

# NEW HORIZONS

≡ *in the* ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ≡

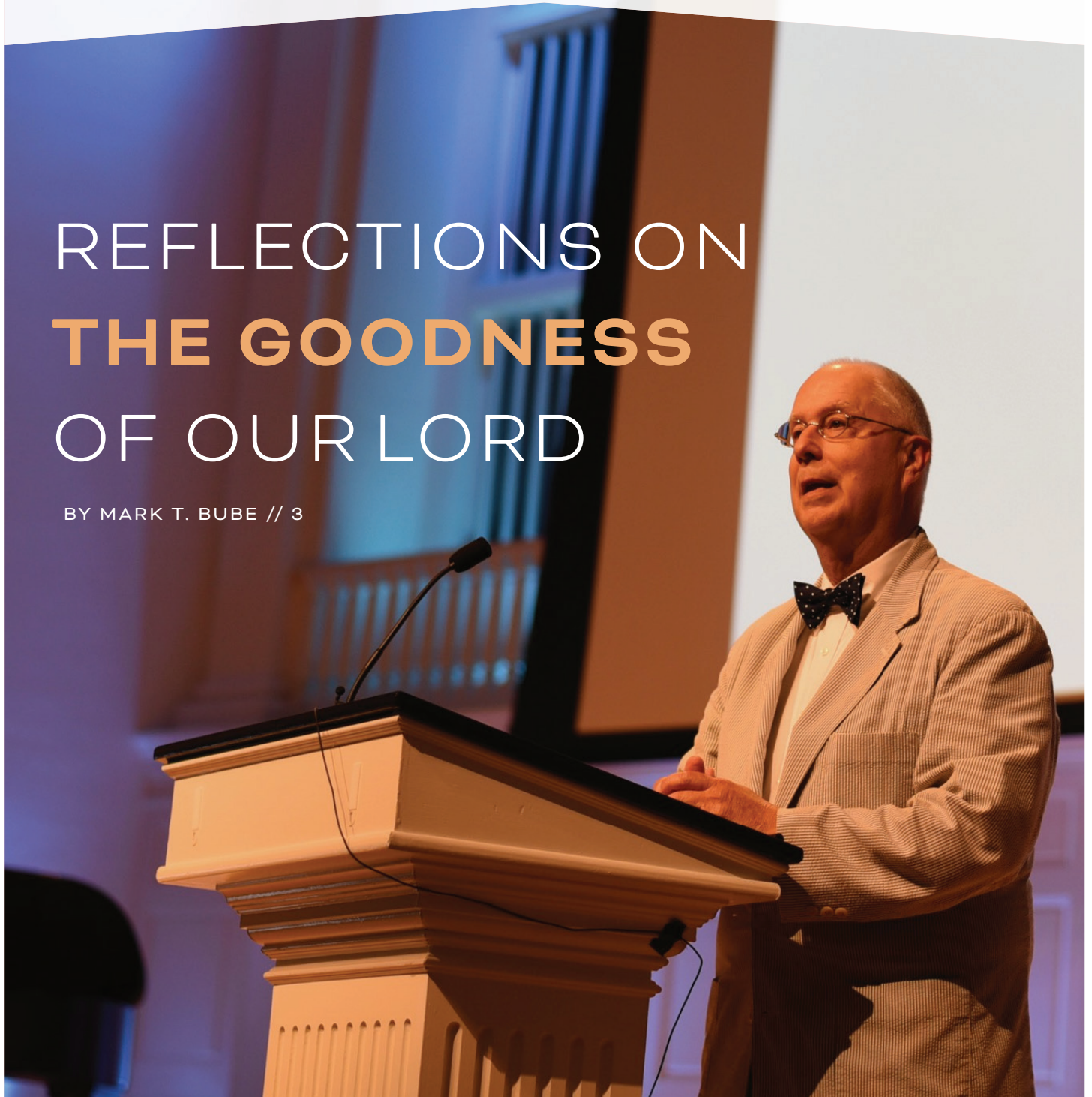
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## REFLECTIONS ON **THE GOODNESS** OF OUR LORD

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## New Horizons

in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church

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# REFLECTIONS ON THE GOODNESS OF OUR LORD



**MARK T. BUBE // In what has come to be known as the Great Commission, our Savior, shortly before he returned to the Father in heaven, commanded his apostles—and through them, his church—to go, make disciples, baptize, and teach. And to this very day, churches that would be faithful to observe all that he had**

commanded us, send missionaries to the nations to establish his worship (planting churches in which his people are discipled, baptized, and taught) and to cast the net—to go—to bring the lost into that worship.

Following the pattern of Scripture, these young church plants on the mission field, by his grace, grow in their whole-hearted embrace of the system of doctrine that is taught in the Scripture and reflected in our Reformed confessions. And over time, we see them also grow in their ability to provide for their own needs and for those of the poor around them; to govern themselves according to the biblical pattern, as the Lord provides sound and godly ministers, elders, and deacons; and, in turn, to continue the process of carrying out that Great Commission to the next village and then to another half-way around the world. This is a process that usually takes some time—often it’s multi-generational—and that requires

much patience, self-restraint, and waiting upon the Lord, and always with our eyes fixed upon Christ. And yet how truly delightful it is to serve a glorious Lord who continues to work powerfully and supernaturally every day of our lives.

## **An Adventure in Grace**

For the past thirty-one years, as general secretary of the Committee on Foreign Missions, it has been a joy and a privilege—an “adventure in grace,” if you will—to see with my own eyes the wonders of his hand at work through the labors of your missionaries as they, by the power of the Holy Spirit, press on faithfully to gather and build his church in faraway corners of the globe. And as his Word has been earnestly and lovingly proclaimed in distant lands to thousands who are otherwise perishing in their sins, time and again we’ve witnessed his Spirit apply that Word to the hearts of his precious ones to cause

them to repent of their sins and to flee in faith to our Savior—each case of which is a supernatural work!

Have you ever seen the look in someone’s face when it first begins to dawn on him or her that there might be forgiveness for sins? We are all sinners, and (apart from Christ) we all carry the terrible burden of our sins around with us every day. Christ tells us in his Word that all people who have ever lived know that there is a God to whom they will one day have to give an answer, but that they suppress that knowledge, exchanging truth for a lie, to pursue their own sinful desires. But we all also know that (unless Christ comes first!) we’re going to die.

And then one day someone, perhaps even a strange foreigner from a different culture, comes and opens up the gospel, and the Spirit gives ears to hear, and they comprehend for the first time that there is repentance and forgiveness for sin in Jesus Christ—and that

they safely can flee in faith to Christ and know that he will never turn them away. And warming in their faces is a wonderful peace, some tears of joy, and a keen anticipation of delighting in their newly found Savior.

### Ministry to Image-Bearers

In his Word, Christ teaches me to view each person that he brings across my path as his image-bearer, no matter how different all our externalities—language, ethnicity, economic or cultural situations—might be. And not only as a fellow image-bearer, but since Christ has with his blood purchased for God men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation, I need to consider that this one who he is bringing into my life just now might also be one of those precious ones for whom he died—and I need to love this one, just as my Savior has loved me.

As part of our ministry of mercy in the name of Christ, our missionaries have been involved in the operation of three different medical facilities in three different nations over the past thirty years, all in a region of the world where, if one went to a typical government (or secular) medical facility, the doctors (if they were present at all) would probably be drunk and the necessary medicines or drugs would long ago all have been pilfered and sold on the black market; and worst of all, you would be treated like an animal.

One of the first things that would stand out to an incoming patient arriving at any of the three medical works through which the Lord gave us the privilege to minister mercy was that, when someone entered the gate, they were treated with the respect and dignity that befits an image-bearer, as someone who had intrinsic value because they are made in God's image. This is part of our testimony and might be one of the reasons that patients and their families will walk for hours, often bypassing other clinics, to come to us for treatment.

In the ordinary course of events, maybe it will please the Lord to use the ministrations of our missionaries and the local medical staffs they have trained to treat the malady that brought the patient to the clinic with success. Or maybe not, for maybe they waited too long to come, or the necessary medications just weren't available to us—but we still have time to pray with them and carry their needs to the throne of grace, and to show them the compassion of Jesus.

### Learning in Humility

Meeting brothers and sisters in Christ among those to whom we minister on our mission fields has been such a blessing. In Christ our hearts are already knit closer together than they will ever be with our own blood relatives who do not know Christ. The shared joy that is ours in the use of the ordinary means of grace together, especially in the context of gathering for worship, is a foretaste of the sweet fellowship that will be ours with them around the throne forever. And we have so much to learn from one another.

I remember years ago sharing a meal with a brother who had been imprisoned multiple times for Christ. He had memorized sizable portions of Scripture to be prepared for the next time he would be put in prison, where

no Bibles were allowed (note to self: am I anywhere near as ready?). Near the end of our time together, the brother, who is now home with Jesus, looked me straight in the eye and pointing with his finger, exclaimed, "And you know, prison is a wonderful place to share the gospel with unbelievers!" I still remember like it was just yesterday: that sense of a wave sweeping over and then melting me with the feeling that I was not worthy to be even in the same room with this valiant brother, who is a real soldier for Christ.

Another brother from the same place related to me how, for several brothers and sisters in Christ, it seemed that, on their way into prison, the Lord, in his merciful providence, would sometimes blind the fingers of the guards as they searched incoming prisoners, missing the Bibles in the prisoners' pockets. Accounts of some of the sweetest fellowship among those united to Christ that I've ever encountered have occurred among those imprisoned together for the name of Christ.

It is difficult to overestimate how truly miserable mankind's bondage to sin is, and how terrifying the thought of God's lifting his restraining hand upon the actions of the evil one ought to be. As we look around the world, it seems that, generally speaking, the further the life of a people is removed from

Christ and what his Word teaches, the crummier their daily lives are. It's fairly easy to see the bondage to sin in the wicked and awful pagan practices of the heathen—child sacrifice, bodily mutilation, greedy impoverishment of widows and orphans, and the like—not to mention the terror of a life dominated by the fanatic and evil wiles of a witch doctor or shaman. But we also see that bondage to sin in the graceless and sometimes bloody practices of other more organized religions that know not Christ—in the superstitions of Roman Catholicism, in the false teachings of the so-called prosperity gospel, and in the overwhelming meaninglessness of our modern



*Bube at a seminar for church leaders in Manipur, India, in 2017 (hosted by the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North East India)*

secular culture that denies there can be anything called “truth.”

Yet in every place, Christ is at work, redeeming men and women and boys and girls for himself. As we seek to be useful to our Savior in our engagement with the unbelieving world, we are reminded that we need to be always ready to give an answer for the hope that is in us, and to do so with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience.

I remember one of our missionaries being put under a blood curse by a much-feared witch doctor while preaching one night to an assembled crowd numbering in the hundreds. The following night hundreds more turned out to watch him drop dead. He didn't, and the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ shone brightly into the community that night.

Another one of our missionaries, who labored among a people that loved riddles, engaged some of the older men gathered under a tree while he was walking between villages. The question that he put to them that day was: “How is it that, if you are born once, you die twice, but if you are born twice, you die only once?” Can you solve the riddle?

### Seasons of Ministry

As many who have been involved in Christian ministry for any length of time have probably experienced firsthand, it sometimes pleases the Lord—the One who opens doors that no one can shut, and closes doors that no one can open—to grant to his servants in his gracious providence, certain sweet spots or seasons in their labors during which the Spirit especially seems to be moving across the land and there is much fruit being gathered in. Those are the times, when at the end of the day, although we are tired and dirty and maybe hungry, our hearts are overflowing with joy and gratitude at the goodness of our God. We rejoice in seeing his power made manifest in our weakness, and we delight in Christ.

We also know that, when the work seems to be going well, and it looks like we're making real inroads to his



[Clockwise from bottom left] Craig Troxel, Doug Clawson, Dick Gaffin, and Mark Bube at General Assembly in 2014; Bube teaching on the field in Haiti in 2013; Mark and Kathy Bube at Calvary OPC in Glenside, PA

domain, Satan will push back. Hard. Trusted workers will betray us or fall into serious sin. The sin of pride is always lurking at our door. We have to remind ourselves over and over again that our work, even a fruitful missionary enterprise that he is richly blessing in the moment, is ultimately never about us: it's always about Jesus Christ and him alone. For it is Christ who leads us in that triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere.

The psalmist reminds us that our days are like grass; we flourish briefly like a flower in the field and then we are gone. The famous missionary apostle opened his heart to a much-troubled

church plant in Corinth, whom he nevertheless dearly loved, declaring, “I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls” (2 Cor. 12:15). Brothers and sisters, this is what we are doing today, and my desire all these years has been that it would please our Lord to grant our missionaries much joy in their labors unto Christ, even as we ourselves are being spent. For together we confess our sure hope that we shall indeed look upon the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. To God be the glory! □

*The author has been general secretary of the Committee on Foreign Missions since 1991.*

# SEVEN YEARS OF MINISTRY IN MONTEVIDEO



**MARK E. RICHLINE // On Sunday morning, I stand behind a rickety music stand looking out over a group of twenty people seated on wooden fold-up chairs arranged neatly on a dance floor with disco balls hanging overhead. Seriously? After nearly seven years of rigorous church planting in Montevideo, this is it?**

Over the years we have had more than forty in our services, with new visitors every Sunday. We have met in a building positioned strategically on a busy downtown corner. We have enjoyed a large sanctuary, a handcrafted pulpit, and extra rooms for Sunday school. Plus, we have been livestreaming our services and uploading them to our own YouTube channel.

But on this Sunday, any visitor would think that we were a church just getting started.

Water infiltration of the ceiling and walls of our building had forced us into this salon (normally used to host giant birthday celebrations). This is only the latest of a long list of challenges that have discouraged our mission over the years. Members have left Salvos Por Gracia Church, we were robbed of all our audio/video equipment, and additional church-planting attempts have not borne visible spiritual fruit. I understand why Montevideo has the reputation of being “a missionary’s graveyard.” So many have come, started their work, and then given up and gone home.

A good friend recently asked me why we are still here. Our faith in Christ’s promise to build his church is the best answer. We firmly embrace the Apostle Paul’s conviction as our own: “And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ” (Phil. 1:6). This powerful declaration fills the believer’s heart with assurance of salvation. It is God’s project, not ours. He started this good work and

faithfully continues it. And unlike believers, who exhaust our resources, leaving projects unfinished, God in *his* infinite power and wisdom will finish the good work *he* has begun in us.

Just as God works to finish what he has begun in us, he is working to finish the church he has begun in Christ. He who redeemed his people by his own precious blood will sanctify them by his Spirit until he perfects them at his coming (Eph. 1:7–14). Our twenty-six members of Salvos Por Gracia Church are an important part of a far greater project God himself is working to complete. Focused on this reality, we keep working now, remembering God’s past faithful work, which moves us to expect its glorious completion to come.

## Working in the Present

We build Christ’s church as we worship together. Our people are scattered all over the city; most spend two hours on the bus just to join our services. Yet they come to adore our Lord in spirit and in truth. Though we rely on YouTube for our music accompaniment,



*Richline preaching—  
with disco balls overhead*

we lift our hearts in praise to our Savior. As I preach through the ministry of Elijah and idolatrous Israel, we respond by confessing our own idols and submitting our desires to Christ's will. Some of our brothers have asked me for my sermon notes to use in their family devotions and in their gospel conversations with others.

Promoting unity among our members has been challenging in these COVID-19 days. Three members of our church family formed a committee to plan and promote our fellowship. We just enjoyed our first outdoor barbecue in three years! Talking, drinking our *mate* (Uruguay's green tea), playing soccer, savoring the slowly cooked meat, and listening to God's Word were all done to his glory. Before that, we spent a Sunday afternoon preparing and then devouring a favorite meal introduced by our Venezuelan couple. And before that, our married couples came together for a night of fun, food, and encouragement from Scripture.

COVID-19 has also hindered our efforts to spread the gospel. Over the years, our mission has welcomed many short-term groups to assist us with vacation Bible school and English clubs. However, the pandemic stopped these efforts in their tracks. Even recently, Uruguay's border policy prevented some interested young people from considering service here as missionary associates.

Our Lord, however, gives us other ways to evangelize. For a while, we



The congregation of *Salvos Por Gracia* at their first picnic in three years

welcomed the public to our Reformed literature table in front of our building. Our women also set up a clothing table in the same spot and attracted several visitors. Far more effective, though, has been the love of Christ shown by two of our families who have "adopted" troubled young relatives into their already small homes. These children constantly witness God's truth in love both in their new families and in their church family.

### Remembering God's Past Faithfulness

Despite our setbacks, we work, drawing our confidence from God's faithfulness. We keep his *past* faithfulness *present* in our hearts, as did ancient Israel (Gen. 28:18, 35:14; Josh. 4:19–24). I hope you have a regular way of doing this for yourself. Keeping a journal is mine. Recording and then reflecting on our ministry regularly reveals to me God's faithful character weaving itself in and out of the fabric of his work.

So many have heard the gospel preached as they walked by our open doors on the Lord's Day. He has used us personally to have many gos-

pel conversations over the years. For months, Matías and I met with a young Jewish man, persuading him to abandon his confidence in his own obedience to the law. I loved listening to my brother explain with all kinds of illustrations how only Christ's perfect obedience justifies us before a holy God.

Many souls have also been edified by our Reformed literature library. Donated funds from generous Orthodox Presbyterian churches have made available Reformed resources on doctrine, apologetics, and counseling not only to our members but also to visitors from other churches. *Salvos Por Gracia* members love to read, so these books have no time to collect dust on the shelves.

Through our Mission, the Lord has also been constantly caring for this body of believers, as it has installed new sheet metal roofs on their homes, put a necessary addition on another home, provided needed appliances, paid for repairs to their cars, and given transport to doctor's appointments. Scores of others in the community have experienced his love through food baskets, clothing, and bus tickets that have been offered in his name.

Another community need the Lord has faithfully provided is English conversation instruction and practice. For years, our Mission offered free English

[Continued on page 18]



Sunday school at *Salvos Por Gracia*

# AUGUSTINE'S SHORT PRAYERS IN HIS CONFESSIONS



SHANE P. LEMS // Many Christians today would probably agree that their prayers are sometimes mediocre. I confess that my own prayers are not always full of deep and heartfelt words. Thankfully, Christ always intercedes for us, and God is a loving Father. This means he always hears the prayers of his children.

However, we should want to grow in our prayer life. It's a positive thing to desire more fervent and passionate prayers.

Though Scripture should be our primary guide for prayer (see Westminster Larger Catechism Q. 186), it is often beneficial for Christians to read the impassioned prayers of God's people in the past. Their prayers can help us better speak to the Lord from the innermost recesses of our hearts.

The North African theologian Augustine (354–430) is a good help for those who want to pray better. The way he articulated the desires and thoughts of his heart in prayer is a beautiful example of a believer intimately communing with the Lord. As we listen in on Augustine's prayers, we not only learn more about prayer, we're also spiritually moved by the God-ward longings of his heart.

It would take a book to examine all of Augustine's prayers and comments about prayer. For now, however, I will focus only on his *Confessions*. This en-

tire book might be considered an autobiographical prayer. To keep it brief, however, I want to point out some of Augustine's short prayers in the *Confessions*. My hope is that a look at these prayers will teach you to pray better and encourage you to open your hearts more as you commune with the Lord in prayer.

## Reflective Confession of Past Sin

Before Augustine turned to the Lord in faith, he lived for his own sinful pleasures. Augustine's prayers recounting his prodigal adolescent years are not restrained: "Lord my God, I sinned by not doing as I was told by my parents and teachers" (12). "I abandoned you to pursue the lowest things of your creation. I was dust going to dust" (16).

Augustine also understood the strong sinful pull of his depraved heart: "As an adolescent I went astray from you (Ps. 118:76), my God, far from your unmoved stability. I became to myself a region of destitution" (34). "You were with me, and I was not with you" (201).

He made no excuses. Augustine didn't blame Satan or the very sinful culture in which he lived. Instead, he prayed, "My stiff neck took me further and further away from you. I loved my own ways, not yours. The liberty I loved was merely that of a runaway" (38). The imagery is striking. Augustine realized his own depravity led him to stray from God into a destitute region where he was like a runaway slave with no true freedom. And again, he confessed as much to God in his prayers.

## Prayer Lesson

When we confess our sins to God, it is beneficial sometimes to include our past sins. We should not pull up our old sins and despair over them—they are fully forgiven in Christ! However, even David thought about the sins of his youth and asked the Lord to remember them not (Ps. 25:7; cf. Jer. 3:25). The sins of our youth might be a burden that is difficult for us to bear. Scripture calls us to cast our cares on the Lord, and he will sustain us (Ps. 55:22;



1 Pet. 5:7). So speak freely and candidly to God about your past sins, confess them, and remember that he forgives them (Ps. 32:5).

### Remembrance of God's Mercy

Augustine was also aware of his ongoing sinfulness and continued need for God's mercy. He prayed for more mercy: "Lord hear my prayer (Ps. 60:2) that my soul may not collapse (Ps. 83:3) under your discipline (Ps. 54:2), and may not suffer exhaustion in confessing to you your mercies, by which you have delivered me from all my evil ways" (17). Augustine knew that even when he was a wayward youth, it was in God's providence: "For you were always with me, mercifully punishing me, touching with a bitter taste all my illicit pleasures" (25). Augustine was deeply thankful to God for this "bitter" mercy. "You are the physician, I am the patient. You are pitiful [full of pity], I am the object of pity" (202). "You pierced my heart with the arrow of your love" (156).

Augustine also knew God's mercy had brought him out of destitution into the light of his love. "You had pity on it [my heart] when it was at the bottom of the abyss [of sin]" (29). "My entire hope is exclusively in your very great mercy" (202). He confessed that God was the author of his conversion even though he did not realize it at the time. "My God, how I burned, how I burned with longing to leave earthly things and fly back to you. I did not know what you were doing with me" (39). Notice the great imagery:

I will love you, Lord, and I will give thanks and confession to your name because you have forgiven me such great evils and my nefarious deeds. I attribute to your grace and mercy that you have melted my sins away like ice. (32)

Indeed, "There is one hope, one ground of confidence, one reliable promise—your mercy" (207).

### Prayer Lesson

When looking back at our past



*"You have melted my sins away like ice," Augustine prays in his Confessions.*  
(Sandro Botticelli, c. 1480, public domain)

sins, we should also remember God's great mercy in delivering us from them. And we should always express thanks for this mercy! It is true that God was "long beforehand" with our souls as the hymn puts it and as Augustine experienced. We can talk to God candidly and freely about this and share with him our heartfelt thanks for his patient mercy (Ps. 28:6; 116:1).

### Prayers for Spiritual Growth

Augustine recognized his ongoing need for spiritual growth. "The house of my soul is too small for you to come to it. May it be enlarged by you. It is in ruins; restore it" (6). He longed to grow in love for God. "Bring to me a sweetness surpassing all the seductive delights which I pursued. Enable me to love you with all my strength that I may clasp your hand with all my heart" (17–18). On the other hand, Augustine also wanted to experience God's love for him more deeply.

[Lord,] I intend to remind myself of my past foulnesses and carnal corruptions, not because I love them but so that I may love you, my God. It is from love of your love that I make the act of recollection. The recalling of my wicked ways is bitter in my

memory, but I do it so that you may be sweet to me, a sweetness touched by no deception, a sweetness serene and content. (24)

### Prayer Lesson

It is right for us to pray fervently for spiritual growth. We should often pray for more love to God as we reflect on his great redemption (Ps. 107:43). Christians can furthermore talk to God about his great love for us and ask him to give us a richer experience of it (Ps. 85:7; 86:13).

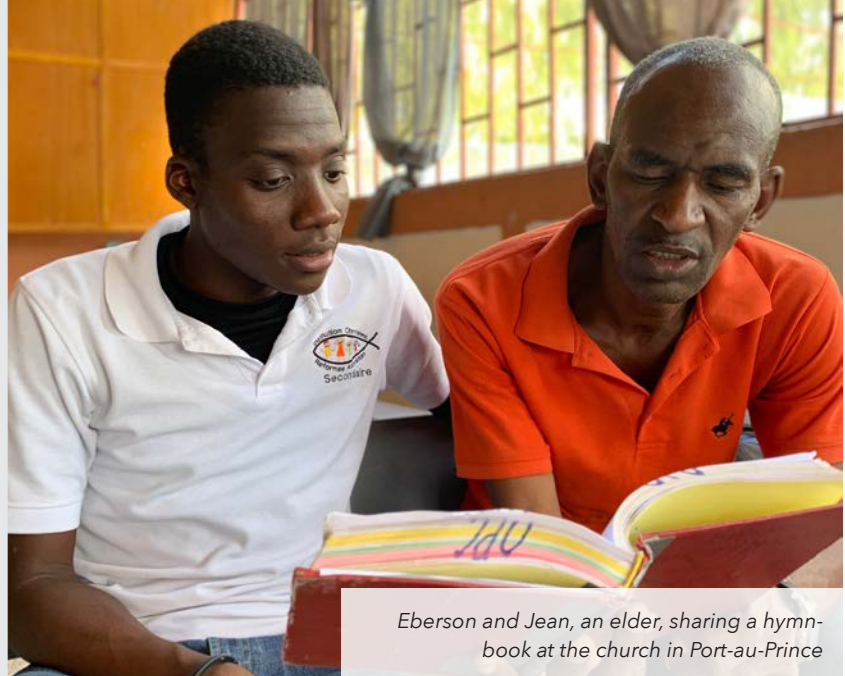
### Conclusion

The short prayers in Augustine's *Confessions* are a good example of how to reflect on God's merciful work in our lives, talk to him about it openly, give thanks for it, and ask him for continued spiritual growth. You may want to put *Confessions* on your "to read" list for resources on prayer! And, of course, don't forget to ask the Lord to help you pray better and open up your heart to him in the intimacy of prayer. □

The author is pastor of Covenant Presbyterian Church in Hammond Wisconsin. All quotations are from *Saint Augustine, Confessions*, translated by Henry Chadwick (Oxford University Press, 1992).

# "IN THE DAYS OF YOUR YOUTH"

// BENJAMIN K. HOPP



*Eberson and Jean, an elder, sharing a hymn-book at the church in Port-au-Prince*

Warwens was still in high school when he first came to worship with us at the church in Port-au-Prince. He has been a baptized member of the church since 2017 and completed his secondary education a couple years ago. What does a young man do after graduating high school if he has a mother and younger sisters to support? How does a young Christian man think about providing for a future family in Haiti?

For Warwens, that possibility came in the form of a veterinary technician program run by a missionary veterinarian in Haiti. The program involves a series of weeklong sessions where the students learn both in the classroom and in the field. They study care of local animals: cats, dogs, goats, pigs, horses, and cows. The OPC Haiti Mission had encouraged another young man to do this program, but he quit after just two months because he thought he had found another, better opportunity.



*Young people serving the Lord in the Port-au-Prince congregation: Santanette, Estania, Handy, Seliane, and Warwens*

How did Warwens fair? We are grateful to report that he completed the program during 2021-2022. The unpredictable security situation meant that travel to the program site in rural Haiti was, at times, very dangerous. But the Lord provided protection, and Warwens will graduate in May 2022. How thankful we are for the opportunity this will give him to work and grow into a young man who can care for his family and give back to the church.

## Young People in a Difficult Situation

Why are young people like Warwens so important for the Haitian churches? Census data suggests that approximately 54 percent of the population is under the age of twenty-five ([worldpopulationreview.com](http://worldpopulationreview.com)). The [World Happiness Report](#) put out by the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network ranks Haiti at 148 out of 156 countries. When you put these two data points together, it means that there are a lot of unhappy young people in the country.

Is this any different in the church? I am grateful to be able to report some stories of young people who are desiring to serve God in his church. These young people are finding their contentment in seeking the Lord and serving his people. As churches who support the work of the Mission, you should be encouraged because they are living out Ecclesiastes 12:1, "Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near of which you will say, 'I have no pleasure in them.'" Being a young person in Haiti is difficult and discouraging, but the church has an important part to play in the spiritual and life development of our young people. Let me tell you a few of their stories, which highlight both how their lives are difficult and how the church is helping them to grow in grace.

## Estania, Waiting on the Lord

One of the young women in the picture with Warwens is Estania. She has been a faithful member of the Port-au-Prince

congregation since coming to us in 2017. She has a beautiful voice with which she praises God in worship and at special celebrations. As she looked to the future, an opportunity came up for her to do a two-year hospitality program. She faithfully studied and completed the program, which included a lot of on-the-job training. She was due to enter the tourist industry in Haiti right at the time the gangs made a resurgence and the security situation in Haiti really deteriorated, diminishing her prospects. What a discouragement for someone who had worked hard and was trusting in the Lord!

By God's grace, Estania has continued to wait patiently. Even as she waits for work, she has had to care for her ill mother. This has given her opportunity to witness to her family of her faith in Christ, trusting that he will provide for her future and encourage her despite difficult external circumstances.



Franklin and Elijah

### Franklin, Finding Encouragement in Relationship

Another young man who came to the Port-au-Prince church with Warwens and Estania in 2017 was Franklin. His skills with technology and computers were evident as he finished high school and looked to the future. He was able to begin a program at a local technical college. Where does a young Haitian man find encouragement to keep going? Sometimes it is through another brother—in this case our missionary son Elijah.

The Scriptures remind young Christians to “let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity” (1 Tim. 4:12). The Hopp kids have had opportunity to do this as they interact with Haitian young people like Franklin. Elijah used his computer knowledge to help Franklin with some of his assignments and also had spiritual conversations with him. This is another example of how the Lord uses both our skills and our willingness in relationship to be an encouragement.

### Janez, a Witness of God's Steadfast Love

Haiti is a place of a multitude of temptations for young people. Unfortunately, many fall into sexual sin. Janez is a young woman at the Nan Mangot church on the island of

La Gonâve, who I baptized along with her sister back in 2015. Her story is one of sin followed by repentance and restoration. Like many young Haitian women, she found herself caring for a child that came as a result of a sexual relationship outside of marriage. By God's grace, she came to her elders with a broken and contrite heart.

Now Janez is faithful in worship and has the support of her church family. In God's mercy, Janez did not run from her sin. She admitted it and sought forgiveness before God and her church. Now the



Janez and her daughter

Nan Mangot congregation has the blessing of three generations of her family worshipping together—Janez, her mother, and her young daughter. It is a clear testimony to God's promise in Psalm 25:7: “Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to your steadfast love remember me, for the sake of your goodness, O LORD!”

### Eberson and Jean

As the church in Haiti looks to the future, ultimately the spiritual growth of the young people needs to be through the older saints helping the younger. Many of the young people I have told you about don't have parents spiritually involved in their lives. Very few young people have parents attending church with them and giving godly guidance.

Eberson has been a stalwart at the Port-au-Prince church since making profession of faith and being baptized in 2016. His growth in grace has been evident, seen especially in his thankful heart. As a mission, we provide a lot of diaconal help, and Eberson is one of those who always comes to say thank you. He is like the one leper who left the other nine to return to thank and praise Jesus for healing him.

As I was looking through photos from Haiti, I was struck by one of Eberson and Jean. Jean is an elder-in-training at the church. In the photo, they are singing together during a Bible study. Jean is one of those men who models a godly life. He has remained in Haiti, served in the church, and is an example to young men like Eberson of one who is thankful and content. Pray for the young people of Haiti, that through the example of more mature saints, the Lord would “give prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the youth” (Prov.1:4).

*The author is an OP missionary in Haiti.*

# A HIGHLIGHT FOR THE CCE: THE TIMOTHY CONFERENCE

// DANNY E. OLINGER



2022 Timothy Conference participants on the beach near Escondido, California

On March 12, 2020, travel and events across the United States began to shut down because of the outbreak of COVID-19. This meant the cancellation of the Timothy Conference that was to start the next week for sixteen young men who had been nominated by sessions across the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC). This was a hard blow, not only for the men who were going to attend, but also for the Committee on Christian Education that oversees the conference. The conference, with its aim of introducing gospel ministry in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church to young men ages sixteen to twenty-one, is annually one of the highlights for the CCE. Since its inauguration in 2008, more than two hundred men have attended the conference. Thirty have gone to study in a seminary, and fifteen have been ordained to gospel ministry in the OPC.

## 2022 Conference in Escondido

It was with rejoicing, then, that the CCE was able to hold the Timothy Conference again on April 20–23 in Escondido, California. Seventeen young men—including one who was originally to take part in the 2020 conference—from fifteen congregations in twelve different states participated. Joining the participants were CCE members David VanDrunen and Joel Fick, CCE General Secretary Danny Olinger, Timothy Conference coordinator Judy Alexander, and OPC ministers and speakers, David Crum, Christopher Hartshorn, Bryan Estelle, Zachary Keele, and John Fikkert.

On the first day, the students attended Dr. Estelle's class on the prophetic books and were exposed to professor and students exegeting Isaiah 27 from the Hebrew text. Afterwards a Timothy Conference participant said that seeing and hearing the primary work on the Hebrew text was "inspiring," a sentiment that other young men also shared.

Mr. Keele also stressed the importance of ministers

learning the original languages of Greek and Hebrew in a talk with the young men. Memorably, he showed how the Greek text in Luke 8:38–39 reveals through its structure that Jesus is God. Mr. Crum, with thirty-nine years of missionary and pastoral experience, spoke on the topic of the office of minister. Dr. VanDrunen followed with a detailed explanation of the what and why of seminary education.

After these presentations, and a delicious lunch served by the members of Escondido OPC, everyone departed for a time of fellowship at the beach at Oceanside, California. By this time, the bonds of fellowship among the recently gathered participants were already beginning to show. Laughter and conversations flowed as the young men enjoyed God's creation. This fellowship continued with a return to the motel as many gathered in a room to sing psalms and hymns into the night.

The next day, everyone attended Dr. VanDrunen's class on Reformed Confessions, the subject being chapters 17 and 18 of the Westminster Confession of Faith. Mr. Fick then addressed the topic that the young men said they had the greatest interest in learning more about: discerning the call to the gospel ministry. Mr. Hartshorn, regional home missionary



The participants sat in on seminary classes, were addressed by OP professors and pastors, and—played foosball.

of the Presbytery of Southern California, then shared with the men helps and encouragements in preparing for ministry now. Mr. Fikkert introduced the Committee on Ministerial Care to the participants and also encouraged them with the importance of being a good listener. Mr. Olinger closed the session with a talk on the steps and examination process for becoming a minister in the OPC.

### Reflections and Thanksgivings

The group then departed for dinner and fellowship at the home of Gabriel and Erin Nave, members of Harvest OPC in San Marcos, California. In addition to many conversations sitting around the Nave's patio, a rousing game of "Runaround" with Dr. A. Craig Troxel at the ping pong table also broke out. The night ended with a prayer of thanksgiving to God for the events of the past two days and for God's blessing on the participants going forward.

Early Saturday morning, the first cars started to leave for the San Diego airport. Mr. Fick said, "I once again boarded the plane for home with thankfulness in my heart to the Lord for blessing our labors and praying that he would raise up from among these young men the next generation of faithful pastors for the OPC." Dr. VanDrunen added, "We had a great

group of young men who expressed serious interest in service to Christ and his church and who also developed a quick rapport with each other."

Attendee Evan Wheat echoed Dr. VanDrunen's comments about the fellowship: "On my trip to and from Escondido, I missed a flight, had a flight



17 men from 15 congregations in 12 states attended the conference

cancelled, and had a nap on the ground of the Phoenix airport. But I would experience all of those troubles again in a heartbeat if it meant being able to spend more time with the brothers in Christ I found at this year's Timothy Conference!"

*The author is general secretary of the Committee on Christian Education.*

## ☆ Congratulations

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

- **Hydee Silbaugh, Calvary OPC, Middletown, PA**

## Favorite Psalms and Hymns *Trinity Psalter Hymnal no. 131A* "My Heart Is Not Exalted"

*John R. Muether*

Like many OPC congregations, our church has grown in greater familiarity with and deepening love for the Psalms since we acquired the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal* in 2018. One selection that quickly became a favorite for us is Psalm 131A. Though 131B is more familiar, 131A is a beautiful tune that originated as a sixteenth-century German Christmas carol, *Lobt Gott, Ihr Christen Alle Gleich* ("Praise God, All Christians Equally") by Nikolaus Herman, an early Protestant hymnwriter and contemporary of Martin Luther. Two centuries later, Johann Sebastian Bach developed the harmony.

The Songs of Ascent (Psalms 130–134) describe the dangers, toils, and snares in our journey to Zion: bandits and thieves, sunstroke and moon-stroke, wild animals, and other threats. In Psalm 131, we find yet another challenge in our pilgrimage—our pride and prosperity. This brief psalm teaches a lesson about contentment. It begins with the countercultural call to restrain personal ambition. David describes this by means of dysfunctional body parts—a haughty heart and prideful eyes. In modern parlance, the pilgrim is blessed who "stays in his lane"—not occupying himself with "things too high for me." Rather than peer into the secret things of God, we must hope, rest, and trust in what he has revealed to us in his Word. David goes on to liken contentment to a weaned child, calmed and stilled, who continues to enjoy the nearness and intimacy of his mother. The infant has matured into a childlike faith.

Psalm 131 is a humble psalm about humility, and Charles Spurgeon once observed that it "is one of the shortest psalms to read, but one of the longest to learn." We can add that it is also one of the loveliest psalms to sing.

## ● Out of the Mouth . . .

My son, Ray, was recently giggling to himself and singing what sounded like "Standin' in the Need of Prayer." However, the pastor who had taught him the hymn was balding, and Ray had misheard the words. He was singing: "Standin' in the Need of Hair."

—Mark Stumpff  
Watsonstown, PA

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

# PLANTING A DAUGHTER CHURCH

// PHILIP T. PROCTOR AND JOHN PAUL HOLLOWAY



John Paul Holloway leading worship at Acacia, a new daughter church plant

*A conversation between Phil Proctor, pastor of Sterling OPC in Sterling, Virginia, and John Paul Holloway, organizing pastor of a daughter church in nearby Manassas. They reflect on their experience thus far and their prayerful hopes for the future.*

**Phil Proctor [Phil]:** Serving on the foreign mission field for the OPC, my “job description” was to promote a local church that was planting its own churches. In 2011, when it was time to transition to a stateside ministry, the Lord graciously led us to Sterling OPC in Northern Virginia. The ruling elders had all been involved in seeing Sterling OPC planted in the 1980s, and as the Lord grew the congregation over the next ten years, each new member knew that the vision of planting a daughter congregation was front and center in our identity. Our goal was to reach a little over one hundred, bring a man alongside and grow to one hundred and fifty or so, and then “peel off” fifty to sixty members for a solid core group. In 2020, it seemed like the Lord was answering our metrics, and we began the process of bringing John Paul Holloway, with his family, to be our first daughter church pastor.

**John Paul Holloway [JP]:** Apparently, church planting is in my blood. Growing up, my family was involved in a mother/daughter church plant in Plainview, Texas (population 21,000). Christ Covenant under pastors David Brack and Andrew Moody was the mother church (seventy-five miles away in Amarillo) to our daughter, Covenant of Grace, pastored by Kevin Van Der Linden. My wife, Corinne, also

grew up in a church plant, in the PCA. We both know well the setup routines of chairs and bulletins. We also know the pain of failure. After seven years, Covenant of Grace closed. Why embark on this adventure again when I have experienced firsthand the soul-crushing lack of success? Because God’s thoughts and ways are higher than ours. The fruit that God brought from my childhood church plant was not immediately evident—but I have seen and experienced it firsthand. And so, here we go again! I was more than excited to take a call to serve saints in Virginia who were excited to plant a church near to them—to reach out in the communities where God has placed them.

**Phil:** One of the things I wasn’t prepared for was the (now obvious) reality that both congregations—Sterling and Acacia—are new congregations with new service dynamics. This is an exciting time to see new faces stepping up to engage in ministry! I walked into our first separate worship service on January 2 expecting to be discouraged by the gaping hole that sixty people had left, but instead have been overwhelmed and encouraged by the joy, the sense of mission, and—yes—the numeric growth over the past few weeks. It really does feel like pruning. OK, that may be a bad Scriptural metaphor, but when the vine is pruned, there’s always abundant new growth. It seems that the Lord is being pleased to continue that at Sterling, and we can’t wait for our next daughter!

**JP:** It’s always extraordinary what the Lord does with his ordinary means of grace as he builds his church. Even though the pruning metaphor is a little thorny—it pricks



John Paul Holloway (center, grey suit) at his ordination and installation service with Phil Proctor to his right

of the truth. This has not been easy! Each step has required an active trust in the Lord. In being planted somewhere new, people miss their friends and the comfort of the familiar. But positively, the group already knows each other and shares a common vision.

Sterling had hoped to start the plant with a well-seasoned elder, Mark Rogers, who was passionate and experienced in church planting. But the Lord, in his good providence, called Mark home just one week before Acacia's first worship service. What was God thinking? In human wisdom, how could this be good for us? I don't know . . . but God does. We had trouble finding a meeting space, but the Lord provided a movie theater, and the contract was signed, with insurance in place, just one week before launch. Was it possible that God could meet with his people in a theater? Yes! His worship is not tied to a particular mountain or location. He was and is present with us by his Word and Spirit because he has promised to till Jesus returns.

*Phil:* Why are we striving for a healthy congregation with solid leadership that is actively seeking to see the kingdom expand in its local area? What Christian *wouldn't* want to be part of such a group? To know that in our "normal" daily lives, we are playing our part in the nations kissing the beloved Son! Other congregations have different approaches to kingdom expansion, and I do not intend to place ours above another's—to God be the glory in each case.

However, in the words of Winston Churchill, "There is nothing more exhilarating than to be shot at without result!" Planting a daughter church feels almost foolhardy and presumptuous. This can be a financial disaster, and God may well choose not to replace the numbers with new growth. All these fears are valid, but this is definitely exhilarating!

This ongoing ministry vision forces us to be outwardly focused. In Titus 3:8–9, Paul warns against allowing the church to focus on issues that are secondary to the gospel. We are not going to be identified by any number of very legitimate wisdom decisions, but by the vows of our church membership plus nothing. The leadership is committed to pastoral shepherding and to the standards of the OPC. Just basic, normal, Presbyterian stuff, but I'm always surprised at how many people have never received a shepherding visit.

Encouraging a congregation where people know each



*Fellowship after worship at Acacia, which meets in a movie theater*

other, are in each other's homes, and are actively seeking to love one another as Christ has loved us—this is where the bride is seen in her beauty and is increasingly attractive in our despairing culture. Whether God is pleased to allow us to plant another daughter congregation or not, our vision is the same and we are blessed to have been able to play our little part.

*JP:* Paul, in his letter to Titus, told him to appoint elders in every town. There are 500,000 people in Prince William County, Virginia, and the population is growing. Many claim to have "no religion." There is room here for even more churches to faithfully proclaim the gospel. Other NAPARC area pastors even expressed excitement for us to join them in the harvest because the need is great. If we are trying to invite people to church, it's nice to not explain that it's an hour away. How about: "It's only ten minutes! Want to come for lunch afterwards?"

In seminary, I read a dissertation called, "Small Churches Can Plant Churches." It argues that small congregations who begin to pray and save for church planting can be just as effective in the work of church planting as megachurches, maybe even more so. When God brings the opportunity, they're ready!

Jesus says in John 4 that the fields are white for harvest. Do you believe him? If so, for guts and for glory! (In fact, his glory alone!) He will be exalted in the earth and in the nations. Labor for him is never in vain. We appreciate prayer as we seek to faithfully proclaim the glorious gospel of salvation in Christ alone to our neighbors, friends, coworkers, and any person the Lord may bring into our lives who does not know the wonder of being saved from God's wrath and hidden with Christ in God. Perhaps Acacia and Sterling's next church-planting effort will be a joint one.

## Home Missions Today

For up-to-date news and prayer requests, receive our newsletter by subscribing at [CHMCE.org](http://CHMCE.org) or scanning this QR code.



# RETIREES: THE BACKBONE OF DISASTER RESPONSE

// CHERYL WADE



*Jim Flanagan, who owned a business specializing in disaster restoration, lent his skills to OPC Disaster Response*

Retirement is not the end of busy work lives for the men and women who OPC Disaster Response sends around the country to repair damage dealt by hurricanes, tornados, and floods.

Church leaders say that these senior citizens make up the backbone of their volunteers. Here are laborers and planners, fixers and rebuilders, with years of prior experience and a love of God and neighbor.

## Volunteering Out of Faithfulness

“Retirement is all about life stages,” said Jeff Davis, a sixty-one-year-old deacon from Cedar OPC in Jenison, Michigan. “You’ve reached a stage in your life where you have more time, and God has provided so well,” he said, “so you have a thankful heart and you volunteer out of faithfulness.”

Davis had worked in a short-line startup railroad, but when it sold, he could make more choices with how he spent his time. He had converted to Christianity as an adult. “Everything changed: my likes and dislikes—everything turned around,” he described. He married Gloria, a like-minded partner who also had a desire to serve others. A cardiology nurse, Gloria was born in Africa to missionary parents.

Jeff went to help in Houston in September 2017 and Gloria joined him a month or two later. While Jeff worked as a site coordinator, Gloria served as administrative assistant. She created spreadsheets to track the work and submitted receipts for reimbursement. Later, she said, she took on the role



*Gloria Davis and her husband, Jeff, have volunteered extensively with Disaster Response in their retirement*

of hospitality coordinator for the Houston site. “Once volunteers were committed to coming, the volunteer coordinator would pass the information on to me,” Gloria said. A church served as the “one-stop” hospitality center, where volunteers had beds, blankets, sleeping bags, and a kitchen where they could cook. Sometimes, women of the church brought lunches for the workers and the neighbors, and there were potlucks where everybody had plenty of chow, she said. Gloria and Jeff worked together on separate parts of the disaster relief.

## On-the-Job Training

Kenley Leslie, who is seventy-three and lives in Staunton, Virginia, where he is a member of Staunton OPC, said he didn’t put “retirement” and his name in the same sentence. He left a career in computer repair and desktop services at fifty-eight so that he could become involved in volunteer work. He was young enough at the time to perform rough, exhausting work—ripping up wet floors, and getting the wet wood out.

“I’m not skilled in anything . . . I knew how to swing a hammer, and I knew about electricity,” Leslie said. “I was a good carpenter’s helper, plumber’s helper, or electrician’s helper. I never said I was good at painting; because I was not!”

John Gordon, sixty-seven, and a deacon at Calvary OPC in Middletown, Pennsylvania, near Harrisburg, displayed equal modesty by calling himself a jack of all trades and a master of none. When it came to disaster work, he said, “I had to learn to do something. I was available.” And time showed him what that “something” was.

Gordon is retired from public school teaching. He



has also worked in group homes for people with disabilities and has volunteered with Joni and Friends, an organization that offers summer camps for families of children with disabilities.

His first job with OPC Disaster Response took him to Maryland, where a creek had backed up and become “a raging torrent.” The brick home of a member of Grace and Peace Presbyterian in California, Maryland, who lived with his aged mother, was flooded, and they needed quick help. The house was not in a floodplain, so they had no flood insurance.

“The whole first floor flooded about a foot high,” Gordon said. Much of the flooring and wall board had to be removed.

“The Lord knew exactly what was going on there (in Maryland) and who he wanted there,” Gordon added. He realized that he could encourage homeowners—and that encouragement, too, was part of the OPC’s work.

The flood had occurred just two weeks after the church had installed its only two deacons. Gordon told them the work would be “a trial by fire.”

Fellow OPC volunteer Jim Flanagan, member of Covenant Presbyterian in New Bern, North Carolina, drove six hours to the site and gave valuable, expert advice to the disaster team, Gordon said. Flanagan also taught him to use a broom properly: “You don’t push past your foot or you’re sweeping stuff back into the air,” he said.

Flanagan, sixty-five, had a cleaning business specializing in disaster restoration. He left that work because of a heart condition, but that didn’t keep him from using his voice and his experience. “It made me more empathic for people,” he said. “You get into people’s personal spaces and you end up going through one of the worst things they’ve ever had to experience.”

When Hurricane Florence struck in 2018, he worked on a site near his home, encouraging church members and coordinating the work. At this post, he could describe the big picture when it came to repairing people’s severely damaged homes. He worked to preserve valuables such as pictures and documents. “I could speak with authority about situations, reassure people of what to expect or do next,” he said.

While volunteering, he was able to “quit” working and focus on relationships, not just management. Compassion pushed him forward. “When you get to the core of what somebody is, and you talk, you build relationships” and see the “harmony” between yourself and another person, he said.

### What’s Next?

Even within retirement, there are stages of life and stages of work. Leslie said he can’t keep up with the very physical work anymore—he doesn’t have the stamina. He said he hopes younger guys will step up for the work. But there’s a new tug for him: refugee work.

“I have talked to people in three different organizations about refugee work since 9:00 this morning,” Leslie stated in a recent email. A year ago, his wife, Sarah, started a prayer

time for the persecuted church. It morphed to include refugees. Recently, the couple learned about Afghan refugees who were being housed eight miles away in a Super 8 motel.

All five volunteers said Jesus Christ is the cornerstone of their work and of their lives. “If our security is in Christ, we don’t have to solve everybody’s problems,” Leslie said. “This was the work of Christ . . . and we worked with Christ.”

“He’s the reason for life; he’s the reason for living,” Gloria Davis added. “Without Jesus in your life, what meaning is there; what joy is there?”

To learn more about OPC Disaster Response, go to their website: [OPCDisasterResponse.org](http://OPCDisasterResponse.org).

*The author is a member of Christ Covenant OPC in Midland, Michigan.*

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## CDM MEETING IN CLARKSTON, GEORGIA

The Committee on Diaconal Ministries met for their stated bi-annual meetings on April 7–8. This year, they met at Redeemer OPC in Atlanta, Georgia, the hosting church for the Clarkston Refugee Ministry, which the CDM supports.

This meeting was an opportunity for many of the members of the CDM to visit the refugee ministry for the first time. “[Pastors Weldeyesus and Tamirat’s] fervor for the gospel and their heart for people was wonderful to experience. Clearly they have a gift for reaching into the lives of those who have lost country, home, and precious relationships,” shared committee member Ron de Ru.

CDM member Seth Long agreed. “I was most impressed with sitting in the living rooms of families who have fled persecution and danger . . . and the ways they are desiring to now provide for their families in a land and culture much different from their own. It was truly wonderful to see how the Lord in his good providence is gathering families to be connected to the gospel outreach work of the church, caring for the spiritual and physical needs of the stranger in our midst.”



*Pastors Weldeyesus and Tamirat along with CDM members John Voss, Seth Long, Nathan Trice, Ron de Ru, and Chris Cashen meet a refugee family in Clarkston*

[Continued from page 7]

classes taught by native speakers. Many children and adults have attended our English clubs, where our Lord has offered the gift of eternal life through the gospel ministry of missionaries and church members alike.

Of the thousands of immigrants arriving in Uruguay searching for greater stability, several have found the Lord's help from our Mission. One couple from Venezuela came from a Reformed church and were looking for a Reformed church! When they found us, they expressed their desire to be married. Several months later, Salvos Por Gracia hosted its first wedding. One of our brothers walked the bride down the aisle in place of her father. The congregation blessed her with a wedding gown, flowers, and a homemade triple layer cake as we celebrated God's love for them.

His faithful work fills us with thankfulness. We recently hosted a married couple from the States who used their Spanish to thoughtfully engage our members throughout the week. Before the couple left, we listened with joy as they praised God for these folks, describing them as lovely, sweet believers who openly shared God's gracious work in their lives. They were also impressed with the members' dedication to Reformed doctrine—their commitment to study the Puritans as well as Spurgeon, Pink, and Sproul. To God be the glory; great things he has done!

### Expecting Christ's Finished Church

Our regular celebration of God's former work keeps us firmly expecting him to finish it. By faith, we pray and plan for the near future. By the time you read this article, we trust that God will have placed our church in its new location, where it will be drawing others to Christ. By September, we hope to have a new missionary couple working alongside us. By this time next year, another ruling elder and a deacon will be added, Lord willing, to our church's leadership. Within two years, we envision a new

church plant taking shape in the vicinity of a member's home.

Five years down the road, we trust that Salvos Por Gracia will enjoy a membership of fifty, be financially self-supporting, have its own Reformed pastor, and be working together with a sister church of twenty members. Beyond this, a presbytery of six Reformed and Presbyterian churches would be ordaining its own pastors and planting other churches. However lofty these goals seem in this atheistic culture, we trust them to the One who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, resting entirely in his promise to build his church.

Should the Lord bless us with all we plan, or far more, it would still only be a meager taste of heaven compared to the eternal glory that awaits his church. She is the new Jerusalem, her husband's holy bride, God's dwelling with his people who will be forever purified, forever free from pain, sorrow, suffering, and death. How gracious of our Lord to call us to labor together with him on the only human entity that will never cease to exist in glorious perfection!

And so, we persevere now in our work, remembering his faithfulness while expecting future glory. What a life-transforming perspective! Our Savior never designs our trials to defeat us, but to direct us toward his final goal.

Last September, Salvos Por Gracia lost its missionaries when we went back to the States for four months of furlough. Though we were unable to work with them, Jesus was working in them. Worship continued under their elder's direction, while weekly Bible studies were led by another potential church officer. They met each other's needs, fellowshiped together, and paid all the bills on time. All this took place while the missionaries were thousands of miles away. Whether they realize it or not, they were taking one giant step



Salvos Por Gracia members in front of a new addition to their home



Elder Juan Lopez exhorting the congregation

towards becoming their own church.

And now Salvos Por Gracia has lost its building. What we first believed to be a major obstacle, we now see as an open door. Moving them out of their building, Christ is moving them to a new place, which is more affordable. As they learn to take greater ownership of their meeting place, our Mission will help them take further ownership of the life and leadership of the church itself. Apart from their loss, they may never have thought to move in a new direction.

Our perseverance today depends on remembering Christ's past faithfulness in order to expect future fulfillment. Isn't it much like coming to the sacrament of the Lord's Table? There we participate in Christ's body and blood, rejoicing in his already finished work while setting our hearts on the wedding feast of the Lamb where we are already fully, but not yet finally, seated. □

*The author is an OP missionary in Montevideo, Uruguay.*

JUNE



The Mourreales (day 1)

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- 1** **MARK & CARLA VAN ESSENDELFT**, Nakaale, Uganda (on furlough). Pray for their baby, due early June. / **PAUL & SARAH MOURREALE**, West Plains, MO. Pray for wisdom as Covenant seeks to purchase a church building.
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- 2** Pray that the **NATIONAL DIACONAL SUMMIT**, June 2-4, would be a rich time of instruction, encouragement, and fellowship. / Pray for the work of stated clerk **HANK BELFIELD** during General Assembly next week in St. Davids, PA.
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- 3** Assoc. missionaries **CHRISTOPHER AND CHLOE VERDICK** and **LEAH HOPP**, Nakaale, Uganda (on furlough). Pray for traveling mercies. / Summer intern **JOE (MYRANDA) SCHERSCHLIGT** at Christ OPC in Marietta, GA.
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- 4** Active duty military chaplains **JEFFREY (JENNIFER) SHAMESS**, US Army, and **CORNELIUS (DEIDRE) JOHNSON**, US Navy. / Pray for the persecuted church in **EAST AFRICA** and the **ETHIOPIAN REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**.
- 
- 5** **LACY (DEBBIE) ANDREWS**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of the Southeast. / **MARKUS (SHARON) JEROMIN**, gathering-minister in Battle Creek, MI. Pray for the mission work's weekly Bible study.

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**6** Retired missionaries **BRIAN & DOROTHY WINGARD** give thanks for the preaching opportunities that Brian has and all the Lord has given them to do. / Pray for **DANNY OLINGER**, general secretary of Christian Education, as he directs internship program.

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**7** Retired missionaries **YOUNG & MARY LOU SON** give thanks for God's provision and care. Pray for Mary Lou's daily challenges with Parkinson's. / **ISAAC (ESTHER) ZHOU**, church-planting intern at Pasadena OPC in Pasadena, CA.

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**8** Home Missions associate general secretary **AL TRICARICO**. / Yearlong interns **BEN (JOELLE) CAMPBELL** at Presbyterian Church of Cape Cod in West Barnstable, MA, and **BEN (VICTORIA) CIAVOLELLA** at Delta Oaks Presbyterian in Pittsburg, CA.

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**9** Pray for Foreign Missions general secretary **MARK BUBE** as he reports to the General Assembly this week. / **TYLER & NATALIE DETRICK**, Dayton, OH. Pray for God's blessing as Lights of the Nations invites its neighbors to worship.

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**10** **JEREMY & GWEN BAKER**, Yuma, AZ. Pray for year-round permanent residents to visit Yuma OPC. / Pray for Foreign Missions associate general secretary **DOUGLAS CLAWSON** and admin. assistant **TIN LING LEE**. / Summer intern **ANDREW DAVIS** at Trinity Presbyterian in Newberg, OR.



The Bakers (day 10)

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**11** **MILLER & STEPHANIE ANSELL**, Waco, TX. Pray for faithful shepherding, officer training, and visitor follow up at Trinity. / Summer intern **MITCHELL GASKINS** at Covenant Presbyterian in Vandalia, OH.

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**12** **HEERO & ANYA HACQUEBORD**, L'viv, Ukraine. Pray that the Ukrainian people would find their peace and hope in Jesus Christ in uncertain times. / Pray for **ANDREW MOODY** and **LINDA FOH**, technical assistants for OPC.org.

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**13** Pray for the health of retired missionary **GREET RIETKERK** living in the Netherlands. / **JAMES (DANA) STAFFORD**, church-planting intern at Grace Presbyterian in Columbus, OH.

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**14** Pray for **CHARLES (MARGARET) BIGGS**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic. / Pray for CCE's **SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERNET MINISTRIES** as it supervises the work of OPC.org.

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**15** Retired missionaries **CAL & EDIE CUMMINGS**. Pray for relatives struggling with cancer and for an opportunity to serve in Japan this summer. / Pray for summer staff at **BOARDWALK CHAPEL**, Wildwood, NJ.

JUNE



The Knox family (day 26)

**21** **MR. AND MRS. M.**, Asia. Pray for the work of the gospel in the Asian students attending Mr. M.'s Bible studies. / Pray for **JOEL PEARCE**, director of the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal* joint venture, a work of the OPC and URCNA.

**22** **BRAD (CINNAMON) PEPP**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of Ohio. / Pray for **MR. AND MRS. F.**, Asia, that their interactions with northern re-settlers in South Korea might lead to Bible studies.

**23** **JOHN PAUL & CORINNE HOLLOWAY**, Manassas, VA. Pray that unbelievers would visit Acacia Reformed and hear the Word. / **JOHN FIKKERT**, director for the Committee on Ministerial Care.

**24** **BEN & MELANIE WESTERVELD**, Quebec, Canada. Pray for the English for Kids Bible Camp and its outreach to children and families. / Summer intern **JOHNATHAN (MONICA) ALLEN** at Westminster OPC in Indian Head Park, IL.

**25** **CHARLES & CONNIE JACKSON**, Mbale, Uganda. Pray that Knox School of Theology will receive provisional licensing to offer degrees this fall. / Home Missions administrative assistant **KATHARINE OLINGER**.

**26** **MARK STUMPF**, OPC Loan Fund manager. / **CHRIS (MEGAN) HARTSHORN**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of Southern California. / Tentmaking missionaries **TINA DEJONG** and **JOANNA GROVE**, and missionary associates **DR. JIM & JENNY KNOX**, Nakaale, Uganda.



Angela Voskuil (day 27)

**27** **GREAT COMMISSION PUBLICATIONS**, a joint publishing ministry of the OPC and PCA. / Pray for associate missionary **ANGELA VOSKUIL**, Nakaale, Uganda, and the KEO teachers as they restart their outreach to many children.

**28** Summer intern **BRENNEN (TIFANY) WINTER** at Harvest OPC in Wyoming, MI. / **CHRIS BYRD**, Westfield, NJ. Pray the Lord would empower the preaching at Grace OPC to bring forth new life and faith.

**29** **AYRIAN YASAR**, editorial assistant for *Ordained Servant*. / **DAVID NAKHLA**, Diaconal Ministry administrator, asks prayer for the **REFUGEE MINISTRY SUBCOMMITTEE** as they consider how to disburse funds to aid Ukrainian refugees.

**30** Associate missionaries **JAMES & ESTHER FOLKERTS**, Nakaale, Uganda. Give thanks for the encouragement of visitors helping with Mission maintenance and the clinic. / **ANDREW & REBEKAH CANAVAN**, Corona, CA. Pray that God's Word would produce wise and joyful disciples at Corona Presbyterian. / Summer intern **NATE (ELISABETH) BLOECHL** at Bethel OPC in Oostburg, WI.

**16** **MICAH & EILEEN BICKFORD**, Farmington, ME. Pray that God would save local families and bring them to worship. / **MARK & JENI RICHLINE**, Montevideo, Uruguay. Pray for more visitors to Salvos Por Gracia Church.

**17** **MARK & LORIE WHEAT**, Sugar Land, TX. Pray that Good Shepherd would see visitors become committed church members. / Pray for **MELISA MCGINNIS**, financial controller, and **CHARLENE TIPTON**, database administrator.

**18** **BEN & HEATHER HOPP**, Haiti. Pray for God's grace on Elijah and Esther as they finish classes and tests for their school year. / Summer intern **JOHN (RACHEL) CLIFFORD** at New Hope OPC in Frederick, MD.

**19** Associate missionaries **OCTAVIUS & MARIE DELFILS**, Haiti. Pray for the safety of those gathering for Sunday worship in Port-au-Prince and on La Gonâve. / Home Missions general secretary **JOHN SHAW**.

**20** **JOHN & KATIE TERRELL**, Moline, MI. Pray for Living Hope's officer training and evangelism efforts. / Pray for yearlong intern **KELLE (ALEX) CRAFT** at Redeemer OPC in Beaver Creek, OH.

# NEWS, VIEWS & REVIEWS



## UKRAINE FUND UPDATE

*Sarah Klazinga*

The CDM's Ukraine Crisis Fund has received \$567,680 in generous donations.

The CDM has disbursed \$75,000 to the PCA's Mission to the World (MTW) Ukraine Crisis Church Fund and \$9,900 designated for "Post-War Needs" to the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Central and Eastern Europe (RPCCEE).

The CDM continues to assess needs for disbursement. In mid-May, David Nakhla, administrator for the CDM, made a whirlwind assessment trip to Eastern Europe, visiting ministries in the countries on Ukraine's western border. He visited MTW's work in Krakow, Poland; the RPCCEE's works in Budapest and Miskolc, Hungary; the ARP's work in Warsaw, Poland, and in Kaunas, Lithuania; and Tolle Lege, a ministry based in Warsaw, Poland. Please pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ, as they live and serve others, in this war-torn country and beyond.

## G. I. WILLIAMSON: SEVENTY YEARS OF MINISTRY

*Archibald A. Allison*

June 1 marks seventy years since the Presbytery of Des Moines (UPCNA) ordained G. I. Williamson as a minister. He was a professional saxophone player and served in the army during WWII. After his first daughter was born, he began attending his parent's church (UPCNA) and was converted under the Rev. Will W. Orr, a son of the ARPC, who encouraged him to consider the ministry. He studied at Pittsburgh-Xenia Theological Seminary and learned sound theology through Dr. John Gerstner's church history lectures and by reading books in the library by men like



On April 17, Ron Pearce retired as pastor of Church of the Covenant OPC in Hackettstown, New Jersey, after forty-one years of ministry. (Left to right): deacons Jerry Laubach, Garrett Miller, Chris Wagner, Ron DeBlock, Scott Pearce; pastors Ron Pearce and Jim Jordan; and elders Joel Pearce, John Vroegindewey, Aron Gahagan, Keith Cuomo.

Benjamin Warfield. In an adult Bible class he taught as a student pastor, his wife, Doris, was converted after hearing the doctrine of total depravity. The Lord took her home in 2017 after seventy-three years of marriage. G. I., now ninety-seven, served as a pastor in the UPCNA, ARPC, OPC, RCNZ, RPCNA, and has been a minister of the Presbytery of the Dakotas since 1984. He served on the CCE and its Subcommittee on Ministerial Training for twenty-three years, CEIR for seventeen years, GCP, and was the first editor of *Ordained Servant*.



Williamson with Danny Olinger at the 87th (2021) General Assembly

## UPDATE

### CHURCHES

- On April 8, **Light of the Nations OPC** in Dayton, OH, became a particular congregation of the OPC.

### MINISTERS

- On January 7, **Brian Tsui** was installed as associate pastor of Covenant Presbyterian in San Jose, CA. Previously, Tsui worked with Reformed University Fellowship as a PCA minister.
- On March 31, the Presbytery of Ohio dissolved **Stephen S. Lauer's** call to serve as an evangelist for Wilmington Reformed Church, its mission work in Wilmington, OH. Lauer has accepted a call to a URCNA congregation in WA.
- On April 8, **Tyler C. Detrick**, previously the organizing pastor, was installed as pastor of Light of the Nations OPC in Dayton, OH.
- On April 22, **Bryce Souve** was ordained as a minister and installed as pastor of Christ Presbyterian in Janesville, WI.

## MILESTONES

• **Kathleen G. Curto**, 69, died April 24. With her husband, OPC minister Tony Curto, she served as a missionary to Uganda from 1995 to 2004, and she later served as registrar of Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary.

• **Larry Woiwode**, 80, former Orthodox Presbyterian ruling elder and member of the Committee on Christian Education, died April 28. He was the North Dakota poet laureate.

## REVIEWS

*The Spiritual Marriage between Christ and His Church and Every One of the Faithful*, by **Girolamo Zanchi**, translated by **Patrick J. O'Banion**. Reformation Heritage, 2021. Hardcover, 152 pages, \$19.00. Reviewed by OP minister and professor **J. V. Fesko**.

Few people know the name of second-generation Reformed theologian Girolamo Zanchi (1516–1590) because he has been eclipsed in the present day by the reputation of John Calvin. Zanchi was an Italian who studied under Calvin and Peter Martyr Vermigli and avidly read the works of Martin Bucer, Philipp Melancthon, and Martin Luther. He was an Old Testament professor in Strasbourg and wrote numerous theological works. I first encountered his *Spiritual Marriage* when I was teaching a course on union with Christ, where we read numerous works on the topic from a wide range of early modern and modern theologians, from Luther to Geerhardus Vos. I found Zanchi's work especially insightful for a number of reasons.

First, Zanchi's work was originally a part of his exegetical commentary on Ephesians. Zanchi carried out the common sixteenth-century practice of writing biblical commentaries and then at key points writing doctrinal treatments of relevant topics. In this case, Zanchi's treatment of union with Christ follows

his exegesis of Paul's teaching on marriage in Ephesians 5. This means that Zanchi's theological work grows organically from his exegesis of Scripture.

Second, Zanchi's work is catholic. He engages a wide array of patristic, medieval, and contemporary sources to explain union with Christ. Zanchi, like the other Reformers, was a Reformed catholic (note the small "c," which is different than the capital "C" of Roman Catholic). Reformed theology did not arise *de novo* from the biblical text and the minds of creative theologian but was informed by the catholic (universal) church throughout the ages but normed by Scripture.

Third, as much as Calvin has a reputation of being a theologian of union with Christ, he never wrote a treatise on the topic. This fact makes Zanchi's contribution unique. Where many only read Calvin, Zanchi provides greater context, texture, and depth to our understanding of the sixteenth-century doctrine of union with Christ. Zanchi has numerous doctrinal and pastoral insights throughout his book. Moreover, even though it is popular to claim that eschatology and biblical theology are the recent insights of twentieth-century Reformed theologians, Zanchi proves otherwise. He begins his treatment of union with Christ in Genesis with the creation of Adam and Eve and advances to the spiritual union that exists between Christ and the church—he covers the unfolding plan of redemptive history—from creation to the last days. Zanchi makes a persuasive case that Adam and Eve's marriage helps us to understand union with Christ, which is the same pattern of argumentation that Paul unfolds in Ephesians 5.

For these reasons, Patrick O'Banion's translation of this work, his introduction, and critical apparatus is a most-welcomed addition to the growing body of literature on union with Christ. As helpful as many recent works on this vital doctrine are, C. S. Lewis's advice rings true: for every one new book, read ten old books. In this case, Zanchi's *Spiritual Marriage* is unquestionably an old book well worth

reading and will provide spiritual edification for the person in the pew, to the pastor, and to the seminary professor.

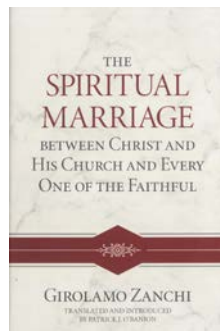
*Missionary Baptism and Evangelical Unity*, by **J. Cameron Fraser**. Wipf & Stock, 2021. Paperback, 126 pages, \$17.00. Reviewed by OP member **James W. Scott**.

Many Presbyterian and Reformed Christians presume baptized infants to be regenerate, while many others presume them to be unregenerate. Cameron Fraser, who was raised in Scottish Presbyterianism and has spent most of his adult life as a Christian Reformed minister in Canada, examines the Presbyterian and Dutch Reformed traditions on both sides of this issue in this book. He adopts the latter view and develops its implications for church unity.

Fraser observes that his preferred view is much like that held by Baptists (especially Reformed Baptists). In a paedobaptist church, children typically are baptized as infants and profess their faith publicly as teenagers or young adults; in a credobaptist (believer's baptism) church, children typically are dedicated as infants and profess their faith and are baptized as teenagers or young adults. The main difference, it seems, is when the water (and how much of it) is applied. That being so, Fraser recommends that, in the interest of evangelical unity, churches should offer parents of newborn children the choice of baptism, dedication (without water), or nothing, and then focus on bringing them to repentance and faith, to be expressed in due course by a public profession, accompanied by baptism for those who were not previously baptized.

Fraser's concept of "missionary baptism" derives from the household baptisms in Acts. He considers it unclear whether there were any small children in the households that were baptized, and he cites scholars who find evidence of both infant baptism and infant dedication in the ancient church. Extending this pattern to families already in the church today, Fraser argues that churches should offer both infant baptism and infant dedication to parents.

In developing his thesis, Fraser relies



heavily on various theologians and scholars, particularly William Cunningham and Joel Beeke, and presents both sides of issues fairly before reaching his own conclusions. His book is thought-provoking and shows that Reformed understanding of infant baptism has not been uniform.

Fraser quotes the views of others extensively. A spot check of several block quotes reveals a number of careless copying errors, though the meaning is rarely affected. However, word substitution in the concluding sentence of a long quotation of the present reviewer obscures the crucial point: in Acts, “heads of households believed [not were baptized] ‘with’ [i.e., accompanied by] whatever infants were in their families,” and then all in the household were baptized (49).

The dual-baptism proposal faces several obstacles. First, if a church believes that there is a definite scriptural imperative to baptize infants (or not to), it cannot in good conscience offer an option. A dual-baptismal practice implies scriptural and thus divine indifference on the

matter, which few Christians have ever been willing to accept. Second, if a child derives any spiritual benefit from baptism that does not come from dedication, then an alternative to baptism should not be offered.

Third, if a paedobaptist church is going to fully accommodate the credobaptist model, it will have to remodel its worship facility to include a baptistry (for immersions) and a changing room. Fourth, what if someone baptized as an infant in a paedobaptist church later wants to be baptized as a believer—does that church abandon the principle that one should not be rebaptized? Should the church allow its holy sacraments to be consumer driven?

While greater evangelical unity is highly desirable, one must question whether churches offering options for baptism is the way forward.

***Expository Preaching*, by David Strain. P&R, 2021. Hardcover, 144 pages, \$11.50. Reviewed by OP pastor Dale A. Van Dyke.**

*Expository Preaching*, by David Strain is a short but extremely worthwhile read on a topic that is often overlooked. While there are many books detailing the *what* and *how* of expository preaching, there are very few devoted to the *why*. As Strain explains, this book is “designed to establish the basic biblical and theological foundations for expositional preaching in a Reformed church” (17). It is a smallish, unimposing book that serves its purpose well. This is more of a conversation than a tome, intended primarily for the listening audience.

The book is comprised of four chapters with an easy-to-follow logic. The first chapter explains how expository preaching is rooted in the very nature of Scripture itself. Chapter 2 builds on that foundation by emphasizing that expository preaching “is the servant of the Bible’s text, and this means that it serves not only to convey the text’s meaning but to accomplish its ends” (45). Strain then gives eleven excellent arguments in favor of such preaching. In chapter 3, Strain convincingly explains why expository preaching is uniquely suited to be the *primary* means by which the church carries out its threefold task of worship, evangelism, and discipleship. This is where modern evangelicals, and increasingly the Reformed flock, are confused. They tend not to identify preaching itself as an act of worship, evangelism, or discipleship, but an add-on or support for them. Strain makes a compelling case that faithful expository preaching is uniquely and powerfully all three. Chapter 4 acknowledges that effective preaching requires attention from both the preacher *and the hearer*. Strain gives helpful counsel on how

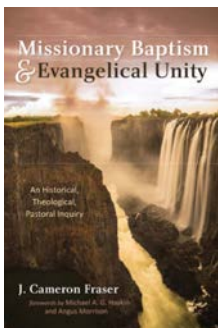
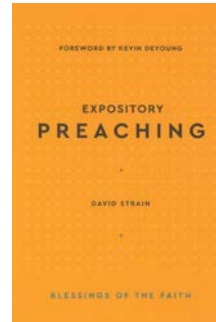
to get the most benefit from a sermon. Each chapter concludes with thoughtful “Questions for Further Reflection.”

The book concludes with a lengthy (thirty pages) Q&A section dealing with practical questions like, “What can I get from expository preaching that I can’t get in my quiet time?” (111); “Why do I need to come to church since I have access to the best preaching online?” (113); or “Won’t my children miss out since preaching like this is often over their heads?” (128). I found the questions to be very relevant, and Strain answers them in a practical and persuasive way.

This is a little book with an important message for both preachers and laity alike. We can easily lose the vitality of our practice by simply failing to understand and explain the reason behind it. Yes, we believe in expository preaching—

*but why?* Without a clear answer to that question, we are inviting formalism and robbing God’s people of the confidence they could have that this is not something we do because of personal preference or religious tradition but because of a thoroughly biblical conviction. That conviction will be a tremendous encouragement and create a God-honoring expectancy when the pastor steps forward to preach the Word.

This book would be beneficial for training elders or interns. It would inspire a much-needed conversation for a Sunday school class or small group study. I plan on using it for the new members class. Highly recommended!



## Position Available

**Regional Home Missionary:** The Presbytery of Northern California and Nevada is searching for a man to call as a regional home missionary. We invite inquiries from any OPC minister or men eligible for ordination in the OPC. Inquiries, including ministry information forms, may be directed to the Reverend Robert Herrmann at [dawnseeker@hotmail.com](mailto:dawnseeker@hotmail.com).



# The Committee on Ministerial Care

SUPPORT • RESOURCES • ENCOURAGEMENT



## CARING FOR MINISTERS

*Pastors are called to care for their flock.  
How can we care for our pastors?*

The Committee on Ministerial Care is committed to providing support, resources, and encouragement for OPC ministers, their wives, and their widows. We work with them directly, as well as with sessions and presbyteries, by providing:

- A yearly love gift from the Obadiah Fund for all retired ministers and widows
- Monetary grants for retreats and sabbaticals
- Quarterly webinars on helpful topics
- A growing library of resources online
- Financial planning support
- A 403(b) retirement plan
- Counseling resources

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*Thank you for your support as we serve Christ  
by serving our ministers and their families.*

