosity. How many of us (would I?) would even consider doing such a thing for another pastor?

Covenant has also had her challenges. For many of our members, CPC is their first confessionally Reformed church, and for a good handful it is their first church—period. Very few of our members were in the OPC before becoming part of CPC, and this is



Eric and Heather Watkins with Kirra and Carl



Inside the new building at the Covenant Church picnic

true of all our ruling elders and deacons. While it has been wonderful to see many people come from different directions, it is also quite clear that we are still in the process of growing into our confessional theology and Presbyterian polity. We are in a wonderful presbytery and learning what it means to be functionally Presbyterian through various means, including giving 100 percent of the askings and leaning on the presbytery for help in working through difficult matters. It has been humbling to see that some of the best teaching moments for what it really means to be Presbyterian have come through times of difficulty. God has shown us that we really need our presbytery, and being a part of both it and our denomination is a privilege that we are appreciating more and more.

One of the biggest challenges lying before us now is learning to function as an established church and not a church plant. A church plant is like a tree that comes up as a frail sapling and eventually (by God's grace) matures into a tree. It grows its rings slowly, through various seasons. Along these lines, there is a lot of information out there about church planting; there is not nearly as

much on how to round the corner of this next phase with sufficient infrastructure, administrative plans, developing discipleship ministries, etc. My own job description seems to be changing, whether I want it to or not. After all, I am foremost a pastor now, and secondarily an evangelist.

It seems only fitting to conclude by saying that it has been simply exhilarating to see God's grace at work in the planting of this unlikely church. God has not only planted us, but has watered, sheltered, and cared for us. We are deeply grateful for his grace. As CPC

moves into this new stage of her life, we hope to be a congregation that continues to grow in our relationship to the presbytery and denomination. We particularly look forward to sharing in the work of planting other new churches in our presbytery, whichever model is used. We are here, humanly speaking, because of the generosity and support of others. Many who were here from the beginning continue to be amazed at the amount of time and energy that was put into our church plant by other members of our presbytery in helping us get established. As we have freely received, we hope now to be able to freely give. Lastly, we hope to offer some encouragement that while this model of church planting may seem challenging, it is not entirely new, and by God's grace it can even thrive. □

The author is the pastor of Covenant Presbyterian Church in St. Augustine, Fla.

THE USUAL STEPS

[Continued from page 5]

Presbyterian churches—churches with a zeal for evangelism and a desire to participate in the great harvest, as the Lord gathers and builds his church to the glory of his great name. □

The author is the general secretary for the Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension.



People who attended the first worship service of Yuma OPC in Yuma, Ariz.

KEEPING THE FAITH IN COLLEGE



JUDITH M. DINSMORE // In the film *God's Not Dead*, an articulate Christian student spectacularly defends his faith in front of a disbelieving class and a hostile professor. It is no secret that secular colleges and universities, and sometimes even their Christian counterparts, are leading the cultural movement away from faith.

But for some college students, standing against the cultural norm and defending their faith is much less about fireworks in the classroom and much more about quiet persistence in building and maintaining relationships.

Benjamin Van Dyke, a student at Michigan State University who grew up in the OPC, was a senior last year, but still lived in a freshman-filled dorm. A member of Spartan Christian Fellowship (SCF) for all four years, Ben has a passion for sharing the gospel. He explained that the dorms facilitate friendships, which lead to conversations: "The reason [SCF] wants students to live on campus is that then you immediately have relational capital with other students. We try to share the gospel, but also share our lives."

Sharing lives is perhaps easier in college than anywhere else, as students live, study, and eat in close proximity. And students, especially freshmen, are often ready to talk. "College is definitely a unique time," Ben said. "People start asking real questions like who am I? and what am I all about? That gives you a huge 'in,' because people are ready to ask questions." Every week he prays together with a group from his dorm.

For junior Laura Dowds, however, engagement hasn't always been attain-

able. A student at the University of Illinois at Springfield and daughter of OPC pastor Terry Dowds, Laura finds most other students accepting, but not engaging. "It's a really liberal school, so they're really open-minded; they're like, 'You can believe that; I don't really care whether you're a Christian or not.'"

Her professors run the gamut from accepting of her faith to, yes, hostile. "In my very first class ever," Laura shared, "my professor made us go around and say the three things that are most important to us, so of course I had to say, my faith [and] God are most important to me. Immediately, the room changed." After that, the professor would do things like curse in class and then look at Laura "to see what my reaction was."

On the other hand, she had another professor, who taught her literature classes, whose consideration impressed Laura. "Anytime something came up regarding Christianity, he would ask my

opinion on it, and ask my opinion on the discussion in class."

Iron-Sharpening Relationships

In fact, Laura said, thanks to the postmodern ideology on campus, which always tolerates, if it doesn't engage, she sometimes feels more comfortable with the non-Christians she interacts with than with those in her on-campus Christian group.

"It's kind of sad when non-believers are more accepting of your views than other Christians," she reflected. Although she stressed her appreciation for the Christian group and the friends it brought her, Laura finds it frustrating when fellow believers cannot get along. "How are we going to reach out to other people if all we're doing is arguing? It might not actually be fighting, but that's what it looks like to other people when we're always debating." These debates often appear on the

[Continued on page 19]



Laura Dowds

THE MOTHER-DAUGHTER MODEL

// BENJAMIN W. MILLER



Pastor Miller (left) greeting a worshipper outside the meeting place of Trinity Church

I have trouble calling myself a church planter, because the way Trinity Church was planted—as a “daughter” congregation of a strong, established church—made it so easy, compared to situations faced by many of my colleagues. We started off with sixty to seventy people in our core group, including three elders besides myself. Thus, from day one Trinity felt more like an established church than a group hoping to become a church.

This is, I think, one of the great strengths of the mother-daughter model of church planting: it allows for significant personnel and financial resources from the start. I would like briefly to tell you our story, and explain how the strengths of this model worked for us. I would also like to tell you about some challenges we encountered along the way and lessons we learned as we worked through these challenges.

I came to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Franklin Square, New York, in 2005—first as an intern, then as the associate pastor. That church was in the middle of a growth explosion at the time, which continued for the next several years. We were pretty much bursting at the seams and even had to experiment with two morning worship services.

Space was not our only challenge. Long Island is an expensive area, and we began to find that, even with a strong annual budget, it was increasingly difficult to pay two full-time pastors. Both were needed to care for so many sheep, but both had families and required income accordingly. Without room for growth and a corresponding potential for increase in tithes and offerings, this presented a problem.

Both the session and the congregation in Franklin Square had church planting in their blood, having started numerous plants before. Discussions began in 2010 about a large group of families in eastern Nassau and western Suffolk Counties that could form the core of yet another plant. I had worked closely with these families in my five years as a pastor, so there

was a comfort level on their part with my being the organizing pastor of the new work.

Eventually it was decided that we would launch in September 2011. The size of our core group, and the size of the congregation out of which we were coming, gave us two advantages during the year leading up to the plant. First, we had lots of available hands to help with logistics—for example, the all-important work of locating a rental space. It wasn't just a lonely evangelist doing everything on his own. This allowed me to continue ministering to the entire flock in Franklin Square right up until our launch date. Second, we were able to split the tithes and offerings in Franklin Square for several months before the launch (the tithes of the core group members being designated for Trinity), which allowed us to build up some financial reserves before opening our doors.

All of these great blessings being noted, the mother-daughter model also presented certain challenges. Most of them can be summed up in a single word: *expectations*.

When forming a new group out of an existing church, it's unavoidable that both those who join the new work and those who remain behind will have expectations about the character of the new work. It's also inevitable that such expectations will be informed by comparisons of the daughter with the mother. Some will want or expect the daughter to be exactly like the mother. Others will want or expect the daughter to be different (to varying degrees) from the mother. Some will want more change than actually occurs in the new work; others will want less change than actually occurs. Both sets of desires and expectations can potentially create resistance to the change (or lack thereof) that actually occurs once the church plant is off the ground.

It so happens that in church life, as in biological life, no daughter is ever exactly like her mother. The goal for a healthy child is not to be a clone of her parent, but to carry the strength, wisdom, and virtues of her parent into her own life, in her own circumstances. There is always danger in the

process of begetting (to use a different metaphor) that the one begotten will throw off the gifts of the begetter, or that the begetter may not allow for the growth and uniqueness of the one begotten. We felt these inevitable tensions in planting Trinity. During this time, my mentor and father in the ministry, Bill Shishko, pastor at Franklin Square, kept clearly before us all that Trinity would not be exactly what people had come to expect and savor at Franklin Square. Rather, it would be a unique work of the Lord with its own personality, even as it continually drew on the rich resources, experience, and wisdom of its mother congregation.

An enormously helpful move made by the Franklin Square elders early in the process of planting Trinity was the formal organization of an overseeing session for the work. The session was composed of the four Trinity elders-to-be, including myself. This allowed me to work intensively with our future leaders for months before we launched. We had a series of meetings in which I introduced our men to the vision for the plant, including our form of worship (which would be different from what we were accustomed to), the focal emphases of our philosophy of ministry, and the sort of ethos or culture we would try to encourage in our body life. It was essential that we be of one mind about these things as leaders before we then placed our vision before the core group.

In August, we held three core group meetings in my home, laying out clearly the sorts of things (both familiar and new) that people could expect from the first worship service. We were able to practice our new form of worship, answer lots of good questions, and confirm that everyone was enthusiastically on board, so there were no surprises when we began.

I really can't overemphasize the importance of this kind of careful preparatory work in a mother-daughter plant. Leaders in both congregations must foresee that the change for those joining the new work will be not only new (that's true in all church plants) but also *disruptively* new. People will be shaken out of comfortably familiar patterns as they adjust to a new location, a new ministry context, different leadership, different ways of doing things, different needs, and a different congregational personality. They need time and help to anticipate the coming changes, to ask questions, and to start gearing up, not only mentally but also emotionally, for the new mission to which they are being called. It is a failure of leadership to downplay, ignore, or run roughshod over the expectations that people naturally have when coming out of a strong existing church—whether they expect less change or more change than will actually occur in the new work.

I should mention one other challenge we encountered

after we launched Trinity. It's a great blessing of the mother-daughter model to begin with a strong congregation. The challenge comes in allocating pastoral time between ministering to a large number of existing sheep and seeking the lost who have not yet been found. I've struggled in the four years since we planted Trinity to make time for seeking the unchurched and the underchurched. Unlike other contexts, in which an evangelist can focus almost exclusively on evangelism, it's hard for a mother-daughter evangelist to spend lots of time with people who aren't yet part of the church.

I don't think this is a problem without a solution. If evangelism is in the DNA of the core group, then there are many sowers of the seed of the gospel. I continually tell our members that my job is to equip them to seek and disciple the lost. I'm not the star player on our team; I'm just a coach. *They* are the players who go out and gather in Jesus' name.

It gives me great joy to say that they're doing this, and our little flock is growing by God's grace and largely by word of mouth. Last November we were able to move into a much larger facility (that is much less expensive!). We're starting to fill it up, and are even in the early stages of talking about bringing on an intern/associate with a view to planting our first daughter church. God is good!

The author is the pastor of Trinity OPC in Syosset, N.Y.



Outside Trinity Church after worship

Home Missions Today

For up-to-date Home Missions news and prayer updates, e-mail HomeMissionsToday@opc.org.
New editions: July 1, 15, 29.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

SUNDAY SCHOOL IN SMALLER CHURCHES

// PATRICIA E. CLAWSON



A Sunday school skit at Grace OPC in Wasilla, Alaska

Considerable challenges face small congregations that seek to provide Sunday school programs for a small number of children spanning many grades. They may have few classrooms and few teachers available. They often must combine several ages into one class, leaving teachers to find curriculum that educates both readers and nonreaders, writers and nonwriters. Instructors struggle to help the youngest understand the lesson while keeping the oldest from being bored.

Several Orthodox Presbyterian churches have met these challenges head-on.

Grace OPC in Wasilla, Alaska, usually has enough children to divide their Sunday school classes into four age-related sections, with their teens joining the adults. Sometimes the church has enough students for separate classes, but only enough teachers and classrooms for three.

"It's not ideal, mainly because it's difficult to find a curriculum that will work well for everyone in such a diverse group, readers and nonreaders," said Sunday school teacher Molly Henry. "It is challenging to have class activities, because they are not all capable of working through worksheets and written instructions. It is difficult to challenge the more-advanced kids sufficiently and not be over the heads of the less-advanced kids."

The Wasilla church confronts this problem, in part, by having students volunteer to read the stories and instructions out loud. This volunteerism keeps poor readers from feeling pressured or embarrassed, said Henry.

The church once had kids aged six through ten in one class. The teacher geared the material to the youngest so the nonreaders weren't left out, encouraged the older students to help the younger ones, and asked questions relating to the material to those veering off on tangents or chatting with neighbors. "It reengaged the children in a positive way rather than moving directly to a negative discipline approach," said Henry.

Covenant Presbyterian Church in Brighton, Michigan, typically has at least sixteen children attend Sunday school. They are divided into four groups, for preschool and kinder-

garten, elementary school, middle school, and high school. The teachers at those levels often have homeschooling experience and know what to expect and how to work around problems, said Pastor Douglas Doll. Helpers are assigned to the preschool and kindergarten class, so that different activities occur within the same class.

About twenty-two children attend Sunday school at Park Hill Presbyterian Church in Denver, Colorado. They are divided into classes for preschool, younger and older elementary grades, and junior high grades six and beyond. The teaching material is geared to the middle reading and age group. To keep students focused and not a distraction, the junior and junior high teachers give the more advanced students additional assignments, such as researching Scripture. One teacher allows the students to read "in character," said Laura Hill, Christian education committee chair at Park Hill.

At Sterling Presbyterian Church in Sterling, Virginia, only four children attend Sunday school. When they have a combined class, teachers seek one-on-one interaction with younger students, work alongside the older kids' parents, and encourage readers to "buddy up" with nonreaders. Teachers engage the older students while making extra accommodation for the younger ones, said Pastor Philip Proctor.

The Right Curriculum

The Wasilla church uses Great Commission Publication's curriculum, which the OPC coproduces with the Presbyterian Church in America. They find that the ideal combination of grades reflects GCP's divisions: grades 1–2, 3–4, and 5–6. If necessary, the church will divide the classes by their reading and writing abilities, combining grades 3–6. "In our opinion, it works much better to have the classes divided in such a way to be able to use the GCP materials, as it makes the job of the teacher so much easier," Henry said. "You can provide a mixture of instruction where the majority hits the middle of the road, but you offer some more advanced material to target the oldest kids (and challenge the youngest), and some material geared towards the youngest so they don't feel left out."

The Brighton church uses GCP's Kid's Quest Catechism Club materials for their preschool and kindergarten class, and GCP's Show Me Jesus curriculum for the elementary and middle school classes, targeting the middle range for each class. "We encourage graciousness in accepting where others might be," said Doll. Teachers for the high school and adult classes create their own curriculum.

Finding Enough Teachers

Beyond finding the right curriculum, small congregations also struggle to secure enough qualified teachers. The Wasilla church encouraged team teaching when volunteers were hesitant to teach. Once when a teacher was needed, someone volunteered who hadn't been considered.

The Brighton church has committed teachers "who love the prospect of discipling children in the faith," said Doll. "Sometimes, when we recognize someone with a gift not being used, we will speak directly to him or her and encourage them to use their gifts for teaching."

The Denver church has difficulty finding teachers because their members wear many hats and have so many commitments, said Hill. Without enough teachers, the junior highs have been combined with the senior highs.

The Sterling church's difficulties in finding teachers led them to drop classes for the youngest children. They also combined the kids in one class to avoid teacher burnout, said Proctor. Their five high school students attend the adult class, even though it is intimidating for them to analyze the Westminster Confession alongside professional attorneys.

Proctor advises churches to review their Sunday school programs annually: "Don't be afraid to add a program, drop a program, or reinstitute the same program. These are just tools in a toolbox—use the one you need at the moment."

Brent Evans, the pastor of Momence OPC in Momence, Illinois, laments that having fewer kids in Sunday school means that fewer kids are being trained as Christ's disciples. Yet in small classes the teachers form lasting bonds with their students.

Putting the dilemma of having few children in a small church into perspective, Doll adds: "Have patience and work with what the Lord has provided. He is the Lord of the church."

☆ Congratulations

The **Shorter Catechism** has been recited by:

- **Will Clifford**, *Grace OPC, Vienna, VA*
- **Jessica Grove**, *Grace OPC, Vienna, VA*
- **Havalah Yarashus**, *Grace OPC, Vienna, VA*

The **Children's Catechism** has been recited by:

- **Elyse Chase**, *Grace OPC, Vienna, VA*

ABCs of PRESBYTERIANISM

All the King's Men (1)

Larry Wilson

What are the New Testament church offices? Initially Christ gave the church offices like apostle and prophet (Eph. 4:11). The apostles and prophets were church officers:

The mystery of Christ ... was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has *now* been revealed to his holy *apostles and prophets* by the Spirit ... that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus. (Eph. 3:4–6)

But these apostles and prophets served the unique purpose of being the foundation of the New Testament church:

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on *the foundation of the apostles and prophets*, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone. (Eph. 2:19–20)

The church is like a building, a holy temple in which God dwells. In order to build a building, the workers must first lay a foundation. Then what? Do they keep laying the foundation over and over? No, first they lay the foundation, and then they build the superstructure on it. This is why the foundational offices of apostle and prophet were extraordinary and temporary. We no longer look for apostles and prophets (in that technical sense) today. The foundation has been laid.

The ordinary and continuing offices in the church are those which our Lord gives for the ongoing ministries of the Word, of rule, and of mercy. We call those who minister in mercy and helps "*deacons*" (see 1 Tim. 3:8ff.). We call those who share in the rule of the church "*elders*" or "church governors" (see 1 Tim. 3:1ff.; 1 Pet. 5:1ff.; Heb. 13:17). The Bible distinguishes those elders whom Christ has called to labor also in the Word and teaching from the ruling elders (see 1 Tim. 5:17). We call them "*ministers of the Word*." Sometimes we call them "evangelists" (from Eph. 4:11), sometimes "pastor-teachers" (from Eph. 4:11), but mostly we call them "ministers" or "pastors" (cf. Form of Government, V.3).

● Out of the Mouth . . .

After our pastor preached on the Holy Trinity, I asked my children what the sermon was about. My three-year-old daughter, Trinity, exclaimed: "It was about me!"

—Tim Ferguson
Bellmawr, N.J.

Note: If you have an example of the humorous "wisdom" that can come from children, please send it to the editor.

MY TEACHING MINISTRY AT ADORATION SCHOOL

// OCTAVIUS DELFILS



Pastor Octavius Delfils (left) with missionary Benjamin Hopp (right)

One interesting aspect of working on the mission field is that the work of ministry is multidimensional. It involves mainly preaching and teaching the Word and making disciples, but it also includes several other aspects of ministry. When put together, these contribute to the multifaceted work of building God's kingdom in the cultural context of Haiti.

An important additional aspect of my ministry in Port-au-Prince is teaching Bible to students in middle and high school. During the past three years, I have been blessed in this aspect of my ministry. I have been teaching seventh grade through tenth grade at Adoration Christian School, where the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Delmas in Port-au-Prince meets. Because of this combination of space, these two ministries complement one another. Since its inception, the school has desired to implement the doctrinal teaching of the church in its Bible curriculum. So the staff needed to receive training in Reformed theology and Christian worldview. The Bible curriculum needed to be adapted for the students to use.

Since I began teaching Bible, the Adoration School community has become one of the church's main missionary fields for evangelism and discipleship. I have four classes and a separate group of between fifty and sixty students to teach every week. I spend two hours with each group every week. I also have the opportunity to meet with parents at their quarterly meeting and share the gospel with them.

Teaching these students has been particularly fruitful during the past two years. Over time I have been able to make good friends among these young people, and it has become easier for me to share the gospel with them, invite them to come to church, and challenge them about the faith. I can focus on some particular cases at a time, week by week. I sow the seed and wait on the Lord to cause the seed to grow in their heart. It takes time, as you know, but slowly the Lord is working, and in his time he is calling some of them to faith.

One time three students visited my office together during recess. They said, "You talked to us very often about Jesus. Now we would like to know more about him, and we want to receive him as our Lord and Savior." I was glad to take time to open the Word with them. Two of these students are now communicant members of our church.

Last year I received a similar visit from a young man in seventh grade. He is now coming to church regularly and is participating in our current membership class. There is a girl whom I spent months inviting to church, and she found all kinds of excuses not to come. She finally came one Sunday. She was baptized in the church last year.

Teaching the classes takes time that could be used for other ministry, but it is a continuation of the work of the church in that it brings, by God's grace, more souls into the fold. Some students receive the Word and go to other churches. I continue to encourage them to visit us every now and then, so that they can be exposed to the preaching of the church. I spend time with Adoration School staff and teach them every time they have a seminar on pedagogy, and they are exposed to Reformed teaching for a few hours during these seminars. I reach the parents through an evangelistic message every time they have a gathering at the school. Many of our regular church visitors come from these parents and students. Some have not yet decided to become church members, but they continue to come to our Sunday morning worship services. It is encouraging to see that they are sitting regularly under the preaching and teaching of the Word. You never know what the Lord might do to bring them into his fold.

With the teaching comes another aspect of my ministry. The school needs materials to teach these students. But no Bible curriculum for Christian schools is currently available in French. It is even harder to find Reformed teaching materials. These need to be translated from English and adapted to our needs, or else new materials must be written in the cultural context of Haiti. It is not easy to get materials that are sound



Part of the Port-au-Prince congregation

doctrinally, strong academically, and adapted culturally.

So I decided to start producing Bible teaching materials for my classes. In agreement with the school leaders, I wanted material that is biblical, Christ-centered, and Reformed. I started producing these materials in December 2013. I now have a study guide for seventh grade, one for eighth grade, and one being compiled for ninth grade. The first manual covers the Pentateuch, the second covers the historical books from Joshua through 2 Samuel, and the third covers 1 Kings through Esther. I hope that this series will continue to be developed to cover the whole Bible, with one manual for each class, from grade seven to grade thirteen.

Most of the students are reading their Bibles and completing the questions in the manual. They receive Bibles at the beginning of the year, and they have to keep them during their years at the school. We are studying one book at a time. They have to read the Bible chapter by chapter and complete the questions for each section of the manual. They have to read the material, study key verses, and be ready to participate in class discussions. Some students are more eager than others to read the text, complete all the questions, and bring questions to the class. Others need to be challenged to participate more. Overall, the teaching is a great experience for both the class and me.

It is a great joy to come to church and see students who are growing in the faith. There are wonderful opportunities to visit them at home and speak with their parents. I can then share the gospel with the family and invite them to church. I love this aspect of my teaching ministry, which opens many doors for me to share the gospel with many different people. The teaching I do builds trust with young people, which allows them to come to me with their questions about the Bible, the gospel, and the Christian life.

My work with students at Adoration School presents a tremendous opportunity to offer counseling, to pray with them, and to be part of the delicate process of bringing back to the right path some lives that have already started to slide in the direction of the Evil One. Some who had no hope are seeing the light of the gospel. This teaching ministry is part

of the hope for a new Haiti. The true hope for this hopeless country is the preaching of the gospel. The hope is Christ and his church. Teaching these classes gives me the opportunity to bring the gospel to many needy souls who are dying without hope. This opportunity is especially valuable because the link with the ministry of the church is so visible.

Please pray that the Holy Spirit would continue to use the teaching of the Word to bring the light of the gospel to these needy young people, to their parents, and to their community. We covet your prayers for the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Haiti, so that the hope of the gospel may continue to shine through its preaching and teaching.

The author, a PCA minister supported by his presbytery, is an associate missionary of the OPC Haiti Mission.

What's New

// Appointments

Miss S. L. Z. (Manor Presbyterian Church, PCA, New Castle, Del.) has been appointed to serve as a missionary associate to Asia for one year beginning in August.

Mr. Jesse L. Van Gorkom (Alderwood Community Church, Lynnwood, Wash.) has been reappointed to serve as a missionary associate to Nakaale, Uganda, for one year beginning in August. His bride, **Mrs. Hannah Springer Van Gorkom**, has also been appointed.

The missionary associate appointment of **Mr. and Mrs. Christopher J. (Chloe) Verdick** (New Life Presbyterian Church, PCA, San Diego, Calif.) to Nakaale, Uganda, has been extended for one year beginning last May.

// Comings/Goings

Rev. and Mrs. M. are concluding their yearlong furlough in the U.S. and plan to return to their labors in Asia in early August.

Missionary associates **Miss C. M. B.** (Cornerstone OPC, Ambler, Pa.) and **Mr. T. W. D.** (Covenant OPC, Barre, Vt.) have completed their labors in Asia and are planning to return to the U.S. early this month and marry later this summer.

Missionary associate **Miss T. M. DeJ.** (Westminster OPC, Hamill, S.Dak.), after six years of service in Asia, plans to return to the U.S. early this month.

Miss Mary F. York (Bonita OPC, Bonita, Calif.) completed her two-year term as a missionary associate to the Czech Republic and returned to the U.S. in June.

LAVISH GRACE, LAVISH GIVING

// DOUGLAS L. WATSON

Grace

“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, which He lavished upon us” (Eph. 1:7–8). Grace: the favor of Jesus Christ given to us as a free gift, the forgiveness of sins that he purchased for us by shedding his precious blood upon the cross. G.R.A.C.E.: Gift Received At Christ’s Expense. God’s favor given to us in Christ and for his sake is a free gift—lavish indeed! Jesus Christ bought it at an infinite price; he gave it freely with infinite abundance—lavish indeed! He gave us this gift out of his infinite riches of grace—lavish indeed. Picture a boundless sea with a limitless supply of the cleansing water of life, poured out upon us sinners in abundance. This is the lavish gift of grace that Jesus Christ has given every one of us for whom he has shed his blood. It is one of the “unfathomable riches of Christ.”

Gratitude

How could such a gift fail to be received and answered with gratitude? “Oh give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; for His loving-kindness is everlasting. Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom He has redeemed from the hand of the adversary.... Let them give thanks to the LORD for His lovingkindness, and for His wonders to the sons of men! Let them also offer sacrifices of thanksgiving, and tell of His works with joyful singing” (Ps. 107:1–2, 21–22). “For all things are for your sakes, that the grace which is spreading to more and more people may cause the giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God” (2 Cor. 4:15). “Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!” (2 Cor. 9:15). “Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give

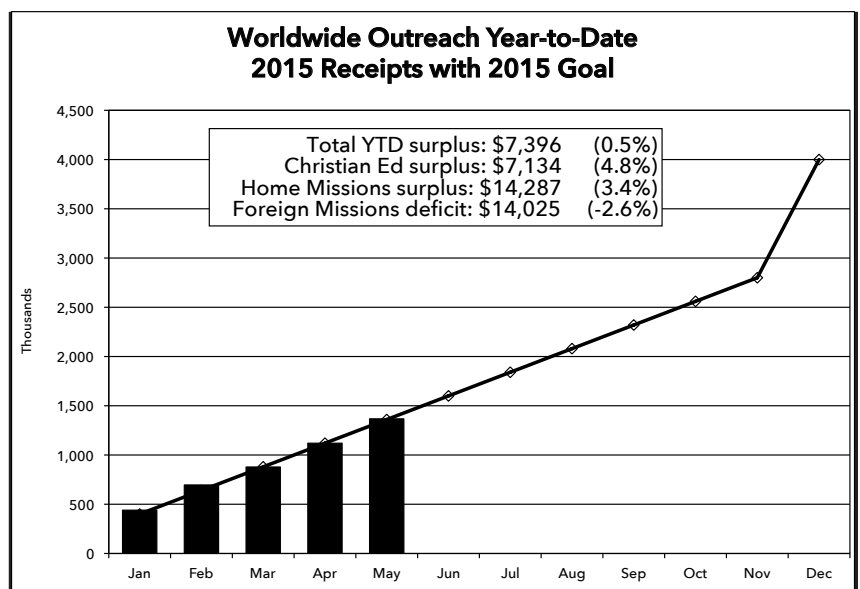
thanks to His name. And do not neglect doing good and sharing; for with such sacrifices God is pleased” (Heb. 13:15–16). The Bible is replete with the abounding thanksgiving of God’s people for his salvation. Another frequent response of God’s people to their salvation, growing out of their abounding thanks, is the sacrifice/worship of giving.

Giving

Lavish grace plus abounding gratitude leads to lavish giving. But how is it defined? Jesus, in effect, said the widow gave her two mites lavishly, while the rich, only out of their excess, gave stingily (Mark 12:41–44). Without mentioning specific amounts, Paul taught us in 2 Corinthians 8 and 9 that our giving should be cheerful and self-sacrificial, to supply the needs of others and further the work of the gospel. What does self-sacrificial giving look like? “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich” (2 Cor. 8:9). Self-sacrificial, lavish giving indeed! Whatever you purpose in your heart to give, give it cheerfully. Let it abound, like your gratitude.

Finally, consider the woman who poured a very costly vial of perfume upon the head of our Lord. Jesus said of her, “Truly I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done shall also be spoken of in memory of her” (Matt. 26:13). She knew that the death Jesus was about to experience for her was lavish grace, so her response was lavish giving. Lavish grace, lavish giving.

The author is the pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in Pearl City, Hawaii. He quotes the NASB.



1. Pray for **Charles and Connie Jackson**, Mbale, Uganda, participating in a pre-field missionary preparation course this month. / **Jim and Bonnie Hoekstra**, Andover, Minn. Pray that God's elect will be brought to Immanuel OPC. / Pray for safe travel for all OPC short-term missionaries, including short-term missions coordinator **David Nakhla** and his wife, **Faith**, as they serve in Ukraine this summer.
2. **Jonathan and Lauryn Shishko**, Queens, N.Y. Pray that visitors to Reformation Presbyterian Church will desire to join. / Foreign Missions administrative assistant **Linda Posthuma** and secretary **Abigail Yates**. / Summer interns: **Ryan (and Rachel) Heaton** at Tyler Presbyterian Church in Tyler, Texas, and **Mark (and Katie) Stumpf** at Providence OPC in Mifflinburg, Pa.
3. **Heero and Anya Hacquebord**, L'viv, Ukraine. Pray for students and leaders at this week's English Bible camps. / **Ron and Carol Beabout**, Gaithersburg, Md. Pray for unity and growth within the congregation of Trinity Reformed Church. / Pray for stated clerk **Ross Graham** as he works on the minutes and yearbook of the 82nd General Assembly.
4. **John and Wenny Ro**, Chicago, Ill. (downtown). Pray that visitors will attend the outreach Bible studies of Gospel Life Presbyterian Church. / **Mark and Jeni Richline**, Montevideo, Uruguay. Pray for wisdom in developing strategies for ministry. / Summer interns: **Andy (and Anna) Smith** at Providence OPC in Temecula, Calif., and **Ryan (and Rochelle) Cavanaugh** at Faith Presbyterian Church in Garland, Texas.
5. **Ray and Michele Call**, Montevideo, Uruguay. Pray for their outreach efforts in the community. / **Phil Strong**, Lander, Wyo. Pray that God would bless Grace Reformed Fellowship with more families. / Summer interns: **Joel (and Leigh) Fregia** at New Covenant Community Church in Joliet, Ill., and **Dan (and Megan) York** at Covenant OPC in Kennewick, Wash.
6. **Andrew and Billie Moody**, San Antonio, Tex. Pray that San Antonio Reformed Church's new building will be a blessing to the congregation. / Affiliated missionaries **Jerry and Marilyn Farnik**, Prague, Czech Republic. Pray for this summer's outreach ministries. / **Jonathan (and Kerri Ann) Cruse**, summer intern at Westminster OPC in Hollidaysburg, Pa.
7. **Ben and Melanie Westerveld**, Quebec, Canada. Pray for much fruit from four English for Kids Bible camps this month. / **Brandon and Laurie Wilkins**, Crystal Lake, Ill. Praise God for his continued blessing on Christ Covenant Presbyterian Church. / Summer interns: **Daniel (and Amber) Doleys** at Redeemer OPC in Dayton, Ohio, and **Wayne (and Suzanne) Veenstra** at Harvest OPC in Wyoming, Mich.
8. Home Missions general secretary **John Shaw**. / Missionary associate **Jennifer Nelson**, Quebec, Canada. Pray for the teams assisting with English Bible camps this month. / Summer interns: **Scott (and Elizabeth) Creel** at Redemption OPC in Gainesville, Fla., and **Jeremy (and Gwen) Baker** at Calvin OPC in Phoenix, Ariz.
9. **Mr. and Mrs. F.**, Asia. Pray for the new Reformed church as they seek a larger meeting location. / Pray for **Glenn Jerrell**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of the Michigan and Ontario, as he does exploratory work in the region. / **Michael (and Melissa) Spangler**, summer intern at Providence Presbyterian Church in Greensboro, N.C.



Glenn and Kathie Jerrell

10. **Jeremy Logan**, Mt. Vernon, Ohio. Pray for Knox Presbyterian Church's discipleship and ministry. / Tentmaker missionary **T. L. L.**, Asia. Pray for a bold witness as she works at the university. / Summer interns: **Aijalon Church** at Bethel Presbyterian Church in Wheaton, Ill., and **Bulut Yasar** at New Life OPC in Williamsport, Pa.
11. Pray for the summer ministry activities and travel of our **missionary associates in Asia**. / **Robert and Christy Arendale**, Houston, Tex. Pray for the Spirit to build up Cornerstone OPC. / Air Force chaplains: **C. Phillip (and Melanie) Hollstein III** and **Cornelius (and Deidre) Johnson**.
12. **Mike and Katy Myers**, Hartwell, Ga. Pray for wisdom and desire to glorify God in outreach at Heritage Presbyterian Church. / **Church in the Horn of Africa**. Pray for the safety of believers in this country. / Pray for effective training of **summer interns**.
13. Pray for retired missionaries **Betty Andrews, Greet Rietkerk**, and **Young and Mary Lou Son**. / **Jay and Andrea Bennett**, Neon, Ky. Pray for God to bless Neon Reformed Presbyterian Church's outreach efforts. / Army chaplain **Paul (and Mary) Berghaus**.
14. **Tom and Martha Albaugh**, Pittsburgh, Pa. Pray for the ministry of Redeemer OPC Mission. / Pray for **Cal and Edie Cummings**, Sendai, Japan, returning to Japan following a four-month furlough in the U.S. / Yearlong interns: **Caleb T. Nelson** at First Church of Merrimack in Merrimack, N.H., and **Tim (and Jeni) Son** at First Presbyterian Church in Ipswich, Mass.
15. **Woody and Laurie Lauer**, Numazu, Japan. Pray for

work for several people associated with the church who have lost their jobs. / **Greg and Stella Hoadley**, Fargo, N.Dak. Pray that Grace OPC's outreach efforts will bear fruit. / Pray for **Danny Olinger**, Christian Education general secretary, as he serves as intern director.

16. Christopher and Ann Malamisuro, Cincinnati, Ohio. Pray that God would add several families to Good Shepherd OPC. / **Kaz and Katie Yaegashi**, Yamagata, Japan. Pray for the youth in the church. / Yearlong interns: **Roberto (and Irma) Quiñones** at Primera Iglesia Presbiteriana in San Juan, P.R., and **Benjamin (and Emily) Gordon** at Trinity OPC in Hatboro, Pa.

17. Affiliated missionaries **Craig and Ree Coulbourne** (on furlough) and **Linda Karner**, Japan. / **Brian and Sara Chang**, Cottonwood, Ariz. Pray for more local visitors at Verde Valley Reformed Chapel. / **Marvin Padgett**, executive director of Great Commission Publications.

18. Jeremiah and Elizabeth Montgomery, State College, Pa. Pray that members of Resurrection OPC will meet non-Christians seeking God. / Foreign Missions general secretary **Mark Bube**. / Yearlong interns: **Daniel Adams** at Calvary OPC in Glenside, Pa., and **Charles Williams** at Redeemer Presbyterian Church in Ada, Mich.



Mark and Kathy Bube

19. Ben and Heather Hopp, Haiti. Pray for the spiritual growth and development of the church in Port-au-Prince. / **Bill and Sessie Welzien**, Key West, Fla. Pray that visitors to Keys Presbyterian Church will desire to join in fellowship. / Pray for the work of the **Psalter-Hymnal Committee**.

20. Jim and Eve Cassidy, Austin, Tex. Give thanks for strong giving at South Austin Presbyterian Church. / Associate missionaries **Octavius and Marie Delfils**, Haiti. Pray for open doors as they make contacts in the community and share the gospel. / **Andrew Moody**, OPC.org website technical assistant.

21. Eric and Donna Hausler, Haiti. Pray for Eric, teaching in Haiti this week. / **Drew and Sonya Adcock**, Williamsport, Pa. Pray for continued development in the ministry of Omega OPC. / **Zachary (and Anne) Simmons**, summer intern at Grace Fellowship OPC in Philadelphia, Pa.

22. Pray for **Steve Doe**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic, as he seeks contacts interested in planting OP churches. / Foreign Missions associate general secretary **Douglas Clawson**. / **Lowell (and Mae) Ivey**, yearlong intern at Covenant Community Church in Taylors, S.C.

23. David and Sunshine Okken, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray that the preaching of God's Word will reach many in Karamoja. / **Brad and Cinnamon Peppo**, Springfield, Ohio. Pray that Living Water OPC will glorify God in its worship. / **James Jordan**, yearlong intern at Church of the Covenant in Hackettstown, N.J.

24. Jim and Tricia Stevenson, Tulsa, Okla. Praise God for his continued blessing of Providence OPC. / **Al and Laurie Tricarico**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for those in the villages who are hearing the gospel for the first time. / **Matthew (and Melinda) Cole**, yearlong intern at Immanuel Presbyterian Church in Bellmawr, N.J.

25. Pray for the labors of our **missionary associates in Uganda**. / **Jonathan and Kristin Moersch**, Capistrano Beach, Calif. Give thanks for recent growth at Trinity Presbyterian Church. / **Matthew (and Elin) Prather**, yearlong intern at Harvest OPC in San Marcos, Calif.

26. Joshua and Jessica Lyon, Carson, Calif. Pray for Grace OPC's movie night outreach efforts. / **Ethiopian Reformed Presbyterian Church**. Pray for believers who face the challenges and consequences of leading Christian lives. / **Robert (and Adelinda) Canode**, yearlong intern at Providence Presbyterian Church in Pflugerville, Tex.

27. Jim and Jenny Knox, M.D. and R.N., Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for Jim as he makes daily decisions impacting patients' medical needs. / **Joseph and Carla Fowler**, Gastonia, N.C. Pray that the preaching of the word at Reformation OPC will bring conversion. / *Ordained Servant* proofreader **Diane Olinger**.

28. Tony and Mica Garbarino, Morgan Hill, Calif. Pray for God's blessing on Providence Presbyterian Church's outreach plans. / **Bob and Martha Wright**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for the Karimojong workers assisting Bob. / *New Horizons* staff: **Jim Scott**, managing editor; **Pat Clawson**, editorial assistant; **Sarah Pederson**, proofreader; **Chris Tobias**, cover designer.

29. Eric and Dianna Tuininga, Mbale, Uganda. Pray for the ministry done by the men attending Knox Theological College. / Home Missions staff administrator **Sean Gregg**. / Committee on Coordination staff: **Doug Watson**, part-time staff accountant; **Jan Gregson**, assistant to the finance director; **Charlene Tipton**, database administrator; **Kathy Bube**, Loan Fund administrator.

30. Kim and Barbara Kuhfuss, Eau Claire, Wis. Pray for God's blessing on Providence Reformed Church's membership class. / **Brian and Dorothy Wingard**, South Africa. Pray for safe travel to and from the theological college where they teach. / **Janet Birkmann**, Diaconal Ministries administrative assistant.

31. Pray for **Mr. and Mrs. M.**, Asia, preparing to return to their labors following a twelve-month furlough in the U.S. / **Chris and Megan Hartshorn**, Anaheim Hills, Calif. Pray that more families will visit Anaheim Hills Presbyterian Church. / **David Haney**, director of finance and planned giving for the Committee on Coordination.

KEEPING THE FAITH

[Continued from page 9]

Internet, especially Facebook, and make Christians look “rude and obnoxious.”

Tanner Beebe, a recent graduate from Kuyper College in Grand Rapids, had noticed a similar dynamic on his Christian college campus. “Sometimes the class discussions were unnecessarily heated. Sometimes that’s because even Christian students have difficulty differentiating between critiquing thought and critiquing people.” In other words, when a belief was questioned, the student would take it as an insult.

When holding Christian-to-Christian dialogue, Tanner has found a few things to be hugely unhelpful: “to not hear their full perspective, to interrupt and interject before they’re finished speaking, to not ever open up the Bible, and to take the Bible out of context.”

Respectful conversation is much needed, because, similar to Laura’s Christian campus group, there is considerable diversity of faith on Kuyper’s campus. Even at a small, confessionally Reformed college, differences of opinion abound. In addition to “students who grew up in Reformed settings,” there were “students from a charismatic, an evangelical, or a Baptist background in all of my classes,” she said. And others had come to Kuyper just to play basketball.

When there’s discord, the classroom might not be the best place to hash it out, says Tanner, especially when your problem is with the professor. “If there’s something you disagree with, maybe talk to the professor after class, one-on-one. The classroom is not your place to hijack a discussion.”

Like Ben, Tanner likes to bring the conversation back to living together—literally. “It’s important that you do other things with the people you disagree with than just talk about your disagreement. Maybe you enjoy watching basketball together or TV. Just enjoy each other’s company.” Although talking is important, Tanner stressed that what’s

most important is a heart condition that sees the other person as a brother.

Church Relationships

Ben, Laura, and Tanner all emphasized that regardless of where you’re going to school, a church family can make a world of difference.

In fact, for Tanner, it was an OPC elder at Kuyper that brought him into the OPC. Tanner attended a state college for two years before transferring to Kuyper because of a growing interest in the Reformed faith. “And then, my favorite professor at Kuyper knew his Bible so well, and he loved people super well.” When Tanner found out that this professor had been a church planter in the OPC, he decided that he might as well check it out, and he has been at an Orthodox Presbyterian church ever since. “I was so encouraged by the people I met there,” said Tanner. “They seemed to know their Bibles really well, to know that they were sinners saved by grace, and to know how to love people.”

His church, New City Fellowship, and the elders and pastors he knew over his four years at college, were “tremendously helpful” for his walk with Christ. Constantly hanging out with college students is like a nonstop party, but when something goes wrong, you need others around you as well, Tanner explained. “If the oldest person able to give you advice is only three years older than you, then there’s a real lack of perspective!”

Does It Matter Where You Go?

Can you keep the faith even if you don’t go to a Christian school? Yes, says Laura Dowds, especially when you attend a good church. In fact, it may be easier to be part of a Christian community at a state school than at a Christian college. “The biggest positive about going to a state school is that you know the

Christians are solid Christians, because they wouldn’t make the effort to come to [extra activities] if they weren’t.”

Ben Van Dyke would agree—he chose Michigan State for almost exactly that reason. “My thought was going to a secular school would be better, because then if you find Christians, they’d actually care about what they believe.” And interacting with those Christians in an evangelism-focused fellowship has changed his life. “After sharing the gospel with random people, [I realized] that’s what makes me happiest—and that’s been true all four years. I also feel capable of doing it, which is kind

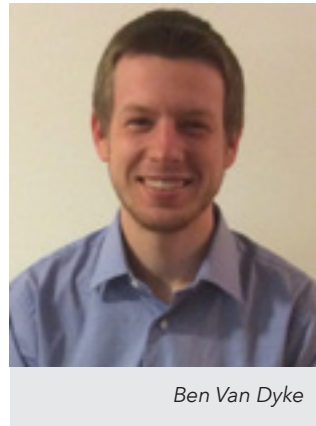
of weird because I feel like I’m not a great public speaker, but it’s really a testament to God’s grace.”

Tanner Beebe, on the other hand, wouldn’t change his experience at Kuyper College because of how it prepared him for the future. As he explained it, “Christian college lays the foundation for twenty, thirty,

or forty years of vocational ministry, whether that’s in the local church or around the world, working as a carpenter, or businessman, or banker.” Incidentally, that future ministry, for Tanner, hopefully includes seminary.

A high schooler may feel overwhelmed while trying to decide where to go—or even whether to go! A freshman walking onto campus for the first time may feel nervous about making friends—let alone sharing the gospel. A jaded senior may just want to graduate and get out into the real world. But Ben, Laura, and Tanner offer an alternative mind-set to the notoriously “me-focused” environment of higher education. As students, they served; they built relationships; and by so doing, they turned their college experience into another battleground for Christ. □

The author is a member of Bethel OPC in Carson, N.Dak.



Ben Van Dyke

NEWS, VIEWS, & REVIEWS



Present at the installation of Mike Kearney (from the left): Cedar Falls elder Ed Olthoff and ministers Ed Jensen, John Wiers, Iain Wright (presbytery moderator), Chuck Muether, Mike Kearney, Iggi Choi, Craig Troxel, and Brent Evans

MIKE KEARNEY INSTALLED IN CEDAR FALLS, IOWA

Mike Kearney

On Friday, May 1, the Rev. Michael J. Kearney was installed by the Presbytery of the Midwest as the new pastor of Covenant OPC in Cedar Falls, Iowa. The Rev. Iggi Choi, of Bethel Korean Presbyterian Church in Aloha, Oregon, served as a guest preacher. Charges were also given: by the Rev. Dr. Craig Troxel to the minister, and by the Rev. Dr. John Wiers to the congregation. This joyful occasion highlighted God's faithfulness in answering the prayers of many to provide for a congregation that had been without a pastor for just over one year.

Covenant OPC was established in the early days of the OPC in the 1930s. It has undergone changes in location and name, but one constant has been God's grace in sustaining this body of believers as a witness to Christ in the Cedar Valley of Iowa and beyond. The Presbytery of the Midwest has been very supportive through this recent chapter of its history, providing steady pulpit supply through Dr. Wiers.

A 2003 graduate of Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, which is his hometown, Mr. Kearney comes into

the OPC from a sister NAPARC denomination, the Korean-American Presbyterian Church, in which he had been laboring among predominantly second-generation Korean-American English speakers.

Iowa promises to be quite a change for him and his wife, Jennifer, along with their three daughters (Miriam, Lydia, and Joanna). Please pray for God's blessing upon this church's kingdom work through

worship, discipleship, and outreach, that Christ our Savior and Lord might be lifted up and proclaimed, and that many might be powerfully drawn to him and added to his church.

MARK SOUD ORDAINED IN BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

Eric Watkins

One of the joyful stories in the Presbytery of the South currently is that of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in Birmingham, Alabama. The church has been in the presbytery for nearly two decades, yet has never received a full program of church-planting financial support. For the last fifteen years, it has been ministered to by part-time or bi-vocational pastors—one of whom went to be with the Lord, and another of whom recently retired.

About two years ago, the presbytery approved a plan for licentiate Mark D. Soud to come as pulpit supply for Redeemer. Since then, the Lord has graciously preserved the church through the arduous labors of Mr. Soud, the only on-site ruling elder, and a newly augmented session. God has slowly added new



Present at the ordination of Mark Soud (from the left): Rev. Mark Winder, Rev. Luis Orteza (PCA), Rev. Joel Fick, Douglas Scofield (elder, Montgomery, Ala.), Rev. Eric Watkins, Rev. Mark Soud, Ken Soud (deacon, St. Augustine), Rev. Darren Thole

families to the work, which now appears to be budding with new growth and vigor. The presbytery thus decided to designate the church as a church plant, and Mr. Soud was called as its church planter.

On May 15, Mr. Soud was ordained as a minister and installed as pastor at Redeemer. Among those present on this happy occasion was his father, Ken, a deacon at Covenant Presbyterian Church in St. Augustine, Florida.

The story of Redeemer and Mark Soud is truly one of persevering grace, but also a beautiful portrait of a presbytery working with one of its churches.

TULSA CHURCH ORGANIZED

On May 15, Providence OPC in Tulsa, Oklahoma, was received by the Presbytery of the Central United States as an organized congregation. At the service, the Rev. Jim G. Stevenson, who had been serving as organizing pastor since November 2, 2012, was installed as pastor of the congregation.

The Rev. Roy Miller preached the sermon, the Rev. Tim Black gave the charge to those installed, and the Rev. Joseph Auksela gave the charge to the congregation.

CASTLE ROCK CHURCH ORGANIZED

On April 25, the Presbytery of the Dakotas received Emmanuel OPC in Castle Rock, Colo., as an organized congregation. Pastor Archibald A. Allison of Emmaus OPC in Fort Collins, Colo.,



Participants in the particularization service for Providence OPC (from the left): elder Terry Miller, Rev. Roy Miller, elder Gordon Robson, Rev. Jim Stevenson, elder David Belanger, elder Jerold Barnett, Rev. Joseph Auksela, Rev. Tim Black

preached at the service.

Emmanuel OPC has 95 members on its charter roll. Regular visitors bring their worship total to about 115. The church is led by ruling elders Mike Chapa and Jim Mill. Mr. Chapa, a former Air Force pilot and instructor at the USAF Academy who more recently led Christian Home Educators of Colorado, is a licentiate of the Presbytery of the Dakotas and hopes to be ordained soon.

PRIBBLES HONORED IN LANSING

Joanna Lipsy

On March 7, Grace OPC in Lansing, Michigan, commemorated twenty-five years that Pastor Stephen Pribble and his

wife, Norma, have served our local congregation. Grace OPC was organized as a particular congregation in 1985. Rev. Pribble was installed as pastor on December 1, 1989.

The gathering of over sixty people at this open house celebration was a wonderful surprise for our small congregation. Those in attendance included former members who took part in organizing the church, former Hillsdale College students who used to worship with us before Hillsdale OPC was formed, and ministers and elders from the Presbytery of Michigan and Ontario. Meaningful memories from the past decades were shared, some of which had been long forgotten by many.

We thank the Lord for this time of celebration and thanksgiving, and we pray



The congregation of Emmanuel OPC in Castle Rock, Colo., when it was organized on April 26

that God may continue to be glorified through the ministry of Pastor Pribble.



Stephen and Norma Pribble

IN MEMORIAM ARLENA MAHAFFY

John W. Mahaffy

Arlena Catherine (née Cross) Mahaffy, 97, widow of Francis E. Mahaffy (1916–1980), died on April 30, 2015, in the home she shared with one of her daughters, Mary Bonner, in Troup, Texas. Born October 23, 1917, in Mishawaka, Indiana, she grew up in Chicago, where her father was a Baptist minister.

Arlena trained as a teacher and taught for a year in a one-room country school in northern Illinois before completing her degree at Wheaton College. In 1944 she married the Rev. Francis E. Mahaffy. The following year they sailed for Eritrea, where they served as OPC missionaries for nearly a quarter of a century. Her seven children were born there, and she taught them in a school operated in her home.

Following their return to the United



Arlena Mahaffy

States to care for aging mothers, she taught at Christian Liberty Academy in the Chicago area, then at Good Shepherd Academy in Tyler, Texas. Although she “retired” from full-time teaching in 1999, she continued part-time teaching and tutoring. Despite increasingly severe macular degeneration, she continued to tutor. A few weeks before her death, she was helping a boy, recently adopted from Africa, learn English. She relished helping students who tended to fall through the cracks, becoming a resident expert on motor-skill deficits and their impact on learning. She had a special relationship with her grandson Jesse (see *New Horizons*, January 2015). She is survived by seven children, twenty-five grandchildren, and twenty-three great-grandchildren.

The day after her death, Jonathan Falk, who has served the OPC on three mission fields, wrote me: “She was not only a mother in Israel, but a mother to the Eritreans. Those of our generation remember her faithful service, along with your father, to the people of that beloved country.”

IN MEMORIAM FUMI UOMOTO

Murray Uomoto

Fumi Uomoto went home to her Savior on May 4, in Ravensdale, Washington. Born Fumiko Onoda in Cosmopolis, Washington, on September 17, 1924, her parents were Japanese immigrants from Kyushu Island. She came to faith while young. Her faith was nurtured at Japanese Baptist in Seattle, but especially through Bible studies by single women burdened for Nisei (second-generation, Japanese-American) youth. Through such, she came to know George Uomoto, who was attending Japanese Presbyterian.

When she was a senior, the U.S. entered World War II. In 1942 her family and George’s family were sent to an internment center in Minidoka, Idaho, where they were able to continue Christian



Fumi Uomoto

activities. Fumi left the center for Whitworth College, Spokane, to study nursing, while George, with a chemical engineering degree from the University of Washington, graduated from Dallas Theological Seminary.

Following the war, when General MacArthur issued a plea for missionaries for Japan, she sensed God’s call. In 1946 she married George, who sensed the same. They would be the first Nisei missionaries serving in Japan.

In 1951 George earned a Th.M. at Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia, where he roomed in Machen Hall next to Prof. John Murray (after whom he would name a son). Called by the OPC’s Committee on Foreign Missions, George and Fumi sailed for Japan in 1951 with three children; the Lord would bless them with eight more. After language school in Tokyo, the Uomotos helped plant East Sendai Church, Ishinomaki Chapel, and Kita Nakayama Chapel. They officially retired in 1988, but continued laboring until 1991, when they returned to Seattle and attended Trinity OPC in Bothell. Upon George’s death in 2004, the saints kindly helped transport Fumi to church.

Fumi is survived by nine children, seventeen grandchildren, and ten great-grandchildren.

UPDATE

CHURCHES

- On May 3, the Presbytery of the Midwest received **Covenant Family Church** in Troy, Mo., into the OPC.
- On April 25, the Presbytery of the Dakotas received **Emmanuel OPC** in Castle Rock, Colo., as an organized congregation of the OPC.
- On May 15, the Presbytery of the Central United States organized **Providence OPC** in Tulsa, Okla., as a separate

Machen Fall Singles Retreat

October 2-4 • McDowell, Va.

- Conference theme: A Cruciform Life
- Speaker: Rev. Matthew Kingsbury
- Details and registration information: <http://machen.org/events/2015-fall-singles-retreat>

congregation.

MINISTERS

- On May 1, the Presbytery of the Midwest installed **Michael J. Kearney**, formerly a pastor in the Korean American Presbyterian Church, as pastor of Covenant OPC in Cedar Falls, Iowa.
- **Marcus J. Serven** has returned to the OPC; he was installed as the pastor of Covenant Family Church in Troy, Mo., on May 3.
- On May 15, the Presbytery of the South ordained **Mark D. Soud** as a minister and installed him as the pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in Birmingham, Ala., where he had been serving as stated supply.
- **Jim G. Stevenson**, formerly an evangelist serving as the organizing pastor of Providence OPC in Tulsa, Okla., was installed on May 15 as the pastor of that congregation.

MILESTONES

- **Arlena Mahaffy**, 97, widow of OP missionary and evangelist Francis Mahaffy, died on April 30.
- **Fumiko ("Fumi") Uomoto**, 90, widow of OP missionary George Uomoto, died on May 4.

Correction

In the June issue, the class shown on p. 10 was held in Cartagena, Colombia; the congregation pictured on p. 11 is located in Bogotá.



STM Summer Calendar

Please pray for those coordinating and participating in the following OPC short-term missions trips and programs this summer:

June-August: Boardwalk Chapel, Wildwood, N.J.

June 22-29: Work team to Magna, Utah

June 22-July 2: Team Haiti

June 22-July 23: Team Uganda

June 27-July 4: English for Kids Bible Camp, Quebec

June 29-July 3: English for Kids Bible Camp, Quebec

July 3-13: English Camp for University Students, Ukraine

July 6-10: English for Kids Bible Camp, Quebec

July 13-17: English for Kids Bible Camp, Quebec

July 18-24: Venture Mission, Zoar, Wisc.

July 27-31: English for Teens Bible Camping Trip, Quebec

July 29-August 10: Team to the Nozomi Center, Japan

Visit www.OPCSTM.org and click on "General Information" for a detailed *STM Prayer Calendar* as well as our *STM Prayer Guide*.

LETTERS

ABSTRACT ART

Editor:

In Ken Golden's response to the March art issue, I found little with which to disagree. I never intended to imply that abstract or other nonrepresentational art couldn't be beautiful. In fact, when asked years ago if I had ever painted abstracts, my instinctive reply was that all my paintings are abstracts. The foundation of any good representational painting is its abstract design. The representational painter simply adds additional steps.

My complaint is in regard to the rejection of the very concept or legitimacy of beauty. Many in the art elite have been eagerly deconstructing art and promoting the idea that the practice of traditional art is passé, naive, and unauthentic. It was they who narrowed the scope of art when they rejected traditional representation. In my opinion, this was particularly destructive because it led to the widespread loss of teaching drawing and design skills and the widespread public mistrust and cynicism towards artistic expression.

Mike Mahon
Sante Fe, N.Mex.

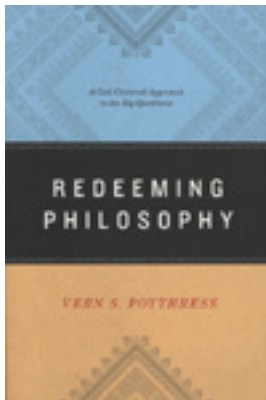
REVIEWS

Redeeming Philosophy: A God-Centered Approach to the Big Questions, by Vern S. Poythress. Crossway, 2014. Paperback, 304 pages, list price \$25.00. Reviewed by OP minister Jeffrey C. Waddington.

Vern Poythress, professor of New Testament interpretation at Westminster Theological Seminary, has done the church a service in authoring a reader-friendly Christian introduction to philosophy. *Redeeming Philosophy* is the latest in a series of books in which Poythress develops his generally Kuyperian/Van Tillian approach to such topics as science, math, sociology, logic, and language.

Redeeming Philosophy consists of nine sections divided into twenty-five chapters and three appendixes. The author discusses the three basic divisions of philosophy: metaphysics (the study of being), epistemology (the study of knowledge), and ethics (the goal, motive, and standard of human behavior). He does so in creative ways that honor the biblical Creator/creature distinction.

Poythress rightly reminds us that all our thinking about wisdom (philosophy is, after all, the love of wisdom) must be



subordinate to God and his Word. This point is often rejected by philosophers. Even Christian philosophers fall into this error (sin) in their philosophizing.

All of creation and how we understand it, behave in it, and use it are dependent upon the triune God of Scripture.

The author brings his familiar triperspectival (or multiperspectival) approach to his work, which he shares with his former teacher and colleague, John Frame. Frame, to whom the book is dedicated, is referenced throughout the book. Originally formulated by Frame and applied to ethics, triperspectivalism looks at various issues from the normative, existential, and situational perspectives. Poythress grounds this theological method in the nature of the triune God. Each of these perspectives is mutually indwelling and entailing.

Readers will appreciate the author's treatment of the metaphysics of an apple, walking, and a bookmark. Poythress writes in a down-to-earth style that will appeal to those who are not acquainted with the ins and outs of philosophy. Those interested in a Christian approach to non-Christian forms of philosophy will enjoy the author's interaction with Immanuel Kant, Edmund Husserl, and analytic philosophers. He also addresses the work of Herman Dooyeweerd, who was a

contemporary of Van Til.

Poythress demonstrates that everything in creation is subject to the lordship of Jesus Christ. Readers already familiar

with the general contours of philosophy and its history will probably be dissatisfied with *Redeeming Philosophy*, although even they would benefit from reading it.

YOUTH CONFERENCE

William Muether

On April 17–18, the Presbytery of the Midwest's Youth Committee sponsored a youth leadership conference at Christ Presbyterian Church in Janesville, Wisconsin. Those present included parents, pastors, elders, and youth leaders.

The speaker was Dale Van Dyke, the pastor of Harvest OPC in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He spoke at four sessions, building upon the importance and benefits of youth disciple-making through the ordinary means of grace as explained in the answer to Question 88 of the Westminster Shorter Catechism: "The outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communiceth to us the benefits of redemption are, his ordinances, espe-

cially the Word, sacraments, and prayer; all which are made effectual to the elect for salvation." Quoting from numerous Bible passages, beginning with Matthew 28:16–20 and Acts 2:42, and concluding with John 10:27, Pastor Van Dyke discussed many practical steps for a gospel-centered, Spirit-dependent, Christ-exalting, and life-transforming youth ministry.

Many questions were discussed, such as: What objectives should youth ministries pursue? What are the biggest challenges facing our youth today? What is encouraging about an "ordinary means of grace" ministry? How well do our young people understand the gospel?

This Friday-evening and all-day-Saturday event offered a wonderful time of insightful, practical, and fruitful teaching for all who attended.



Dale Van Dyke addressing a youth leadership conference