

# NEW HORIZONS

▬ in the ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ▬

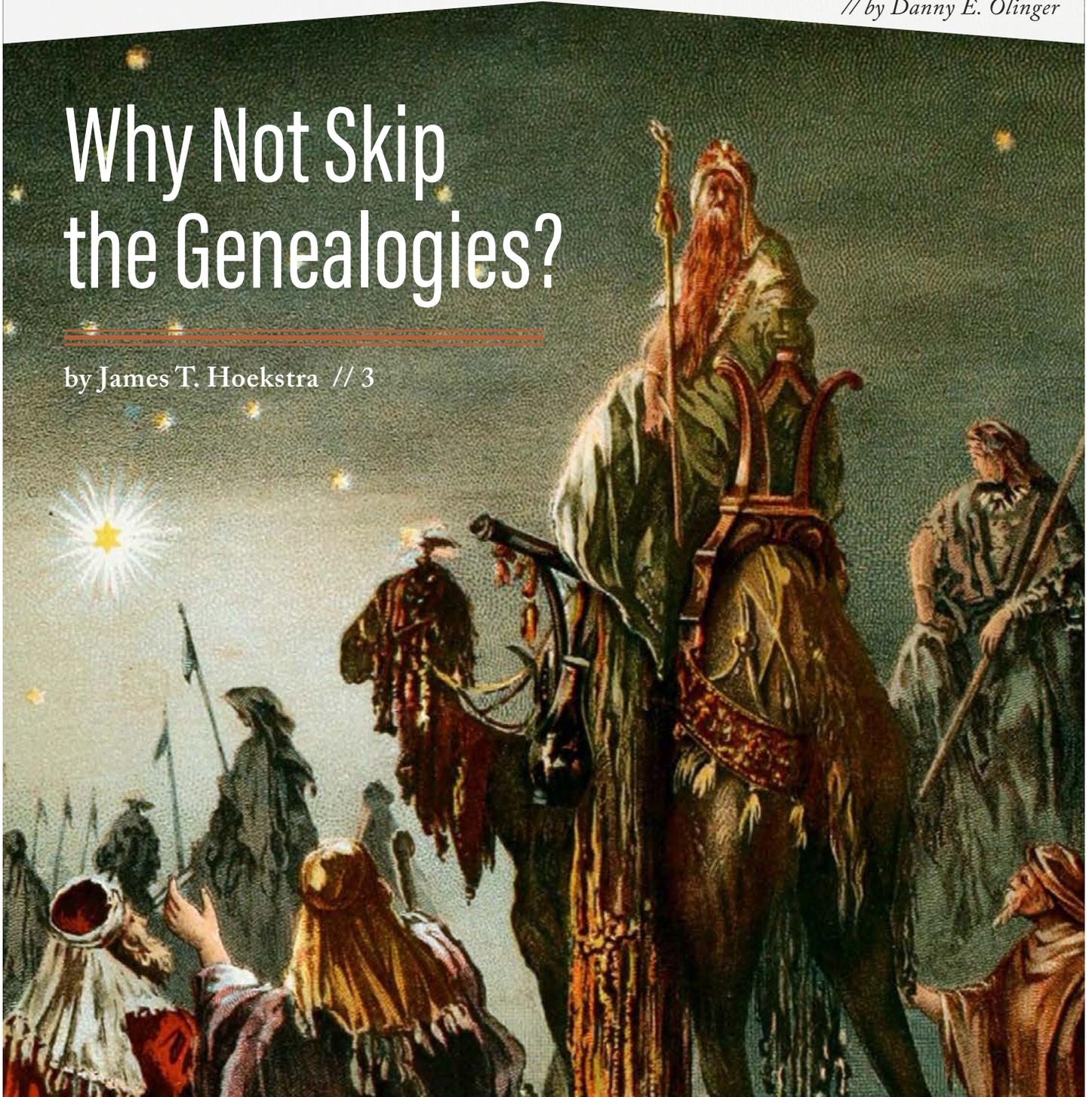
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## New Horizons

in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church

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September 17 was a historic moment in the life of the Presbytery of the Midwest. Not only did the presbytery complete its business in one day, including a name change to Presbytery of Wisconsin and Minnesota, it also gave birth to a new presbytery that carries its previous name: the Presbytery of the Midwest. In 1968, the Presbytery of Wisconsin changed its name to the Presbytery of the Midwest as churches were planted in nearby states. Its growth resulted in the formation of the Presbytery of Michigan and Ontario in 1999. And as that growth has continued, it has now divided again.



# WHY NOT SKIP THE GENEALOGIES?



**JAMES T. HOEKSTRA //** When you read the Bible, either by yourself or with your family, do you skip the genealogies? When I was a child, growing up in a Reformed household, we would read the Bible after supper. Oftentimes the four of us kids would fight about who got to read—until we approached a genealogy. Then the

fighting would stop, and we encouraged each other to take the chapter.

Although the names are difficult to pronounce, genealogies are valuable because they are part of Scripture. You just need to dig a little bit to get their significance. The genealogy in Matthew 1 is especially significant—it tells an important story. This lineage has a theme running through the list of names: gracious fulfillment.

Perhaps the most striking piece of the genealogy are the surprises, the people we maybe wouldn't have picked ourselves if we were putting together an all-star lineage for the King of Kings.

## Surprising Women

The women in the genealogy stand out, and not only because women are unusual in a Hebrew genealogy. Matthew is making a point about the universality of the gospel by naming three heathen female ancestors by name: Tamar, Rahab, Ruth. They all stand in

contrast to the righteousness of God's anointed one. And yet, all outcasts, they made it into Jesus's family album. They are, thereby, strong assurances of God's grace to sinners.

Each woman represents an unexpected turn in Israel's history. Let's start with Tamar, mentioned in Matthew 1:3: "Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar." Tamar's story, found in Genesis 38, is a sordid tale of incest, prostitution, and deception. Perhaps you remember how the patriarch Judah chose Tamar as a wife for his son Er. Er was wicked and was killed by the Lord. Then Er's brother Onan became Tamar's husband (see Deut. 25 for the law that required this). He refused to father a child by her, so God struck him dead, too. She, still childless, dressed up like a prostitute, placed a veil over her face, and sat by the road. Her father-in-law, Judah, came along. He—not knowing who she was—slept with her. Twin sons were born of the act of harlotry and in-

cest. Judah was worse in his hypocrisy and blindness than even Tamar, and he admits this in the end. Tamar and her story are part of the great plotline of God's redemptive work. Mankind's sinful rebellion simply cannot thwart the grace of God. If God would continue his messianic line through Tamar and Judah—with the web of incest, harlotry, hypocrisy, and deception—then he surely is a God of grace.

The next surprise is Rahab, two verses later in Matthew 1:5: "Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab." She originally was a professional prostitute, according to Joshua 2. Her heritage was as a Canaanite, an enemy of God's people. One of her most important acts was telling a lie: As Israel is ready to enter the Promised Land, Joshua sends some spies to scout out Jericho. They come to Rahab's house. She hides them from the city officials. When asked where they are, she lies! Rahab then pleads with the spies to spare her family. Her family is saved

and delivered. She turned to the Lord and became part of the messianic line. She was the great-great-grandmother of David.

Then there is Ruth. Ruth is not a surprise due to her occupation but due to her own lineage. She was a Gentile. She was a Moabitess. You may recall that the whole nation of Moabites was the product of incest. Genesis 19:30–38 describes how Lot fled with his two daughters at the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. The daughters, thinking there would be no one to marry them and carry on the family, decided to get their father drunk and lie with him. The oldest daughter later gave birth to Moab. So, Ruth came from a nation that was the product of incest. Yet she was the wife of Boaz, the ancestor of King David, and thus an ancestor of Christ.

What do we gather from all this? It is important that these women are mentioned because Matthew is saying that the Jewish Messiah's blessings extend beyond Israel. Not just to the Jews but to the whole world comes tremendous news—to people of all different backgrounds and nationalities.

### Surprising Men

Yet, the story is not over. I do think Matthew pays special attention to the women in his genealogy. But note also some surprising men. We'll look at two.

In Matthew 1:6, attention is drawn to David and Bathsheba, whose story is told in 2 Samuel 12.

David the king illicitly sent for this married woman, Bathsheba. A child was conceived. When David learned of the news, he tried to cover his tracks by getting Bathsheba's husband to come home. He assumed that her husband, Uriah, when he came home from battle, would have normal relations with his wife and David's sin would be covered

up. But Uriah was a man of dedication; he would not go home to his wife. Even getting Uriah drunk did not work, for he was a better man drunk than David was sober. With his plan frustrated, David sent a note to his army officers to put Uriah in the front lines in battle and pull back from him so that he would be killed.

Then David took Bathsheba to be his wife, and their child died. David was confronted with his sin and repented. Later, he had another child by Bathsheba who was named Solomon—the one in the messianic line. Matthew highlights the grace of God by exposing David's sin and mentioning "the wife of Uriah," Bathsheba, in the genealogy.

Finally, look at one of the worst bad boys of Israel's history: Manasseh. "Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos" (Matt. 1:10). Raised in the covenant, Manasseh committed reprehensible sins: he sacrificed his own children in idol worship and did other things that were far worse than the pagan nations that the Lord had expelled from the land (see 2 Kings 21:1–18; 2 Chron. 33:1–20). Although he was the son of the godly Hezekiah, Manasseh's wickedness was epic. But the story is not over yet. God weaves him into the grand story of redemption. The Lord was gracious to him at the end of his life and brought him to himself and then included him in the line of the Messiah.

All these failures—all *our* failures, rebellion, and sin—remind us how we need Christ, the great Son of David, the son of Abraham. Where all others failed, God overcame and prevailed by his grace. He has brought into the world his perfect Son through a genealogy that is full of sinners.

### A Line of Grace

The black sheep make this an in-

credible genealogy for Christ our Lord to have. The line of Jesus is a hall of shame, filled with Gentiles, fornicators, adulterers, liars, cursed kings, and other sinners.

Why doesn't the Bible gloss over it? Because it is a line of grace. That is Matthew's point. The people in the Messiah's line are not so much on display—God's grace is. They are memorable for God's grace in forgiving them.

He has put enmity between Satan and the seed of the woman (Gen. 3). The conquering power of God is seen in the face of such sinfulness, in the face of our great wickedness. It underscores that Jesus identified with sinners, yet without sin. The spotlight is on God's grace of pure unmerited favor, his sovereign intervention based on his free choice, and his overpowering mercy. Where sin abounds, grace abounds much more! God's grace cannot be outmaneuvered when he is at work. His arm is mighty to save.

Do not overlook the message of the genealogy, perhaps as you read the story of the birth of Christ this holiday season: God in his mercy is doing what we could not do for ourselves—he is mending broken lives. He is fulfilling his covenantal promises. The Lord in the manger is the Lord of grace, grace overflowing offered to sinners who desperately need it. Jesus is the fulfillment of Israel's history, the fulfillment of our messianic hopes, the fulfillment of our hunger for a true king, and the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham to bring blessing to the nations.

The same Jesus of this genealogy is active today, mending our lives and saving us from the corrupting power of sin. Rejoice! □

*The author is pastor of Immanuel Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Andover, Minnesota.*



# THE NEW OPC HISTORIAN

// JOHN R. MUETHER WITH CAMDEN M. BUCEY

*Last summer the General Assembly elected Dr. Camden M. Bucey as the Historian of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. He is the fifth to fill this post. After brief tenures by Paul Woolley and Clair Davis, Charles Dennison took the reins in 1981. After his passing in 1999, John Muether served until his retirement last summer. Mr. Muether sat down with Dr. Bucey.*

**Tell us about your upbringing and education.**

I'm a native of Illinois, born in Rockford. I earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Computer Systems at Bradley University in Peoria with a significant information technology component to it. There I met my wife, Erica. With two years remaining in her degree and sensing that we were moving toward engagement and marriage, I stayed in Peoria after graduating in 2002 and enrolled in the Master of Business program. Soon I had an opportunity to intern and then work at Caterpillar.

**An unusual background for seminary studies, it seems.**

All this time, I was becoming increasingly interested in Reformed theology. I was actively involved in a Baptist church where one of its pastors was discovering the apologetics of Cornelius Van Til. We began reading Greg Bahnsen's *Van Til's Apologetic: Readings and Analysis*. This prompted me to learn more about Van Til and Reformed theology. I found an extensive pre-seminary reading list, which included works by John Calvin, Geerhardus Vos, B. B. Warfield, Van Til, and Richard Gaffin. It took me three years, but I read every book on that list. This prompted a sense of call to the ministry, and I worked with my pastor and elders to affirm an external call.

**And this brought you to Westminster Theological Seminary and the OPC?**

Yes, Erica and I moved to Philadelphia in 2007. We attended Calvary OPC in Glenside on the evening of our first Lord's Day, and we soon joined, never visiting another church. We knew next to nothing about the OPC prior to attending Calvary, but we quickly came to love the denomination and feel a deep affinity for its history, confessional beliefs, and polity.

After completing my coursework at WTS, Erica and I moved to Wheaton, Illinois, for a yearlong internship at Bethel OPC. Then, in 2013, I was ordained and installed as pastor of Hope OPC in Grayslake, Illinois.



Muether and Bucey at the 87th General Assembly

**By this time, you were already podcasting. *New Horizons* readers may remember the story of your labors at Reformed Forum from the April 2019 issue. How does your background shape the ambitions you bring to your new office?**

I would begin by saying I'm not seeking to depart from the course that has already been set. One of the most important things that the historian can do is to record our history, to record our stories, and to protect our identity and our confessional theology for future generations.

What is distinct, I think, about my abilities and skills and desires is that we can do that very activity of protecting and promoting our pilgrim identity for the next generation using newer methods and multimedia resources. I am also hoping to invigorate our presbyteries and local churches to engage in the work of history. I think that we can do more to assist our churches in promoting our shared identity and in learning lessons from the past, so as to move into the future with increased confessional fidelity and integrity.

**What have you found most interesting in your own reading of OPC history?**

I have long been familiar with the OPC's books, but I have been reviewing and rereading several of them. One of my favorites, of course, is Charlie Dennison's *History for a Pilgrim People*. I read that book in pastoral ministry, especially during difficult points in ministry, thinking through what it meant to be a pilgrim and what it means as a follower of Christ to suffer in this present age, just with the infirmities of this present earthly existence. Charlie's understanding of the church's identity—in the overlap of the ages of the already and not yet—speaks directly to the challenges of the church in our age. More broadly, I have been reading Ned Stonehouse. His extensive contribution to the *Presbyterian Guardian* has been another helpful way to rehearse the history of the OPC. In conjunction with that, I've begun reading the minutes of early general assemblies. It is helpful to get into the minds of Stonehouse and other early figures in the OPC. They provide a scaffolding of historic events and reflections upon which we can build a better understanding of our own day.

# SPORTS FOR GOD'S GLORY



ANDREW J. MILLER // Based on a true story, the movie *Chariots of Fire* portrays 1924 Olympian Eric Liddell, a Christian who sought to use his running abilities for God's glory and not merely his own. In one famous scene, Liddell tells his sister that God "made me fast, and when I run, I feel his pleasure."

That scene deeply impacted me after I became burned out by chess competitions as a high schooler. In elementary school, I had been a local chess star, with comparisons to Bobby Fischer puffing up my ego. By fourth grade, I won fourth place in a national tournament among other fourth graders, and I had several youth state championship titles to my name. However, in time, the pressure to win became unbearable, the joy of the game faded, and I was playing simply not to lose. I had to take a hiatus from competitions.

God used that break to help me understand that my chess skills belonged to the Lord. This perspective enabled me to come back to the game with a new joy in the Lord and an experiential understanding and appropriation of Liddell's words—when I played chess, I felt God's pleasure. I continue to play competitively when I can, and it is my hope that sharing what I have learned will help others use their gifts and abilities for God's glory. The principles below can be applied to competi-

tors of all kinds.

## 1. Submit the Results to the Lord

First, submit the results to the Lord. This means honing and exercising your gifts while trusting in God's loving providence for you. He knows what is best for you—and failure may be better for you than success (Isa. 28:24–29; Ps. 119:67). This expands your perspective on how God can use your interest for his glory. Regardless of how you do in a competition, God may have other providential purposes for your presence at the competition, like making a connection with an unbeliever and sharing the gospel. I have found Jonathan's words in 1 Samuel 14:6 to be a good example of faith that leaves the results to the Lord:

*It may be* that the LORD will work for us, for nothing can hinder the LORD from saving by many or by few. (emphasis added)

God is good, and he will do good to us in one way or another (Rom. 8:28–39).

## 2. Don't Idolize Success

Second, do not make an idol of success. We are called to rely on the Lord, but we cannot do that when we are pursuing something we place higher than him (Isa. 31:1). When we believe "success" in competitions will give us true joy and peace, we are not only robbing God of his glory and using his gifts selfishly, we are also falling into the sin of self-reliance. James 4:1–4 warns us that when we pursue our own passions, we take matters into our own hands rather than asking God. Self-reliance and idolatry go hand in hand. On the other hand, when we submit the results to the Lord and know that our true joy comes from the Lord, we can rely on him for strength.

## 3. Reorient Your Prayers

Third, orient your prayers to God's glory. One of the most powerful and lasting changes in my perspective toward competitions came when I realized that my prayers were changing. Before each chess game I played as a youth, I would

pray, “Lord, help me to win.” In time, however, I came to pray that God would be glorified, that I would enjoy him through his creation, and that he would guard my heart. Rather than praying for success or victory in the fashion you imagine it, pray for God to be glorified. Pray that if you lose a competition, you will handle it with the proper attitude, and that you would know that God’s grace is sufficient (2 Cor. 12:9). Changing your orientation to God’s glory changes your prayers.

#### 4. Check for Vainglory

Fourth, regularly take stock of how your character has been affected by your pursuit of the game. Ask yourself if competing and seeking to improve has made you more proud or more humble (Deut. 8:17–18). Sinful human beings can easily fall into “vainglory,” which Rebecca Konyndyk DeYoung illustrates with a piercing quote:

I lust after recognition, I am desperate to win all the little merit badges and trinkets of my profession, and I am of less real use in this world than any good cleaning lady. (*Glittering Vices*, 59)

How foolish we are when we put such value on earthly glory that passes away like a mist!

Likewise, the Reformers recognized that our hearts are “curved inward,” focused on ourselves. Our gifts used for God’s glory should reflect a heart curved outward, toward our neighbors, by God’s grace and his sanctifying Spirit. Furthermore, we might ask ourselves: am I becoming a more contented or a less contented person by this hobby? (See Phil. 4:11–13.)

The use of God’s gifts to us should lead us to rejoice in him and his salvation. While competitions are work based, rewarding only those who do well, God’s love for us is received in the covenant of grace, and it is unchanging. Reflecting on the fact that your justification before God comes from Christ and not your “success” in your sport should lead you to praise the Lord. A



Miller at nine years old competing at a national championship in 1995. Eventually the pressure to win became too much, and he took a hiatus.

book that I read to my children, Ed Welch’s *Buster’s Ears Trip Him Up*, illustrates this: when a young bunny fails to win a race and is distraught, he is reminded that God loved him *before* he ever raced. There is a wonderful freedom in this truth (Rom. 5:6).

#### 5. Build Relationships

Fifth, consider how to use your interest or ability to build relationships with those who do not know Christ. You may be surprised by how many opportunities God will provide for you to dialogue with unbelievers about spiritual truths when you are looking and praying for those opportunities. God’s faithfulness to answer prayer was powerfully confirmed to me at one local chess tournament. During one of my games, I prayed that the Lord would give me opportunity and courage to share the gospel sometime with a young man there who seemed antagonistic toward Christianity. Later that day, as I was readying to leave, the same young man came to me and asked me about my work as a pastor, and we now have ongoing dialogues about the Christian faith.

Our church likewise occasionally hosts tournaments at our building on Saturdays, giving us opportunities to be good neighbors and to enlarge our profile in the community. Because we do this, spiritual conversations come up frequently and organically, and we have

had a chess player attend worship because of it. We are not the only church to do this, and I have learned of several other chess players in the OPC who wed their interest in the game with outreach.

#### 6. Don’t Sacrifice God’s Priorities

Finally, never sacrifice God’s priorities to pursue your sport. Part of the great drama of *Chariots of Fire* is that Liddell refused to compete on the Lord’s Day. In the movie, one of Liddell’s competitors shared 1 Samuel 2:30 with him—“those who honor me I will honor”—and sure enough, Liddell won the race. While we should not expect extra success in our pursuits because we honor the Lord, we do believe that God rewards those who seek him (Heb. 11:6). He also frustrates those who put their own priorities first (Hag. 1:4–11).

It may be that regular attendance of public worship requires sacrificing opportunities to pursue your hobby, sport, or interest. You might have to give up attendance at competitions or practices to care for your family. God’s people have always found, however, that what they give up pursuing Christ is never truly a sacrifice in the end (Phil. 3:8). Knowing him is the pearl of greatest price (Matt. 13:44–46). □

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# AUGUSTINE ON CHRISTIAN BURIALS



CALVIN R. GOLIGHER // When a family member dies, the mourners face a host of practical questions, including what do with the loved one's body. Burial is the traditional answer to that question, but cremation is an increasingly popular alternative. The reasons for cremation are often practical: it is cheaper, simpler, and

more efficient. Most people also don't think it really matters what happens to a body, since it doesn't affect the person who has already died. I would like to challenge that status quo and argue that burial is the proper way to dispose of a human body, especially the body of a Christian. To make my case, I will review a discussion of burial from Augustine (AD 354–430), the great bishop of Hippo in modern Algeria.

## Tragedy in Rome

Tragedy swept the Roman world on a grand scale in the early fifth century. Invaders poured through the Empire's northern borders, threatening Roman society at its foundations. Augustine died in 430, having spent his final weeks reciting psalms from his deathbed, as the Vandals laid siege to the city.

By this time, Augustine had been addressing the questions raised by tragedy for many years. When Rome, the "Eternal City," fell to Gothic armies in 410, he began working on *The City of God*, which addressed many objections to Christianity occasioned by the crisis. Was God to blame for this tragedy?

Were the old pagan gods better protectors of Rome? Is God really governing world history? If so, is he doing a good job of it?

A more personal question was why God failed to protect even the Christians from the disasters of the Gothic invasion. Many Christians had suffered in these conflicts, and many died. To make matters worse, many of the dead never even received an honorable burial. This is the specific question that Augustine addresses in book 1, sections 12–13, of *The City of God*: What does it mean that these people died without burial?

## Dying Without Burial Is a Tragedy

Augustine first concedes that dying without burial is indeed a tragedy. He acknowledges that (as the pagans of his day would have said) it is an "ill-omened circumstance" (*The City of God*, Modern Library 1993, 16).

Augustine had a very simple reason for this view: "The body is not an extraneous ornament or aid, but a part of man's very nature" (18). There is no room for flippancy in dealing with a dead body. "For if the dress of a father,

or his ring, or anything he wore, be precious to his children, in proportion to the love they bore him, with how much more reason ought we to care for the bodies of those we love, which they wore far more closely and intimately than any clothing?" (18).

This is doubly true, as Augustine pointed out, in the case of believers. The bodies of believers are especially worthy of honor because they "have been used by the Holy Ghost as his organs and instruments for all good works" (18).

## Burial Honors a Christian's Body

For those convinced that it is important to properly honor a Christian's body, the next question is whether there is a particular way that such honor should be given. Augustine looked to the Scripture for guidance on this point and found several examples. The patriarchs provided sepulchres and honorable burials for their dead (see Gen. 23). Augustine noted specifically that Jacob and Joseph "while yet alive, gave commandment to their sons about the burial, and, on occasion, even about the removal of their bodies to some

favorite place” (Gen. 49:29–32, 50:25). He found a further example in Tobit, a character in the apocryphal books (18).

The highest example of burial is in the Gospels, which pay special attention to the burial of Jesus. Augustine pointed out that Jesus himself commended “the good work of the religious woman who poured precious ointment over His limbs, and did it against His burial” (17; see Matt. 26:12). The Gospels further record the godly care and attention of those who removed Jesus’s body from the cross, wrapped it in a costly and skillful way, and provided for its honorable burial (18; see Matt. 27:57–61).

As a contrast to these examples, Augustine noted the poignant lament of Psalm 79:2–3: “They have given the bodies of your servants to the birds of the heavens for food, the flesh of your faithful to the beasts of the earth.” The point of this lament, he noted, was “to exhibit the cruelty of those who did these things” (17).

Augustine concluded that burial is a fitting way to honor a body, especially a Christian’s body. Augustine did not advocate burial because he thought it comforted the dead, but because it shows godly love and hope. The important point, Augustine said, is not that “corpses have any feeling” but “that God’s providence extends even to the bodies of the dead, and that such pious offices are pleasing to Him, as cherishing faith in the resurrection” (18).

### **Dying Without Burial Does Not Shake Christian Faith**

We should not underestimate the importance of burial, but there is also a danger of overestimating its significance. Burial is important and honorable, but it is not our hope. Our hope is resurrection, and that is in God’s hands. Augustine emphasized that dying without a burial cannot ultimately harm God’s people or frustrate God’s intention to bless them.

Augustine reminded his readers of the promise that “not a hair of your head will perish” (Luke 21:18). He accurately

explained that this is not a guarantee of absolute safety in this life, but an assurance that even if they “be devoured by beasts, their blessed resurrection will not thereby be hindered” (16–17). Christians need not fear those who can kill the body (Matt. 10:28), and therefore we have no reason to fear that our dead bodies will be left unburied (17).

While the unburied bodies of Christians may be abandoned by men, they are never abandoned by God. Since he created heaven and earth, Augustine argued, he certainly “knows whence he will raise again what he created” (17). When a Christian’s body remains unburied, the promise remains that “the flesh itself shall be restored, and the body formed anew, all the members of it being gathered not only from the earth, but from the most secret recesses of any other of the elements in which the dead bodies of men have lain hid” (18).

Augustine reflected on the fact that when Christians suffer in this life they ultimately are not harmed, since they are in God’s care. In the same way, “the absence of the funeral, and of the other customary attentions paid to the dead [cannot] render those wretched who are already reposing in the hidden abodes of the blessed” (19). This should be especially precious to parents of Christian children lost by miscarriage, who may be unable to bury their child’s remains.

Christians know that world history will come to a proper end in the day of judgment. We also know that each individual believer’s life of bodily weakness and decay will come to a glorious conclusion in the power and glory of resurrection life. On that day, our questions will be answered, and the goodness, wisdom, and power of God’s providence will be visible to all.

### **Practical Guidance**

Augustine drew one practical lesson from all this: Christians should not be concerned to have a lavish or extravagant funeral. He pointed out that a “costly burial” does no good to a wicked man, and a “squalid burial”

cannot harm the godly. The rich man in Jesus’s parable had a funeral that was “gorgeous in the eye of man,” but in God’s sight “that was a more sumptuous funeral which the ulcerous pauper received at the hands of the angels, who did not carry him out to a marble tomb, but bore him aloft to Abraham’s bosom” (17).

I would not venture to guess what other practical lessons Augustine might give if we could ask him, but I have a few suggestions of my own. First, Christians should make a special effort to attend graveside burial services. These are very spiritually edifying occasions, as we honor a Christian’s body, bear witness to God’s continued care, and express our hope for the day of resurrection.

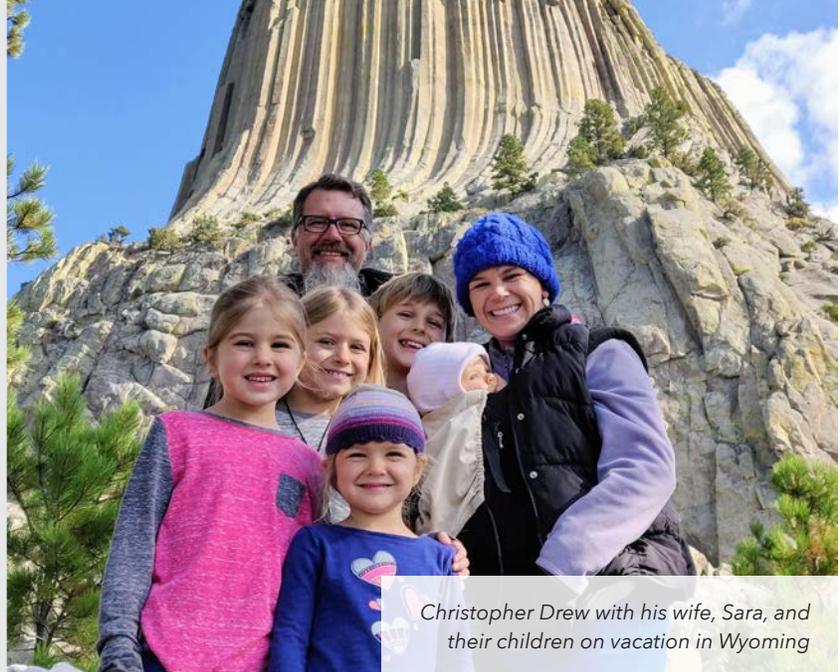
Second, Christians should be diligent to provide for their own burial as well as the burial of others. This will require some planning and some saving. For most Christians in America, a burial and a plot should be within financial reach, especially if saving for this purpose is considered a priority. In cases of financial destitution, the church and its deacons should consider assisting with expenses for a simple burial as an act of Christian mercy.

In some places, a scarcity of land makes burial prohibitively expensive. Some creative thought may be required here. One idea would be to practice burial at sea, which is a dignified and time-honored method for honorably disposing of a body without a plot of ground.

Third, Christians should live without fear of what will happen to their body in death. God’s providential kindness and covenant promises guarantee our ultimate welfare. Whether our bodies are laid to rest in an honorable and well-appointed funeral or tragically abandoned amid war or disaster, still it is true that “precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints” (Psalm 116:15). □

*The author is pastor of First OPC in Sunnyvale, California.*

# MEET NEW RECRUITS CHRIS DREW AND CHRIS BYRD



Christopher Drew with his wife, Sara, and their children on vacation in Wyoming

The Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension supports the efforts of presbyteries to plant new congregations of the OPC. There are times when a presbytery asks for what is called “non-aid-receiving” support. This involves all of the regular support program available to the work with the exception of funding. Included are the publication of prayer requests in *Home Missions Today* and *New Horizons*; monthly reporting to the committee; enrollment in courses offered by our Ministerial Training Institute; and participation in the annual church planter training conference. Below, two men who are currently supported in this way introduce themselves.

## RUBE GOLDBERG GRACE

*Christopher D. Drew*

You’re probably familiar with Rube Goldberg machines, those overly elaborate, complicated contraptions designed to perform a very simple task, like flipping a switch on or off. They are still popular today, perhaps in part because they are an apt metaphor for how things work in real life. My path into the OPC resembles one of those old Goldberg-esque contraptions.

I grew up in a mainline Presbyterian Church (USA) church in Salt Lake City, Utah, and cannot remember a time when I did not know the Lord. I was baptized as an infant, confirmed at thirteen, and served the congregation in a number of capacities. A call to ministry seemed possible, but college came along, then a graduate business program and a move to San Francisco, California, where I was based for about ten and a half years as a consultant. When that job came to an end, the call to go to seminary became pronounced, and I moved to Austin, Texas, eventually graduating from Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary. I met my wife in seminary, and my first call was at a small church in southwest Minnesota.

The liberal seminary I attended showed me just how orthodox my own views were regarding the Bible, the doctrine of God, the person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the sanctifying work of the Spirit. I was aghast at what was taking place in my denomination nationally, but things did not reach a crisis for me until my first call came to an end.

Realizing that I could no longer remain in the PCUSA, I began searching for another call. I had little success until one day on Twitter, a good brother and minister from the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church noted that he had read *Planting an Orthodox Presbyterian Church*, published by the CHMCE. I read it cover to cover in one sitting and began wondering if perhaps I could form a group where I was living. The book listed the website for the committee, and on its homepage I saw the name Jason Wallace, pastor of Christ Presbyterian Church in Magna, Utah. I knew about Jason because my father had sent me a YouTube video of him debating the then-pastor of my hometown church. With that as an icebreaker, I gave Jason a call and explained my situation. He listened patiently. We spoke again a few days later and he told me, based on my situation, that planting a church where I lived probably wasn’t a good idea. “But,” he said, “I know of this church that meets in a mall in Grand Forks, North Dakota.” (The church plant had recently come into the OPC, overseen by the session at Bethel OPC in Mandan, North Dakota.)

I wish I could recount verbatim the hilarious conversation that occurred when representatives of the presbytery announced to the church that they had a potential candidate from the PCUSA—whose wife had also been an ordained PCUSA minister!

Well, after over a year of occasional visits to the church, coupled with vigorous preparation to be examined by the presbytery, I was received, by God’s grace, into the Presbytery of the Dakotas in 2017, having received a call to be the pastor at Faith Presbyterian Church in Grand Forks, North Dakota. In addition to ministering Word and sacrament, I have a full-time

job at the University of North Dakota, where I do technical support work.

Our church is small, but our people are hugely devoted to the Lord and to growing deeper in the faith once for all delivered to the saints. We are still located in the mall, where we are increasingly surrounded by the mall's owner (and our landlord), a very large church that occupies the anchor position just down the concourse. We ask our brothers and sisters in the OPC to pray that God would bring to us more individuals and families and that we might find a place more suitable for worship, one where we don't have to say things like, "To get to our church, you first have to go through this other church."

We also ask that the Lord would raise up men to assume the responsibility of being ruling elders, so that we might one day be particularized. Please pray that we would remain at peace, that our love for each other in the Lord would deepen, and that we would be more faithful in reaching out to our neighbors in the community with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

*The author is pastor of Faith Presbyterian in Grand Forks, ND.*

## AN EVANGELIST PARTNER

*Christopher I. Byrd*

My work as an evangelist at Grace OPC in Westfield, New Jersey, is a somewhat unusual approach to home missions because Grace's pastor, Timothy Ferguson, and I serve as a two-minister team. While his primary focus is pastoring the congregation, my primary focus is extending the church through evangelism and outreach. The town of Westfield is nestled in a densely populated county outside New York City with nearly half a million people within a fifteen-minute radius of the church . . . a place full of opportunity for the gospel!

Before this, I was teaching in a Christian school, where I sensed a growing call to ministry, which led to seminary. While at Westminster Theological Seminary, I served several summers as an intern at the Boardwalk Chapel in Wildwood, New Jersey. During this time, the Lord grew my passion for sharing the gospel with the lost. I began to realize that many OPC churches are surrounded by a mission field of people who have never heard the gospel clearly preached or explained. I also knew many solo ministers in small congregations who found outreach difficult because of the time and energy demanded by pastoral duties. This seeded the idea of working as an evangelist alongside a pastor to help grow a small or struggling church—a team ministry that could effectively cover both the in-gather-

### **Home Missions Today**

For up-to-date news and prayer requests, receive our newsletter by emailing [HomeMissionsToday@opc.org](mailto:HomeMissionsToday@opc.org). New editions: December 8 & 22.

ing and up-building aspects of the Great Commission.

While I was finishing a yearlong pastoral internship in Maryland, the Presbytery of New Jersey connected me with Tim and Grace OPC, because Tim had been expressing a similar vision of a pastor-evangelist team. We discovered our vision and passions aligned, and the presbytery's home missions committee agreed to financially support a call to Grace with the expectation that Grace will grow through this partnership and eventually be able to fully support an ordained evangelist. They issued the call, and I was ordained and installed in October 2020.



*Evangelist Chris Byrd*

My work as an evangelist here is twofold. First, it involves seeking to grow the church by means of my personal labors in evangelism and outreach. This includes weekly evangelism in local

parks in addition to regular door-to-door outreach and evangelism in the neighborhood. It also involves planning and leading outreach events and evangelistic ministries, like our special outreach services and meals or our new evangelistic ESL program, as well as conducting evangelistic Bible studies.

The other aspect of my mission is developing a culture of evangelism in the congregation so that the whole church is involved in the work of gathering in. This means teaching about evangelism and taking members along in my community evangelism. It also means praying regularly with them for their unsaved relatives and friends, encouraging them in their witness, and helping them to share Christ with those in their orbit. A key part of building this culture is praying together for the lost. We now have four prayer groups that meet weekly to pray for the church, for the lost, and for our community along the lines of the Lord's Prayer. And once a month I lead a church-wide prayer gathering where we pray for the growth of Christ's kingdom.

The Lord has been graciously blessing the work. Over the past year and a half, Grace's membership has nearly doubled, and our average Sunday morning attendance is now close to ninety! We have guests coming out to the church almost weekly, and the guests regularly include unbelievers and the unchurched. Our prayerful goal is that, in the next three to four years, we would outgrow our building's capacity and begin the process of planting a daughter church.

We are so grateful for the support and prayers of the denomination for the work in Westfield. May the Lord be pleased through your prayers and the work of his Spirit to grow his church here, that the name of Jesus might be exalted in Westfield as it is in heaven.

*The author is an evangelist at Grace OPC in Westfield, NJ.*

# WOMEN'S MINISTRY IN KARAMOJA

// CARLA VAN ESSENDELFT



*Two attendees of the women's ministry, Sarah and Oliver, leading their own class for the first time*

There were many things I missed when we first moved to Karamoja to work with the Uganda Mission in early 2018, such as family and friends, paved roads, and hot showers. However, I knew it would be that way, and I was ready for it. There was one thing, however, that I didn't realize I would miss so much: women's ministry. I have been ministered to by women since the day I was born—my mother, grandmothers, Sunday school teachers, youth leaders, Bible study leaders, and many other women have led, guided, chastised, taught, inspired, encouraged, and been an example to me. They are tools that God used to build me into the woman I have become.

## A Failed Attempt

When we arrived on the mission field, I soon felt the void of older Christian women speaking into my life. There were so many women in Karamoja—I wanted to meet them all, to remember their names, to learn about their lives, to make friendships, and to share the love of Jesus—but I found it difficult to connect with them. The majority couldn't speak English, and I definitely couldn't speak the Karimojong language yet! Besides that, the women lead very busy lives, and as a homeschooling mom of eight, I did, too.

After praying and brainstorming with some of the other ladies on the team, we decided to start a women's group on Sunday mornings before church. I pulled out a Bible study book I had used in high school, and we organized the studies so that a translator could more easily present it. The first week, we had over fifteen ladies from the community show up. I was so excited! But after a few weeks, our group was down to two or three, and we would get next to no interac-

tion from them on the passage. It seemed like they didn't understand anything from it—or was it that I wasn't understanding them? I would ask a question about the passage, and the reply would be random and quite unrelated. For example, "A neighbor had eye pain," or "We need to pray to God for that." After a few months, the group dissolved. It seemed to be an utter failure.

## Beginning Again with Shaky Knees

In summer 2020, I really started thinking and praying about women's ministry again. While considering what went wrong the first time around and how to better reach participants, I came across a program online for teaching nonreaders by using Bible stories. When I told my husband, Mark, and missionary associate Joanna Grove about the program, they both said that they had come across the very same one. It seemed God was leading us in that direction.

Relationships are everything in this culture, so we decided to share the vision with a few local Christian women with whom we had developed friendships. They were also interested, and so with shaky knees and a lot of prayer we started again, deciding to meet every Saturday morning at the church.

Our first lesson was on prayer. Oh, how we needed it! We mapped out the people in our lives who are far from God and committed to praying for them. Next, we learned how to share the story of God's work in our lives and how to share the gospel by using simple symbols scratched in the sand. We practiced with each other and learned how to reply to people who had different responses to the gospel. The third step was growth—so we plunged into a ten-week study of ten commands of Christ, including repent, love, be baptized, give, and gather. Each lesson was based on a Bible



*Practicing retelling the Bible story*

story, which we practiced telling to each other so that we could go and share it with the people on our prayer maps. It was at this point that we sensed a growing desire in the ladies to invite others to our group. We eagerly opened the invitation, and we have never ceased to be amazed at whom God sends. We had entered the final step: harvest. Some leaders were emerging from among the women, and so the team and I shifted out of teaching every week into coaching them, two by two, to lead the meetings.

When churches were closed due to COVID-19, the ladies wanted to continue meeting and eagerly opened their homes. They invited their neighbors and friends who would have never come to the church. We were able to reach many more women this way, and we all enjoyed visiting each other's homes. God's work would not be stopped. And now that the church is open again, there seems to be a desire to continue taking the Bible lessons into the villages.

### Prayers of the Women

One attendee, Vicki Loupe, asked this in the prayer time: "Pray for God to give us strength to share these Bible lessons and to protect us. Pray that we continue to share every Saturday." Another attendee, Achia Rose, expressing her desire that the group would grow, asked us to "pray to God for these gathered that we become more and more." And the women are not shy to share truth. Regina, after calling a friend to read Scripture and pray over a woman who was apparently being tormented by demons, told her: "You have to believe in Jesus! You have to come to church! You have to read the Bible!"

Their practical application can be humbling in its directness. Anna reflected, "This class is good for me because . . . it brings to my mind things from God when I'm quarrelling. I think of the verses and realize I don't have time to quarrel."

After studying Genesis 22 about Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac, an attendee named Maria, who just recently became a Christian, smiled and said, "When God wants us to give him our children, we cannot refuse. We must have faith. He will provide!" I asked her if she had ever lost a child. She explained that she had lost four children and used to be very angry at God for that, but that he is now working joy in her life.



*Our first visit to Nabolenger, home of Rita (far right), where we are now holding Bible studies and Sunday worship*



*Learning how to share the gospel through simple pictures in the sand*

### The Wonderful Work of God

Looking back over this past year, we give God all the glory. As we loosen our grip and encourage the Karimojong women to take more ownership in the group, we have to exercise faith that this is God's work, not ours. Some weeks, it seems like pulling teeth to get the conversation going, and other weeks, we sit and listen to animated discussions that never seem to end, wishing we could understand it all. Some weeks, there is no one to translate, so we call a passerby to come help. Some weeks, those who are supposed to lead don't show up. Some weeks, no one shows up—until two hours later!

One memorable day, Rita, a regular attendee who had moved to a village over an hour's walk away, showed up with forty-five women, accompanied by five men and several babies, from her village. They were so eager to hear the Word of God. The ladies from our group quickly took a collection and bought some rice, cabbage, salt, and oil. We borrowed cups, bowls, and tarps, then rented pots, and hosted the guests. Our normal two-hour Bible study turned into an all-day event.

Though we never know what each week might bring, one thing is the same: we always come home surprised, encouraged by how God answers prayer, and feeling privileged to be able to witness the work of God in the lives of these women.

*The author is a missionary in Nakaale, Karamoja, Uganda.*

## What's New

### // Appointments

**Dr. and Mrs. James D. (Jenny) Knox, MD,** (Grace Presbyterian Church, OPC, Columbus, OH) were reappointed to serve as missionary associates in Uganda, for two years beginning in August 2021, with a view towards laboring at the Akisyon a Yesu Presbyterian Clinic in Nakaale, Karamoja, Uganda, for eight months in 2022.

# MTIOPC COURSE ON DISABILITY AND THE CHURCH

// JUDITH M. DINSMORE



Participants in the summer 2021 MTIOPC intensive training in Rockport, Maine. The “Disability in the Church” course will run again in spring 2022.

The new MTIOPC course avoided the trendier title “Disability Ministry” on purpose, instructor Stephen Tracey explained.

New books and big-church conferences on the topic will usually use that term, and it comes with one big problem: “Disability Ministry” can imply that some members of the church dedicate some time to help other members who have disabilities. For small churches making wise decisions about requesting volunteers or allocating funds, such an “extra” ministry may seem impractical even if desirable.

That’s just the wrong lens, Tracey said in August 2021 at the MTIOPC intensive training held at the church he pastors, Lakeview OPC, in Rockport, Maine. “The whole church is to seek to serve the whole person with the whole gospel.” Undergirded by readings that approached the topic of disability from a Reformed perspective, the intensive training was packed with practical insights for Sunday school teachers and church officers on what it means to make ministry to those with disabilities a “complete, normal, and essential” part of the church’s life rather than “a” ministry.

## Insights for Sunday School Teachers

How do you include a child whose dyslexia causes him to feel frustrated and to act out in Sunday school? Or a child with autism whose behavior is throwing VBS storytime into chaos? The details of interacting with kids were addressed at the training by Suzanne de Boer and Sonja

de Boer (who may be known to readers as the daughter and granddaughter of late OP minister John Galbraith). Suzanne de Boer, whose field is special education, explained that children diagnosed with a learning disability such as ADHD or dyslexia do not have a “deficient brain.” Rather, she said, “it’s an inefficient brain. It’s handling its information inefficiently.” Teachers can learn how to present the lesson in a way that can be received and remembered by an inefficient brain.

Sonja de Boer, a behavior analyst and expert in Autism Spectrum Disorder, opened the door to a world of strategies to better teach a child with autism. (She is quick to caveat that each child on the spectrum is different—if you know one kid with autism, you know one kid with autism.) Some strategies dovetail well with longstanding Reformed convictions: children with autism need clear boundaries, she said, and thrive on knowing the rules. “Hello, I’m Ms. de Boer, I have five rules in my classroom, and today we’re going to learn about rule number one,” de Boer will say at the beginning of a

class. She’ll put painter’s tape down on a shared classroom table so that each child knows their physical boundaries and, if appropriate, what space is “theirs” to keep clean.

Other strategies are more counterintuitive to church culture. “As Christians, we have this concept that if you don’t hear from me, you’re doing the right thing,” de Boer explained. But kids with autism need more immediate feedback when they do something right: it helps their brains to build the pathways needed to then repeat the correct action in the future. Relevant research indicates that “kids with autism need four-to-one praises to criticisms.” De Boer also challenged



Mother-daughter pair Suzanne de Boer and Sonja de Boer spoke to the MTIOPC class on learning disabilities and autism

the propensity to lay down the law for every activity. Offering choices instead gives the child with autism some measure of control inside the teacher's boundaries. "Because I said so" will never make sense to a kid with autism," she said. If it's time to sing, de Boer illustrated, say: "We're going to sing 'Jesus Loves Me' and 'Psalm 23.' Johnny, which one would you like to sing first?"

### Insights for Deacons

In a tour of Lakeview OPC's church facility during the MTIOPC training, Tracey pointed out accessibility improvements they have made or hope to make: an outdoor ramp (then a ramp extender when one member noticed that frost heave caused a two-inch bump from the parking lot to the ramp that was problematic for a wheelchair or a walker); a lift to the basement; and widened doorways. The basement has a sensory processing room; the room at the back of the sanctuary has a bin of sensory toys. They plan to add cup dispensers beside drinking fountains.

Every change to the building, of course, comes with a financial cost—and displays the second big area, along with accessibility, for diaconal consideration. The financial costs to families of those with disabilities can be great. Doctor's visits, procedures, medications, therapies, and special equipment may all be straining a family's budget. A private diagnostic assessment for autism by a qualified provider, for example, can cost anywhere from \$3,000 to \$10,000. Deacons may be wise to ascertain whether families are foregoing recommendations from their doctors due to tight finances.

Caring for a child with special needs also places a huge emotional strain on the parents, on their marriage, and on any siblings, de Boer pointed out. (Tracey mentioned that these siblings are sometimes called "glass children"—because it is so easy to look "through" them and only see the child with the disability.) The church might pay for a few hours of respite care each week or each month, so that the parents can go on a date or have a day off with the typical siblings.

### Insights for Pastors and Elders

In the training, Tracey gave down-to-earth descriptions of Lakeview's practices that could easily be applied to other OP churches—from bulletin inserts on disability etiquette to a buddy system for church members. He explained that "ministry to those with disabilities" is on their docket at each session meeting. A member once requested to bring in director's chairs for their family, because of a medical condition that made standing up from the pews difficult. Tracey happily agreed. Later, at the session meeting, the family's request came up in the discussion under the docket item, "ministry to those with disabilities." As they discussed, the session realized that other people attending probably had a similar problem. Now, rather than makeshift seats in back, chairs with arms have been interspersed among the pews, so that those who

*[Continued on page 16]*

## 2022 MTIOPC Courses

### What are the 2022 spring courses?

Disability and the Church (taught by Stephen Tracey)  
Westminster Standards (taught by Chad VanDixhoorn)  
Reformed Worship (taught by Glen Clary)

### When do the MTIOPC courses begin?

Classes will begin on February 1, 2022, with online assignments.

### Where will the mandatory in-person intensive training sessions be held?

The in-person intensive training sessions for Westminster Standards and Reformed Worship will be held in Glenside, Pennsylvania, May 3–5, 2022. The in-person intensive training session for Disability and the Church will be held in Rockport, Maine, May 17–19, 2022.

### Who can attend?

Admission is open to OPC ministers, ruling elders, licentiates, and men under care. Admission to Disability and the Church is also open to other members who serve in the Christian education or Sunday school ministries in their local OP congregation. A non-ordained member who wishes to participate needs to be recommended by his or her session in a written letter sent to the MTIOPC director ([danny.olinger@opc.org](mailto:danny.olinger@opc.org)).

### How much does it cost?

All students must pay a \$50 registration fee, which is fully refundable upon successful completion of the course. To help defray the cost of travel to intensive training, travel scholarships of up to \$350 are available to OP ministers, licentiates, and men under care. If necessary, an additional \$100 in travel reimbursement is available if the student's session or presbytery matches that amount.

### Where do I apply?

Applications are available at [OPC.org](http://OPC.org). Go to Worldwide Outreach, then Christian Education, then Ministerial Training. Click on [MTIOPC](#).

### When is the deadline?

Deadline for registration is January 28, 2022.

## Out of the Mouth . . .

Our four-year-old grandson had just suffered his first bout of stomach flu. Feeling better a couple of days later, he reported to his mother "The virus has lefted my tummy so Jesus can come back in."

—Greg De Jong  
Naperville, IL

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

[Continued from page 15]

need them can participate in worship more fully.

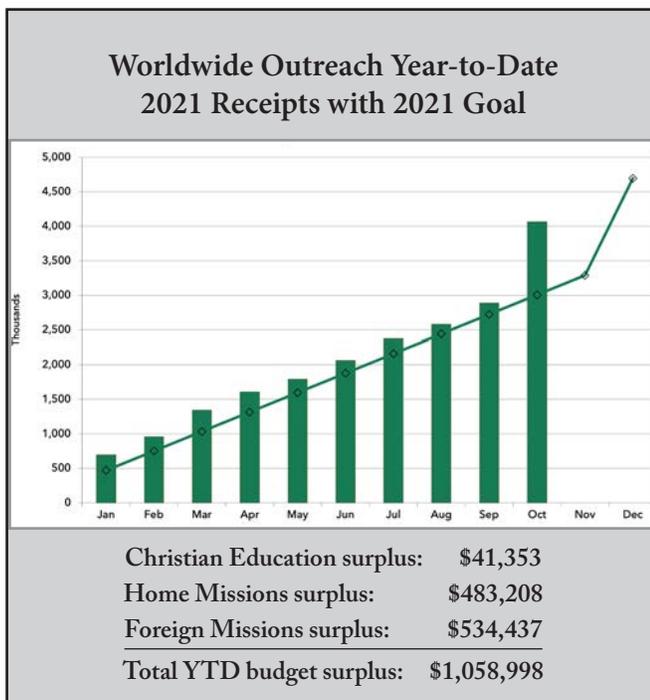
Also addressed at the training was the need to be sensitive to issues of identity. Some people prefer person-first language—for example, “the boy with autism.” Others gladly self-identify—for example, “autie” or “aspie.” What is always helpful is focusing on who we are in Christ.

Tracey urged pastors to consider the sheer numbers of those affected by a disability for whom attending a church event may seem difficult or impossible. If you know an interested person who may have difficulty, “make sure they’re welcome,” he said. “Call them. Say, ‘We’d really like you to be there. What can we do to make it easier?’” Once that person or family finds help in your church, they have a whole network of relationships with other families and caregivers whom they will tell. Word will get out that your church welcomes.

OP pastor Chip Hammond, who attended the MTIOPC training and has written on cognitive disability and the image of God, agrees. He wrote the following about those with cognitive disabilities, which can be applied to all church members with disabilities: “Rather than a ministry *to* such people, the church should foster within itself an attitude of ministry *with* such people, that is, a ministry that is inclusive of such people. . . as much as possible, those with cognitive disabilities should be included in the overall life of the church” (*It Has Not Yet Appeared*, 222).

The 2022 course will begin on February 1, 2022, with online reading and writing assignments and will conclude with a mandatory in-person intensive training in Rockport, Maine, May 17–19, 2022.

*The author is managing editor of New Horizons.*



## Favorite Psalms and Hymns *Trinity Psalter Hymnal* no. 311 “Hark! the Herald Angels Sing”

*Carol H. Blair*

Considered by many hymnologists to be the greatest Christmas hymn, “Hark! the Herald Angels Sing,” written in 1739 by Charles Wesley (1707–1788), is both a much-loved carol and a poetical essay on Bible doctrine. After a synopsis of Luke 2:14 in the first stanza, the hymn affirms the truths of the virgin birth, the deity of Christ, and the need for a second birth. Note in the second stanza the thrice-repeated affirmation of the deity of Christ: “Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; hail th’incarnate Deity, . . . Jesus, our Emmanuel.” The third stanza has direct and indirect references to Malachi 4:2 and John 3:3.

Alterations have changed the carol from its original form. When it was published, the first line read, “Hark! and how all welkin rings” (*welkin* means “heaven” or “sky”). Unfortunately, some modern hymnals have changed the phrase about the virgin birth, thereby denying one of the most important doctrines of Scripture.

The music to which the hymn is sung was not written for it but was a piece from Felix Mendelssohn’s *Festgesang*, Op. 68. In the mid-1800s, William H. Cummings changed the tune slightly and wedded it to Wesley’s words, giving us the hymn as we know it today.

The fourth stanza, below, does not appear in the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal* or in most modern hymnals. Note in it the references to Haggai 2:7 and to the first messianic prophecy of Genesis 3:15.

Come, Desire of Nations, come!  
Fix in us Thy humble home;  
Rise, the woman’s conqu’ring Seed;  
Bruise in us the serpent’s head.  
Adam’s likeness now efface;  
Stamp Thine image in its place;  
Second Adam from above,  
Reinstate us in Thy love.  
Hark! the herald angels sing,  
“Glory to the newborn King!”

## ☆ Congratulations

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

- **Rebekah Van Den Broeke**, *Faith OPC*,  
*Lincoln, NE*

# DECEMBER



*The Detricks (day 4)*



*The Ciavolellas (day 11)*

- 
- 1** Pray for Home Missions general secretary **JOHN SHAW** and associate general secretary **AL TRICARICO** as the committee meets Dec. 1-2 in Austin, TX. / **MARK STUMPF**, OPC Loan Fund manager.
- 
- 2** Pray that the new podcast, **THE REFORMED DEACON**, would be a useful tool to the OP deacons. / Pray for **GREAT COMMISSION PUBLICATIONS**, a joint work of the OPC and PCA, producing Sunday school materials and more.
- 
- 3** Pray for **MR. AND MRS. M.**, Asia, as they adjust to Mr. M.'s new schedule of Bible studies for students at a university campus in Ohio. / Yearlong intern **GRANT (STORMIE) ALLARD** at Christ Covenant, Amarillo, TX.
- 
- 4** **TYLER & NATALIE DETRICK**, Dayton, OH. Pray that Light of the Nations would advance God's kingdom. / **MR. AND MRS. F.**, Asia (on furlough). Give thanks and pray for new members and recent visitors to churches.
- 
- 5** **STEPHEN PRIBBLE**, senior technical associate for OPC.org. / Pray for the **OPC COMMITTEE ON CHAPLAINS AND MILITARY PERSONNEL** and for active duty military chaplain **STEPHEN (LINDSEY) ROBERTS**, US Army.

- 
- 6** Pray for Foreign Missions general secretary **MARK BUBE** and associate general secretary **DOUGLAS CLAWSON** as they report to the executive committee next week. / **NATE (KATIE) PASCALL**, church-planting intern at Christ the King, Naples, FL.
- 
- 7** Associate missionaries **LEAH HOPP** and **ANGELA VOSKUIL**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for spiritual refreshment at the mission's team retreat this week. / **CALVIN & CONNIE KELLER**, Winston-Salem, NC. Pray for Harvest OPC's leadership training.
- 
- 8** **ETHAN & CATHERINE BOLYARD**, Wilmington, NC. Pray God's blessing on officer training at Heritage OPC. / Missionary associate **JOANNA GROVE**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for the Karimjong women that they would hunger for the Word of God.
- 
- 9** Associate missionaries **CHRISTOPHER & CHLOE VERDICK**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray that construction for the new clinic staff houses can start in early 2022. / **JAY & ANDREA BENNETT**, Neon, KY. Pray for continued growth at Neon Reformed Presbyterian.
- 
- 10** Pray for **RETIRED MISSIONARIES** Cal & Edie Cummings, Brian & Dorothy Wingard, Greet Rietkerk, and Young & Mary Lou Son. / Pray for Diaconal Ministries' **REFUGEE MINISTRY SUB-COMMITTEE** as it works toward a plan to help local churches aid refugees.

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- 11** **MARKUS & SHARON JEROMIN**, gathering-minister in Battle Creek, MI. Pray for the mission's weekly Bible studies. / Yearlong intern **BEN (VICTORIA) CIAVOLELLA** at Delta Oaks Presbyterian, Pittsburg, CA.
- 
- 12** Associate missionaries **JAMES & ESTHER FOLKERTS**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for continued physical and mental recovery after their October attack. / Stated clerk **HANK BELFIELD** and database administrator **CHARLENE TIPTON**.
- 
- 13** **MARK & CARLA VAN ESSENDELFT**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for a good reunion and safe holiday travels for son Daniel at school in Kenya. / **LACY (DEBBIE) ANDREWS**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of the Southeast.
- 
- 14** **BILL & MARGARET SHISHKO**, Deer Park, NY. Pray that the Haven in Deer Park would find a worship facility. / Pray for **DANNY OLINGER**, general secretary of Christian Education, as he directs the intern program.
- 
- 15** Tentmaking missionary **TINA DE-JONG**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for wisdom in giving gifts that point to Christ and not just worldly comforts. / Intern **PAUL (JOY) WOO** at Calvary OPC, Glenside, PA.

# DECEMBER



The Haquebords (day 16)

**21** Associate missionaries **OCTAVIUS & MARIE DELFILS**, Haiti. Pray that church members can attend church free from gang violence on the roads. / **JOHN FIKKERT**, director for the Committee on Ministerial Care.

**22** Home Missions administrative assistant **KATHARINE OLINGER**. / Affiliated missionaries **DR. MARK & LAURA AMBROSE**, Cambodia. Pray for the needs of young women and girls rescued from trafficking in Cambodia.

**23** Pray for **BEN & MELANIE WESTERVELD**, Quebec, Canada. / Yearlong interns **MATTHEW (HYO-JUNG) WALKER** at Westminster, Hollidaysburg, PA, and **JEREMIAH (ANNA) MOONEY** at Covenant Community, Taylors, SC.

**24** Pray for **MARK & JENI RICHLINE**, Montevideo, Uruguay, as they prepare to return. / Yearlong interns **BEN (CHERIE) FRANKS** at Ketocin Covenant, Purcellville, VA, and **MARC (RUTHIE) SCATURRO** at Harvest OPC, Wyoming, MI.

**25** **RYAN & ROCHELLE CAVANAUGH**, Merrillville, IN. Pray for five more families to join Mission Church. / **MIKE & NAOMI SCHOUT**, Zeeland, MI. Pray that Grace Fellowship OPC would hunger for Christ and his Word.

**26** **BRADNEY & EILEEN LOPEZ**, Arroyo, PR. Pray for Iglesia Presbiteriana Sola Escritura's outreach efforts. / Yearlong interns **DUSTIN (AMYE) THOMPSON** at Trinity Presbyterian, Medford, OR; **A. J. (CHELSEA) MILLSAPS** at Sandy Springs Presbyterian, Maryville, TN; and **KELLE (ALEX) CRAFT** at Redeemer OPC, Beavercreek, OH.



Linda Karner (day 27)

**27** Pray for affiliated missionary **LINDA KARNER**, Japan. Pray for two new believers helping her in conversational Japanese learning. / Pray for **TRISH DUGGAN**, communications coordinator for Disaster Response.

**28** Pray for **CHRIS (MEGAN) HARTSHORN**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of Southern California. / Pray for affiliated missionaries **CRAIG AND REE COULBOURNE**, Japan.

**29** **LARRY & KALYNN OLDAKER**, Sandusky, OH. Pray God's guidance for Firelands Grace OPC in its pursuit of a building. / Foreign Missions administrative assistant **TIN LING LEE** and office secretary **STEPHANIE ZERBE**.

**30** **CHARLES & CONNIE JACKSON**, Mbale, Uganda. Pray for a good transition to work at the churches and Knox School of Theology. / **GREGORY REYNOLDS**, editor of *Ordained Servant*.

**31** Pray for missionary associates **DR. JIM & JENNY KNOX**, Mbale, Uganda, as they travel to the US. / **MATTHEW & LOIS COTTA**, Pasadena, CA. Pray for officer training at Pasadena OPC.

**16** **GREGORY & GINGER O'BRIEN**, Downingtown, PA. Pray for a new location for Christ Church Downingtown. / **HEERO & ANYA HACQUEBORD**, L'viv, Ukraine. Pray for effective outreach to families during the holiday season.

**17** Pray for **MELAKU & MERON TAMIRAT**, Clarkston, GA, as he ministers to refugees in the Atlanta area. / **KERRI ANN CRUSE**, video and social media coordinator, and **SARAH KLAZINGA**, Short-Term Missions assistant.

**18** Affiliated missionaries **JERRY AND MARILYN FARNIK**, Czech Republic. Give thanks for the students in Jerry's biblical counseling course. / **DAVID NAKHLA**, Disaster Response coordinator, asks for prayer for more volunteers.

**19** **BEN & HEATHER HOPP**, Haiti (on furlough). Pray that the suffering saints in Haiti would be reminded of Jesus as Immanuel, God with us. / **BRAD (CINNAMON) PEPPO**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of Ohio.

**20** **JASON (CAITLIN) VARTANIAN**, church-planting intern at Harvest OPC, San Marcos, CA. / Pray for OPC office manager **ANNELISA STUDLEY** and Christian Education office secretary **ABBY HARTING**.

# A NEW PODCAST: *THE REFORMED DEACON*

// TRISH DUGGAN

In November 2021, the Committee on Diaconal Ministries (CDM) launched a podcast focused on the office of deacon, called [The Reformed Deacon](#). It was developed with the local Reformed deacon in mind: to help train him, to encourage camaraderie with other deacons, and to educate a greater audience on the role of the deacon. Episodes will include interviews of local deacons, elders, pastors, authors, and others with relevant experience. The podcast will also share case studies and dig into topics often complex or misunderstood.

## The Office of Deacon

Perhaps you have heard one or more of the following in your church: *I can't hear the preacher—I'm not sure his mic is even on! I'm sure one of the deacons will get to it.* Or, *I know that family isn't really making ends meet. I'll be sure to mention it to one of the deacons.* Or, *We don't have enough chairs set up for Sunday school. I'll let the deacons know.* Or, *We're moving next week. I'll ask the deacons for help.*

The local deacon's role can sometimes seem to be a kind of catch-all for many of the physical needs of the church, from managing church facilities to aiding a needy family to everything in between. Further complicating their work can be its sensitive nature, along with complex family situations, distrust from those both inside and outside the church, and even dishonest requests for help. This office requires great wisdom!

In addition, many OPC deacons may be serving their congregation alone, without the benefit of a colleague to commit to regular times of counsel and prayer. Some diaconates are small and spread thin, with somewhat unclear tasks. So what exactly is a deacon's job, and how can he be better supported in it?

## Supporting Deacons through a Podcast

The CDM continues to recognize the need to support



CDM administrator and podcast host David Nakhla

the local deacon in his God-appointed work, and it prayerfully strives to meet that need. A unique aspect of the CDM's approach is its great desire to see local deacons supported not only by the committee, but also by one another. There are, after all, nearly one thousand deacons in the OPC, representing hundreds of years of experience!

Over the years, the CDM has organized gatherings primarily for deacons (three national summits to date and another one in June 2022) and developed training materials, a resource website ([OPCCDM.org](#)), a newsletter (*The Mercy Minute*), and a deacon check-in program (where deacons are partnered in order to take intentional time to talk one on one and are given counsel and financial support).

And now, there is a podcast, too.

In its first episode, Tim Hopper, a deacon at Shiloh OPC in Raleigh, North Carolina, said that he reminds himself often that deacons, too, need to sit at Jesus's feet. "It's easy for me to be doing things and staying busy," he said, "and I'm good at making my lists and getting things done, but that's what Martha was doing, and our Lord told her she needs to sit at his feet . . . My wife often asks, 'Are you getting to hear the sermon?'"

In another episode, Dr. Cornelis Van Dam explained that he wrote his book *The Deacon: Biblical Foundations for Today's Ministry of Mercy* because, when he was a pastor, newly ordained deacons would ask for resources on the diaconate. "That question always kind of bugged me," Van Dam said, "because I didn't think there was a good holistic treatment of the office."

Deacons, this podcast is for you, and the CDM hopes you will benefit by listening. For those who are not deacons, the podcast may allow you to better understand and support your local deacons in their work. When you are able, remember to pray for the deacons and elders in your church as they fulfill their calling. They are likely doing more than what you see on Sunday!

Look for *The Reformed Deacon* wherever you listen to podcasts. We'd love to hear from you. What topics would you like to hear on this podcast? Go to: [opccdm.org/podcast-feedback](#) or email us at [mail@thereformeddeacon.org](mailto:mail@thereformeddeacon.org). Find show notes and links at [thereformeddeacon.org](#).

*The author is communications coordinator for the CDM.*

# NEWS, VIEWS, & REVIEWS

## PRESBYTERY OF OHIO WOMEN'S RETREAT

*Christine Wilson*

Sisters in the Lord from the Presbytery of Ohio, as well as some from other denominations, gathered again—finally!—September 24–25 to take a fresh look at how the love of Christ frees us from self-consciousness, self-indulgence, and self-condemnation. Lydia Brownback, author of *Flourish*, guided us away from our culture's messages toward Scripture's promises, demonstrating that only Christ defines us. Such a blessing!

## IN MEMORIAM: GEORGE W. KNIGHT III

*Mark T. Bube*

Our dear brother and father in the faith, Dr. George W. Knight III, went home to his Lord on October 11, 2021, at the age of eighty-nine, at his residence in Lake Wylie, South Carolina. A graduate of Westminster Theological Seminary and the Free University of Amsterdam, he was ordained to the gospel ministry by the Presbytery of Philadelphia in 1961 and served his Savior faithfully for the next sixty-one years, until he retired in 2012. He helped to prepare generations of men for the ministry during professorships at Covenant Theological Seminary (1970–1989), Knox Theological Seminary (1989–1994), and Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary (1994–2012), where he also served as the chairman of the Board of Trustees (2005–2012). He served as a pastor or teacher of the Word in OP congregations in West Collingswood, New Jersey; Matthews, North Carolina; and Charlotte, North Carolina. He served as the moderator of the OPC's 38th (1971) General Assembly.



*George and Virginia Knight*



*Participants in the 2021 Presbytery of Ohio Women's Retreat*

George was a godly Christian gentleman, a churchman in the finest sense of the word, who was always ready to give an answer to anyone who asked for a reason for the hope that was in him, yet with all gentleness and respect (1 Peter 3:15). He authored several books and articles, including *Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* (NIGTC, Eerdmans 1992).

George delighted in Christ. If you knew him, you would see the ever-present twinkle in his eye when he spoke of the things of the Lord. He patiently survived cancer (and the effects of treatment) and a heart condition, never losing sight of his Savior.

George loved sweets. If you ever were on a road trip with George (he served on the Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations from 1997–2014) and found yourselves having to go out for a meal, the first thing George would do when he got to the restaurant would be to check out the dessert menu. Then he would order his meal accordingly, with his appetite ever anticipat-

ing the dessert to come. Well, George is now finally enjoying his heavenly dessert: the delight of unbroken fellowship with his sweet Savior, forever. Maybe there's something there for all of us to learn from our brother about ordering our lives in the present, with our hearts set on the future—with Christ!

George is survived by his loving wife and helpmeet of sixty-nine years, Virginia (Sergeant), four children (one son having predeceased him in 2013), and numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

## RALPH REBANDT RETIRES

*John Frith*

On June 27, 2021, after thirty-five years of ministry, Rev. Ralph Rebandt Jr. retired as pastor of Oakland Hills Community Church in Farmington Hills, Michigan. Pastor Rebandt retired in order to pursue his campaign to run for governor of the state of Michigan. The church marked the bittersweet event with a buffet lunch, speeches, and presentations that celebrated the more than three decades of faithful labor of Ralph and his wife, Carol. He was the founding pastor of the OPC congregation as well as chaplain to the Farmington Hills Police and other community and statewide law enforcement organizations. Rebandt began



Ralph and Carol Rebandt

his metro Detroit ministry in 1986 with a handful of members meeting in homes and oversaw the growth of the congregation that now meets in its own beautiful church building. Ralph and Carol have had a deep impact on many lives and will be sorely missed.

## UPDATE

### CHURCHES

- On October 22, **Resurrection Presbyterian Church** in Oshkosh, WI, became a particular congregation of the OPC.

### MINISTERS

- On August 12, **John E. Terrell** was installed as an associate pastor at Harvest OPC in Wyoming, MI, to work with the Living Hope church plant in Moline, MI. Terrell previously served churches in the PCA and the Presbyterian Reformed Church of Australia.

- On August 15, **Adrian Crum** was installed as an associate pastor at Harvest OPC in Wyoming, MI. Crum was previously an associate pastor at Reformation Fellowship in Roseville, CA.

- On October 8, **Joshua D. Valdix** was ordained as a minister and installed as associate pastor of New Life OPC in Williamsport, PA.

- On October 15, the Presbytery of the

Southeast pronounced the censure of deposition to **Scott G. Davenport**.

- On October 15, the Presbytery of the Southeast added **Louis J. Cloete** to its roll of ministerial members, having approved his call to serve as an instructor at John Wycliffe Theological College in South Africa.

- On October 21, **Christopher D. Hartshorn**, who previously served as pastor at Anaheim Hills Presbyterian, was installed as regional home missionary for the Presbytery of Southern California.

- On October 22, **Robert T. Holda**, previously the organizing pastor, was installed as the pastor of Resurrection Presbyterian Church in Oshkosh, WI.

- On October 22, **Mark R. Wheat**, previously pastor of Sovereign Grace in Hughson, CA, was installed as an evangelist of the Presbytery of the Southwest to work with Good Shepherd OPC Mission in Sugar Land, TX.

### MILESTONES

- Pastor, teacher, and professor **George W. Knight III**, 89, died on October 11. As an OP minister, he served congregations in NJ, FL, and NC. He was a former chairman of the board of Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary.

- Retired OP pastor **Sam M. Allison**, 84, died on October 7. He served OP congregations in ND and IN.

## REVIEWS

**Providence**, by **Richard Sezov**. Self-published, 2021. Paperback, 248 pages, \$9.70 (Amazon). Reviewed by OP member **Margaret D. DeWaard**.

Richard Sezov's first novel, *Providence*, could be preachy since it offers an apologetic take on the events that unfold. But it is not: it employs classic storytelling styles to develop an interesting and even gripping story. The book involves two catastrophic events on opposite coasts, which massively influence the worlds and worldviews of many different but overlap-

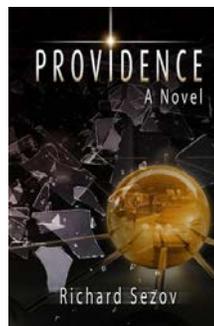
ping groups of people. Some of those affected by these events are Christian, and some are not: Sezov spends a good deal of time highlighting the differences in the way these varying characters respond to circumstances based on their religious convictions and worldviews.

There is one grounding, almost central, character: a pastor working as a chaplain at the hospital where many of the victims of the primary event are taken. He is going through his rounds and happens to meet many of them, having long and fruitful conversations with the victims and their families about grieving and how to make sense of sudden and horrifying events. These conversations are where we find the meat of the apologetic work, with one conversationalist in particular who stands out.

This conspicuous character is a sociologist who prides herself on her ability rationally to take down religion, specifically Christianity, and has a very antagonistic attitude toward the idea of God. This interaction happens in chapter 27 and covers quite a bit of apologetic ground. The conversation primarily centers around atheists' inability to account for their sorrow at wrongdoing or tragedy apart from belief in God (and specifically the Christian God, not simply a theistic perspective) and the fragile foundation a secular worldview has to support feelings of outrage, confusion, and sorrow at the sin, misery, and evil in the world.

Sezov deals with these questions thoughtfully and fairly; there is no hubris in his apologetic style. He does not treat the nonbeliever as a fool or an unrelatable figure in any way. Instead, he sensitively addresses the many life circumstances and various upbringings that result in people believing what they believe, and he still takes the time to engage them. His willingness to take on multiple complex topics and serious emotional experiences is evident and appreciated and adds a great flavor to the novel.

In addition to the apologetic nature of the book, there is also pure entertainment, as any good novel should have. The char-



acters are easy to keep track of, and the stories are woven together well. The story is potently Christ centered and moves quickly, putting characters together in unexpected scenarios that play out in some surprising ways.

Overall, this was quite an interesting read, and would be great for both new believers as well as longtime Christians. Sezov's initial work is especially suited for those interested in apologetics and the daunting conversations one may have with a nonbeliever in a time of need. Since this is a situation practically all believers have been in at one point or another in our lives, I expect that this book will likely resonate with and edify many.

***Survival and Resistance in Evangelical America: Christian Reconstruction in the Pacific Northwest*, by Crawford Gribben. Oxford University Press, 2021. Hardback, 210 pages, \$26.99 (Amazon). Reviewed by OP minister and professor Bryan D. Estelle.**

Christian Reconstructionism is a theological and cultural movement marked by a postmillennial vision that hopes and expects to see earthly society governed by biblical law. Some readers may think that it is a *faux pas* to review a book about Reconstructionism in the Pacific Northwest, since it appears to some that Reconstructionism is waning. For example, Michael Vicar, in *Christian Reconstruction: R. J. Rushdoony and American Religious Conservatism* (University of North Carolina

Press, 2015) has even announced its death. Others, however, like Julie J. Ingersoll, *Building God's Kingdom: Inside the World of Christian Reconstruction* (Oxford University Press, 2015), have signaled the ongoing influence of Reconstructionism and the man considered its founder, R. J. Rushdoony. And, while some may even think that too much attention (or credit?) is given to Rushdoony, let's not forget that *Newsweek* magazine once identified Rushdoony's think-tank, the Chalcedon Foundation, as exerting tremendous power within the Religious Right. The position of Gribben's book is that Reconstructionism, along with its cousin, theonomy, is still influential in North America, still receiving authority indirectly within conservative politics and especially, more directly, in the homeschooling movement.

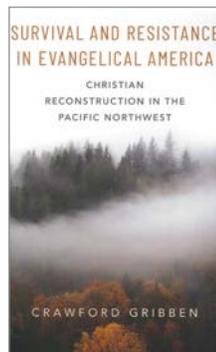
His book is useful because it demonstrates that theonomy has changed and developed in recent decades, especially with the migration of many likeminded Reformed people to survive, resist, and reconstruct in the culture-building projects in Moscow, Idaho, and surrounding areas that are especially connected to Douglas Wilson and those associated with him (though Gribben makes the case that the "Moscow movement" never sought to influence politics inside the Beltway). This is something that should be of immense

interest to those in the OPC, since so many parents have chosen homeschooling or Christian private schools over public schools. Gribben (like the authors noted above) has demonstrated the profound influence that Rushdoony and his followers have had on the homeschooling and Christian education movement

(noteworthy, e.g., is the recognition of Dorothy Sayer's famous article "The Lost Tools of Learning"). Gribben's aim in this book is to demonstrate that Reconstructionism (or theonomy) has remade itself into a "Redoubt" movement (a small and defensive fortification within a fortification), which has hunkered down in the Pacific Northwest of the United States, particularly in

Idaho and the eastern side of the state of Washington.

The book is comprised of an introduction, followed by five chapters, and then summary statements in the conclusion. Chapter 1 describes the migration movement to Idaho and its environs with lots of evidence marshalled from the likes of Rushdoony, Gary North, and James Wesley Rawles. Chapter 2 describes the movement's promotion of a postmillennial eschatology. Chapter 3 describes the goal of the Redoubt movement: to rechristen Christendom. Chapter 4, perhaps the most interesting and important for members of the OPC, discusses



## New Tracts Available

The Committee on Home Missions and the Committee on Christian Education have produced three new gospel tracts. Written by Eric Watkins, pastor of Harvest OPC in San Marcos, California, these tracts share one evangelistic message for three different audiences. The first, "What Is Truth?" addresses skeptics. The second tract, "What's Your Story?" is intended for narrative-driven postmoderns. The third tract, "Your Only Comfort," shares why Christ is the believer's surest hope. These pocket-sized, eight-page tracts are printed in full color and can be customized with your church's name, address, and contact information on the back page. Visit the [CCE online bookstore](#) for order information. Questions can be emailed to CHMCE administrative assistant Katharine Olinger at [katharine.olinger@opc.org](mailto:katharine.olinger@opc.org).

the Redoubt movement's influence on education. Reading this chapter will (and should) alarm many in the OPC. The fifth chapter is on "Media," specifically about how successful the Redoubt movement has been in its use of media and promoting a middle- or even high-brow culture.

Although reading this book will be disturbing and shocking for some members and ministers in the OPC, the book is recommended for those who want an honest analysis of the Redoubt movement in Idaho and its surrounding environs.

***Foundations of Covenant Theology: A Biblical-Theological Study of Genesis 1–3*, by Lane G. Tipton. Reformed Forum, 2021. Paperback, 131 pages, \$16.99. Reviewed by editor Danny E. Olinger.**

Lane Tipton's *Foundations of Covenant Theology* is a 131-page biblical-theological study of Genesis 1–3. Divided into twelve chapters with questions at the end of each, the book is ideal for adult Sunday school classes. But the book is also profound in its explanation of the eschatological goal set before Adam in the covenant of works and the realization of that goal through the person and work of the second Adam, Jesus Christ, in the covenant of grace.

Tipton declares that the central concern of Scripture is the glory of the self-contained triune God who in the beginning created the heavens and the earth. Exegeting Nehemiah 9:6, Isaiah 6:1–6, and Colossians 1:16, Tipton further argues that "the heavens" of Genesis 1:1 refer to the invisible realm of glory where God dwells forever to be worshiped by his creatures—a worship wholly for his own sake.

In Eden, fellowship existed between God, the Creator, and Adam, the creature. Tipton beautifully explains that God made Adam to worship and glorify him. He writes, "God breathes life into him so that he might himself breathe out praise to God. It is a movement from God to Adam and from Adam back to God. He was created in such a way that the very breath he possessed existed so that he might confess the glory of the triune God" (71).

It was a fellowship that God initiated and upheld, but it was not the full fellowship of the highest heavens. The "special

act of providence" (WSC 12) that God extended to Adam that Adam might advance from Eden to the invisible heavens and full fellowship with God was by way of covenant. Tipton explains that in Reformed theology this covenant by which God voluntarily condescended to Adam takes on different names to emphasize different aspects of the positive and verbal promise of God. "Covenant of life" (WSC 12) emphasizes the outcome of the covenant if Adam had obeyed; "covenant of works" (WCF 7.2) emphasizes the demand placed on Adam; and, "covenant of creation" distinguishes it from the covenant of grace that is established after Adam's fall into sin.

Tipton also stresses the importance of understanding the two trees. God's prohibition of eating of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil presented Adam with the fundamental religious question—would he love and glorify God for God's sake alone? The tree of life pictured advancement beyond earthly probation to the highest heavens where God is enthroned in Sabbath rest.

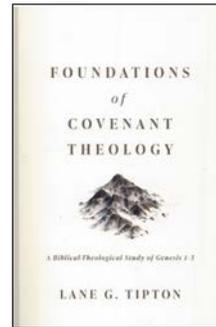
Regarding the fall into sin, Tipton points out that Eve's basic problem is that she treats the words of God and the words of the serpent as competing hypotheses, thus making herself the judge of competing claims. Adam and Eve then transgress God's command, and the fellowship that once was theirs with God is lost. They hide from God, for God must judge sin. But where judgment is expected, the gospel dawns with the covenantal promise of the coming seed of the woman who

will crush the head of the serpent (Gen. 3:14–15).

From this point forward, the Scripture is Christ centered. There is also no neutrality. Antithesis exists between the City of God and its representative champion, the promised seed, and the City of Man and its representative champion, the serpent.

Tipton closes the book with a detailed look at the temptation of Jesus in Luke 4. Adam fails the probation; Jesus is the second Adam who obeys. Jesus recapitulates and reverses the outcome of the temptation of Adam. Tipton also explains how Israel fails as sons of God (Exodus 16:2–3), but Jesus is the new Israel who obeys.

Highly recommended, this is a wonderful resource for understanding the scriptural foundations of covenant theology.



## Positions Available

**Pastor:** Grace Covenant Church in Sheffield, Ontario, Canada, is looking for a shepherd. This congregation of about twenty families needs a seasoned pastor committed to the Reformed faith in every area of life. While the desire for a long-term commitment is strong, the session would consider a suitable candidate for a specified time. If you are interested in learning more about this position, please contact GCC's ministerial advisor, Pastor John Ferguson, at [ferguson.1@opc.org](mailto:ferguson.1@opc.org).

**Senior Pastor:** Rockford Springs Community Church (OPC) in Rockford, Michigan, is seeking a new senior pastor. Our congregation of around 150 members is located about fifteen miles north of Grand Rapids. We are searching for a well-rounded preacher and teacher of the Reformed faith and practice. We desire a shepherd who will help lead our congregation to a greater maturity in Christ, while equipping us to evangelize and establish relationships in our neighboring communities. If interested, check out our website at [rockfordsprings.org](http://rockfordsprings.org) and send a resume and/or letter of interest to our search committee at [baasscott@gmail.com](mailto:baasscott@gmail.com).

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