

# NEW HORIZONS

in the ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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by Patricia E. Clawson

JANUARY 2022

**21** Review: Hubach's *Parenting and Disabilities* // by George and Donna Hammond



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## New Horizons

in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church

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When Yuma OPC in Yuma, Arizona, pastored by Jeremy Baker, received feedback that their booklet table was "overwhelming," they put together this welcome table at the front door instead. The white bags contain an OPC brochure, a Yuma OPC pen, booklets (*First Catechism*, *Westminster Shorter Catechism*, and *What Is a Reformed Church?*), and will soon include a Yuma OPC trifold brochure and welcome letter. On the far right are crayons and coloring pages for little ones. On the left are the most recent issues of *New Horizons* and a few other booklets on topics geared toward visitors.



# COMING ALONGSIDE IN A CRISIS



REBECCA SODERGREN // In November 2019, Orthodox Presbyterian pastor Joshua McKamy took his six-year-old daughter, Zoey, for what was supposed to be regular checkup with the pediatrician. He didn't know that this would be their last normal day for a long time.

The doctor felt a lump in Zoey's abdomen and sent her for scans that showed a cancerous tumor on her kidney. Zoey's parents rushed her to Penn State Health Children's Hospital in Hershey, Pennsylvania, where doctors scheduled emergency surgery for a Stage III Wilms' tumor.

Josh McKamy had performed a wedding ceremony the previous weekend. The family had just enjoyed trick-or-treating together. "Within a week, we were trying to figure out if our daughter was going to die," he said.

Amid the chaos, God providentially provided fellow OPC minister Stephen Payson as the chaplain at the same hospital where Zoey received her care.

Those early days following diagnosis are among the most traumatic for parents, Payson observed. Parents "usually are crumbling but trying to put on a strong front for their child."

Payson had been interested in chaplaincy ever since a seminary ro-

tation in a hospital. While pastoring Providence Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Mifflinburg, Pennsylvania, he volunteered at a nearby community hospital. In 2015, he left congregational ministry to attend a yearlong chaplaincy residency, followed by a year of fellowship in pediatric oncology chaplaincy at Penn State Health. He stayed on as the pediatric oncology chaplain afterward.

In November 2019, Payson received a text message from John Van Meerbeke, pastor of Living Hope Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, notifying him that Zoey had been diagnosed with cancer and that the McKamys were on their way.

When it's a friend who is coming through the door, the "heartbreak becomes a little more personal," Payson said. But the advance notice allowed him to help the McKamys from their first few moments in the hospital.

"The first night, I asked Stephen,

'How do young kids process having cancer?'" Josh McKamy said. "He said that most kids just want to keep being kids. I interpreted that to mean that we should find ways to keep giving her experiences that are normal child things."

## A Divine Knockout Punch

That wasn't easy, because Zoey's treatment required full isolation. Not only did family life grind to a halt, but church life also grew more complicated.

At the time, Josh McKamy was a church planter at Covenant Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, and it was budget season. The leaders were already facing a "sink or swim" year for the mission work.

Zoey's cancer "was a very clear sign that it was going to sink because they were going to have a pastor with very limited capacities," Josh McKamy said. The COVID-19 pandemic, which started a few months later, further hindered outreach. He preached at

church and wore a mask in public. His wife, Kristen, stayed home with their children, overseeing Micah's schooling and protecting Zoey's immune system. They stopped being able to invite church members and visitors into their home, and Kristen McKamy had to stop nannying other children. They couldn't even have in-person help from their own extended families.

Zoey's cancer, a new baby, the pandemic, and the flailing mission work combined to create a season of trauma. "I think it was the compounding of all these things that got us," Josh McKamy said. "It felt like a divine knockout punch. I had expectations for the future of my ministry and my family, and the Lord took away all of those." The mission work did close, and he worried about providing for his family and seeking a new call while keeping Zoey's medical care plan intact.

"The book of James tells us, 'You do not know what tomorrow will bring,'" Josh McKamy said. He felt that deeply.

### Mom and Nurse

Although the McKamys were afraid, they helped Zoey to process the seriousness of her disease. "It was hard, but we didn't really shield her," Kristen McKamy said. "We took comfort that Zoey, in her own age-appropriate way, could articulate the gospel. She knew it was bad, but we were with her, and God was with her."

Josh McKamy also felt concern for his wife, who was processing the situation differently. While her husband was "focused on the big picture," Kristen McKamy said, "I was focused on the next thing, in nurse mode," still dealing with the mental shock of "seeing a scan of a tumor that was crazy big."

She had to leave their other children, Micah and Kalia, at home with other caregivers while Zoey was in the hospital. Also, she was pregnant with their youngest child. And she was feeling the weight of helping her other children process their sister's illness.

"Micah thought she was going to die," she said, and it was hard to navigate

those fears with an eight-year-old.

### Big and Small Mercies

But the Lord provided in big and small ways. Josh McKamy's sister organized a GoFundMe campaign to help with expenses, including the purchase of a reliable vehicle that would get the family back and forth to treatment. And Penn State University's annual THON fundraiser and the Four Diamonds childhood cancer organization covered every cent of Zoey's medical care. (Four Diamonds fully funds Payson's salary, too. The THON fundraiser is a student-run dance marathon to benefit Four Diamonds.)

Small mercies included freezer meals from friends, Chick-fil-A gift cards for the chicken nuggets Zoey enjoyed eating during treatment, and hospital visits from Kristen McKamy's friend who lived nearby. One family gave the McKamys an overnight stay at a hotel with a pool to celebrate Micah's birthday. "Little ways that people had connections" felt like a gift, Kristen McKamy said.

Josh McKamy added that he appreciated people's low expectations of them during that time. "The vast majority of people were willing to be patient and not expect normalcy," he said, adding that their family felt loved by both their mission church and their mother church.

It was also a mercy that Zoey appreciated all the one-on-one time with her parents, her mom said. But that appreciation was tempered by the physical rigors of what she was enduring.

"She was in a lot of pain, and she would wake up screaming," Josh McKamy said. In total, Zoey endured the tumor removal, a second surgery for a lung biopsy (which was clear), two weeks of radiation, and seven months of chemotherapy.

Payson had warned the McKamys that young children generally don't understand a cancer diagnosis, so their worst suffering kicks in when the treatment makes them feel terrible. Payson's presence at the hospital and his explanations of what to expect were another of the Lord's mercies during that season.

"Stephen was with us before the surgery, praying with us right as they wheeled her in," Kristen McKamy said.

For Josh McKamy, that was a relief. "I appreciated that he's an excellent Reformed pastor and that I didn't have to initiate any of that. I could just be Dad, and Stephen could be the pastor. He gave really good advice."

### Suggestions for Coming Alongside

Payson has grown close with many families journeying through cancer treatment, sometimes caring for them as long as two to three years for children receiving leukemia

treatment. He finds that families need his services most acutely when there is a new diagnosis, a relapse, or a need for end-of-life care. He also ministers to the doctors and nurses who care for these patients, and he and other care workers have started a program that connects bereaved parents with each other. After witnessing such hardship, Payson suggests that when churches want to come alongside

members in crisis, God's people should pray.

"I've heard amazing stories of prayer chains with people all over the world praying for perfect strangers," Payson said. He suggests sending a card that says, "I prayed for you today in this way" and including a Scripture verse. Josh McKamy added that many people prayed for their family through various OPC prayer chains.

In addition to prayer, people should



*Pediatric oncology chaplain and OP minister Stephen Payson says that parents can be "in a fog."*

“just be present, volunteer to help with the children, bring meals,” and help with practicalities, Payson said. “Call me if you need anything” isn’t helpful because most people won’t call. Instead, he recommends just going ahead and doing something.

Another thing to avoid saying is “I know what you’re going through.” Instead, Payson suggests acknowledging the difficulty by saying something like, “What you’re going through must be really hard. I can’t imagine.”

Parents often feel anger, helplessness, powerlessness, and even undeserved guilt, blaming themselves for not “giving their child broccoli instead of macaroni and cheese” or fearing that their genetics caused their child’s suffering, Payson said. They “are caught up in such a whirlwind. No parent is really prepared for what they’re going to walk their child through. I tell them, ‘You’re going to be in a fog for a while. You’ve been thrown into a foreign country, and you don’t speak the language.’”

That was true for the McKamys, who now have “far lower expectations of how quickly people can bounce back from trauma,” Josh McKamy said. “Part of me expected that you just process through it theologically, you get to the point where you know what’s true, and you move on.” He now knows it’s more complex than that, and he thinks he’s a better pastor because of it.

He encourages churches to “draw near, pray, love on, support, ask questions, and be slow to assume you know what’s going on” when ministering to someone in crisis. His wife adds that helpers can “encourage people to give themselves grace,” especially moms.

“My house was a mess, my kids watched too much TV, we ate too much takeout,” Kristen McKamy said. “I needed to be told that those things didn’t matter, that I could rest, that I could just enjoy the kids and appreciate time with them.”

Josh McKamy also encourages couples to shore up their marriages before crisis comes. “I’m thankful that [Zoey’s cancer] brought us closer, but



*Joshua and Kristen McKamy with their children Micah (10), Zoey (8), Avia (18 months) and Kalia (6)*



*On vacation in the Outer Banks the summer after Zoey received her final treatment*



*Zoey being lifted up by her dad to ring the end-of-treatment bell after seven months of chemotherapy*

many times, crisis drives a wedge,” he said. “If your marriage is held together by nothing but duct tape and prayer, at some point you’re going to have a crisis,” and the fallout could be even worse.

### **Thanksgiving and Praise**

The McKamys’ life, however, has settled down. Josh McKamy is now the associate pastor of Redeemer Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Danville, Pennsylvania. They’re still close enough to Hershey for Zoey to receive her checkups there. In May 2020, about three weeks after the birth of her new sister Avia,

Zoey rang the bell to end her chemotherapy treatment. Payson was there for her big moment. So far, she remains cancer free.

“Our family situation now is better than it’s ever been,” Josh McKamy said. “Better even than October 2019. I can look back at how the Lord has used all this suffering. We’re catching up mentally to thanksgiving and praise for God’s deliverance.” □

*The author is a member of Redeemer Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Danville, Pennsylvania.*

# LOVING A HURTING NEIGHBOR



**PATRICIA E. CLAWSON // When I had breast cancer twenty-four years ago, folks from our congregation and presbytery showed the love of Christ by encouraging us with cards, meals, flowers, offers of help, and especially prayers during that difficult time. One friend's daily emails demonstrated that I wasn't forgotten.**

With a clean bill of health a year later, I tried to imitate her by periodically sending emails to a pastor and a new mother who both struggled with difficult cancers. Surely, I had a handle on loving my neighbor in crisis.

## Challenges of Caring Well

Such confidence melted a decade later when a dear church friend fought a precarious battle with lymphoma. She had asked for help that was far more challenging than sending emails. I couldn't say no. Her husband's job required him to often be in Virginia weekdays while she underwent chemo and radiation. Without his work, they wouldn't have insurance. Her well-organized daughter from California offered direction, but they needed someone on the ground to coordinate volunteers to enact those plans.

What a challenge to find willing women who were healthy, didn't have sniffly kids when her immune system was low, weren't too busy working or homeschooling, and could climb the stairs! Volunteers were needed to shop

for groceries, provide meals, drive her to the doctors or hospital for treatments, wash her sheets and clothes, make beds, clean their home, give her water and chemo medications, sit with her during the day, or stay overnight when her husband was out of town.

About a dozen women emerged as instruments of mercy. Despite the daughter's organization, the task of enlisting volunteers and ensuring that all was accomplished became overwhelming. My work responsibilities and the growing needs of my long-distance widowed mother added stress. Stretched to my limit, I made mistakes. Thankfully the daughter sensed my situation and stepped into the coordinator role instead.

Since then, I've cared for my mother through her dementia and for a pew buddy during her last months, ran errands for a bedridden pastor, and was the primary caregiver for my daughter when she battled cancer and passed into glory. During those times and through two surgeries, I witnessed many servants of Christ walk alongside the hurt-

ing, including us. How they buoyed our faith!

## Practical Advice for Caregiving

This may lead you to think I now know what I'm doing when it comes to caregiving. But you would be wrong. I have made countless mistakes that still bring me sorrow, embarrassment, and shame. I've said the wrong thing, didn't protect someone's privacy, forgot that I was there for the patient's needs and not my own, or simply didn't know how I could help.

How I wished I had earlier come across a book called *Alongside: A Practical Guide for Loving Your Neighbor in Their Time of Trial* by Sarah Beckman. This is the first resource I have found that gives detailed, practical instructions on what to do, say, and think when someone needs help in a crisis. Beckman, who attends an Assembly of God congregation, writes with wisdom gleaned from her own difficult trials and from asking many suffering believers to share what helped or hurt them.

Four things emerged. First, of

course, we must biblically base our response to someone's suffering on Jesus's commands to love the Lord with all our heart, soul, and mind, and to love our neighbor as ourselves (Matt. 22:36–39). Since God ranks loving our neighbor second only to loving himself, Beckman says we should consider it our God-given responsibility, even though it is hard to know what to do and even harder to do it. God will be our help.

In our hearts we understand this, but sometimes our feelings get in the way of truly helping. Beckman's second reminder is crucial: "It's not about you." We sometimes offer help but end up making it about us—our grief, our need to be "in the know," or our desire to be appreciated. The hurting person may not be thinking clearly, so we should give grace and forgiveness when needed, be sensitive and humble, and respect the person's privacy. After upsetting my daughter by sharing private concerns as a church prayer request, I learned to run all requests past her first. Other practical tips include keeping visits short and acknowledging the crisis but not dwelling on it every time you see them. Put their needs first. It's not about you.

If God is "nudging" your heart to help but you wonder whether you are the best person to handle a task, Beckman thirdly offers a "tier" system to aid you. A Tier 1 caregiver is a close family member or friend who handles the more intimate needs, such as choosing a wig or accompanying the loved one to the doctor. Friends, neighbors, church members, and coworkers are Tier 2. If there is an emergency, pray for strength and wisdom, then step in. At the start of a crisis, a Tier 1 or 2 person is needed to coordinate the needs and organize the many volunteer offers, as I tried to do with my friend.

An acquaintance or friend by association would be Tier 3, and someone you don't know—a neighbor perhaps—is a Tier 4 relationship. Be careful about forcing yourself into an acquaintance's

life even with the best of intentions, Beckman warns. Pray for them and help with less intimate needs, such as mowing the lawn. Remember: it's not about you. The tier concept allows you to consider the depth of your relationship and keeps you from jumping in inappropriately.

When offering appropriate help, Beckman fourthly shares how best to keep our eyes on a hurting person's needs. Don't say, "Let me know what I can do." You will not receive a response. Give specific offers: "I'd love to pick up groceries for you or drive your son to practice." Respect them if they say no. For Tier 2 friends, I ran errands, picked up medications and their mail, cleaned out their fridge when they were hospitalized, watered plants, took out the trash, and drove them to appointments. You could help the caregiver too by offering to stay with the hurting person for a few hours, babysit the kids, or walk the dog.

Sitting silently, as Job's friends did at first, may be the greatest help. When our daughter was in the NICU, a friend brought magazines for me and her knitting, and told me we didn't have to talk.

When we do speak, Beckman reminds us that nothing we say can take away someone's pain. Unless you are close, it's best to simply voice, "Sorry for your loss." Let them know you care, affirm feelings that *they* have expressed, and empathize: "I'm here for you." When someone dies, share memories and your appreciation of the loved one. Think more and say less. Especially avoid comments like, "Heaven needed them more than you."

Remind them of who God is and how he loves them by praying, texting,

sending notes and cards, and calling. "Any reminder of Whose they are instead of what their current circumstance is can be a powerful weapon against the lies of the enemy" (124). Choose Scripture verses that speak of God's character.

Ask if you could pray out loud with them, which few others are likely to do. "Nothing is more worthwhile than shepherding a loved one in prayer to the throne room of grace" (128).

When the diagnosis is difficult, Beckman suggests that "if they don't ask your advice, don't give it." If you have been through the same situation, your experience may be helpful, but keep

the focus on them, not yourself. Skip the horror stories.

## One Body

As God created each member of his body with special gifts, consider how your gifts would be beneficial in this trial. One friend used her floral arranging skills to create our daughter's funeral flowers. She also gave a pedicure to our bedridden friend. Another friend's financial know-how helped a new widow plan for her future. A saint played his banjo for a sick teen. A friend gave me handmade cards to use as thank-you notes.

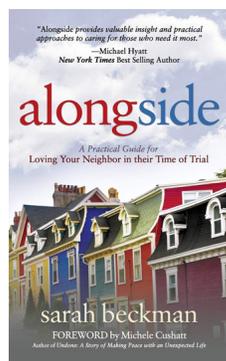
Although I've walked alongside a few folks, Beckman's book added many pieces to the puzzle of caregiving. It's not often that I finish a book with a prayer, thanking God for the author's insight. But this time I did. □

*The author is a member of Calvary OPC in Glenside, Pennsylvania.*

*Alongside: A Practical Guide for Loving Your Neighbor in Their Time of Trial* by Sarah Beckman. Morgan James Publishing, 2017.



Patricia and Douglas Clawson with their daughter Katie



# REFLECTING ON DISABILITY IN THE CHURCH



JUDITH M. DINSMORE // As supper guests a few weeks ago, my family played a mind-bending conversational game with our hosts and their kids, the objective of which was not to play by the rules but to discover the rules—to the delight of the initiated and the slow-dawning satisfaction of those puzzling it out.

I had that same sense at the August MTIOPC training on disability in the church, where unlearning an old way and absorbing a new one was at the heart of the course.

There is an “old” way to consider disability—the old way of the flesh, recalled OP pastor Ben Snodgrass, a participant in the course that was held at Lakeview OPC in Rockport, Maine. But according to 2 Corinthians 5:16–17, we have been given a new one.

By the old valuation, Snodgrass explained, when a family with a disability begins to regularly visit a church, they might be seen as a drain, as a burden, a family that must be helped. But those who are indwelt by the Spirit are able to think differently: “When we regard people according to the Spirit, we say, ‘Oh great! Here comes a family! How can we bless them? What gifts are they bringing to the church?’”

## Indispensable

In June 2019, Snodgrass had given a seminar on caring for caregivers at the church he pastors, Falls Church in

Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin. The seminar came about simply because he and his session were seeking to respond to the needs that were before them. Afterward, Snodgrass began to pray—What next? Another seminar? Then he saw the email about the 2021 MTIOPC course.

The topic of disability in the church is so important because it displays whether we are thinking according to the flesh or according to the Spirit, Snodgrass observed.

Donna Hammond agrees. She and her husband, OP pastor George Hammond, were participants in the course and also spoke from personal experience as parents of a daughter with cognitive disabilities. Donna pointed out that church members can be tired, leading them to regard church attendees, or even *potential* church attendees, who have disabilities through eyes of exhaustion: “We can be resentful of people who will put a drain on resources or on our peace and comfort,” she said.

For George Hammond, thinking according to the Spirit about disabilities must come back to 1 Corinthians

12, especially verse 22: “The parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable.”

“It’s a nice sound bite,” he said, “but I found myself asking, do I really believe that? There are a lot of rational reasons why it would really be better for the church to have a lot of impeccably able people.” But—the parts that seem to be weaker are indispensable. The church needs those with hearing, visual, cognitive, and ambulatory disabilities.

Hammond, pastor of Bethel Presbyterian in Leesburg, Virginia, wrestled with these questions, eventually writing *It Has Not Yet Appeared What We Shall Be: Considering the Imago Dei in Light of Those with Cognitive Disabilities*. In it, he considers the church’s need for those with cognitive disabilities. His words can be widened to include all those with disabilities: “[Their] presence . . . is a rebuke to our self-defined worth, and a reminder that God’s salvation is by grace alone.”

Thanks to a Reformed understanding of life in a fallen world, we can expect to attend church alongside those

with disabilities. We can expect to meet those who cannot sit still for the service and those who must remain seated in a wheelchair; kids who only ever wear soft sweatpants due to an overload of sensory input and adults who have trouble looking you in the eye.

It is not a problem when those with disabilities change the habits or budget or look of a church. What is a problem is when they are not in church at all.

Their absence is a loss, and leaves the church vulnerable to the incongruity of an able group talking about a sin-ravaged world—and vulnerable as well to a worldly confidence in the flesh.

### Removing Barriers to Worship and Fellowship

In the MTIOPC class, instructor Stephen Tracey, pastor of Lakeview OPC, gently challenged a common assumption: that ministry to those with disabilities requires adding special events or committees. Rather, it may simply mean subtracting what shouldn't be there: physical barriers, lack of understanding, and snap judgments.

Steps, hard pews, narrow doorways: all can be barriers. They can even be spotted in online photos and keep a potential visitor away. Instead of lecturing on accessibility, Tracey gave a tour of Lakeview OPC as an example of a church constantly reevaluating its facility. He pointed out the chairs with arms and cushions interspersed among the pews; the lift down to the basement; and the wheelchair ramp in the parking lot. For parents of children with autism, there's a small bin of sensory toys in the room in the back of the sanctuary (someone washes them each week); and in the basement, a Sunday school room was converted to a sensory room with a beanbag chair, weighted blankets, and more sensory toys.

Understanding what someone in front of you needs might be impossible until they tell you. Dr. Sonja de Boer, John Galbraith's granddaughter and a recognized expert in the field of autism who presented to the MTIOPC participants, shared a wealth of examples of

what a typical person in church might misunderstand about someone with autism. For an adult with autism, Sunday morning small talk might be uninteresting or exhausting. For a family with a child with autism, coming into church clothed and clean might have taken hours of preparation. The ten-year-old sibling helping his autistic brother up the stairs might be feeling waves of guilt for wanting to play with his friends instead.

A third obstacle to ministry is that snap reaction of judgment so easily deployed when someone seems "off."

A pastor at the MTIOPC training explained that once members in his church realized that a certain adult had autism, the members' attitude changed and became warmer. That's good, de Boer replied. But what would it take

for us to "react with kindness *before* we knew?" Snap reactions can include, perhaps especially include, the parents of children with special needs. Those families may be struggling because they have been made to feel shame, Donna Hammond observed. "People judge the parents more than the kids . . . when they find out what their life is like, or what the coping mechanisms are that they have in their family."

### Not an Expert

Disability and the church is a topic that may only become more relevant: one in every fifty-four children today, for example, is diagnosed with autism. And tempting as it might be to think the answer lies in knowing more about disability—about the autism spectrum, about learning disabilities, about accessibility and the surrounding government regulations—that's not quite the goal. As George Hammond commented

during the training, "You don't need to be an expert on people with disabilities; you just need to be an expert on the people in your church."

The MTIOPC training did not spiral into ever-more-specific details of care that placed a burden of specialized knowledge on shoulders already heavy with responsibility. Instead, "for me," Snodgrass said, "it was the affirmation that I didn't need to build a formal



At the MTIOPC course in Rockport, Maine: Judith Dinsmore, Ben Snodgrass, John Fikkert, Stephen Tracey, George Hammond, Donna Hammond

program, known as disability ministry, within our church. Disability ministry is not some wing of ministry. It *is* ministry."

To be in the room was to witness ministers and members exhibit an otherworldly love that focused on details only inasmuch as they served actual people—stories of whom they had aplenty. Hope truly attends a conversation that regards church attendees as first made in the image of God and only second as people beset with sundry sorrows and weaknesses. As George Hammond writes:

The latent potential of man to be the most God-like of all creatures, which was never realized in Adam, and having now been realized in Christ, the God-man, will be realized in all those who are vitally united to him. (161) □

*The author is managing editor of New Horizons.*

# UPDATING THE LANGUAGE OF THE DOCTRINAL STANDARDS

// DAVID C. NOE

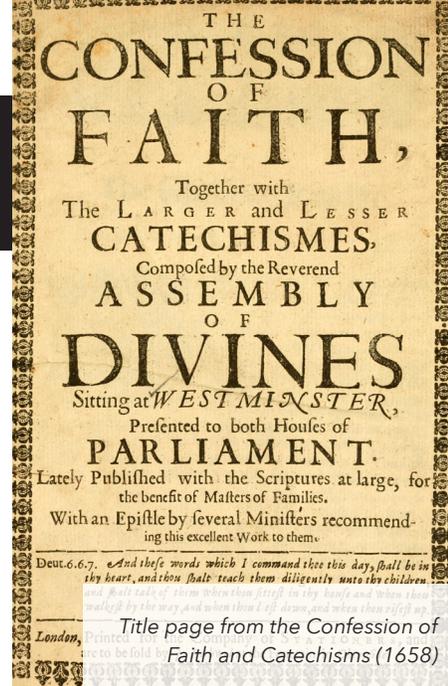
At the Eighty-Fifth (2018) General Assembly of the OPC, held in Wheaton, Illinois, the commissioners elected a Special Committee on Updating the Language of the Doctrinal Standards. This committee was constituted of four ruling elders and three ministers. The ministers are Glen Clary, John Fesko, and Alan Strange; and the four ruling elders are Mark Bube, Jim Gidley, John Muether, and myself (since ordained as a teacher of the Word). The assembly also elected two alternates, ministers Tony Curto and Ryan McGraw.

The assembly gave us this mandate: “To propose specific linguistic changes to the doctrinal standards of the OPC. The committee is authorized to propose only such changes as do not change the doctrine or meaning of the standards.”

In addition, the assembly authorized us to consider only four kinds of changes: “1. morphological (e.g., ‘hath’ to ‘has’); 2. replacing archaic pronouns (e.g., ‘thou’ to ‘you’); 3. replacing obsolete and/or archaic words (e.g., ‘stews’, LC139); 4. substituting a modern Bible translation for the text of the Ten Commandments and the Lord’s Prayer.” We were also tasked “. . . to strive to propose changes that preserve the cadence, memorability, and dignified style of the standards.”

## The Work Thus Far

In order to fulfill this mandate, we have worked both online and, before COVID, during an extended *viva voce* session in Oviedo, Florida, in February 2020. My responsibility as chairman (with Mark Bube as vice-chairman) has been to shepherd a lively and complicated discussion about how to meet the expectations of our mandate. We have found this to be very challenging, but thus far God has granted us a salutary consensus. Despite some natural disagreements among us about particular points, a spirit of preservation—that is, an unwillingness to risk losing anything of theological or literary significance—has characterized all of our discussions. And the



Title page from the Confession of Faith and Catechisms (1658)

task of Mr. Muether as the clerk of our committee has been to keep track of the very numerous proposals, motions, amendments, amendments to the amendments, and so forth, that render presbyterianism both a joy and a challenge.

Of the four tasks, proposing “morphological changes” has been the easiest thus far and entirely without controversy. We soon formed three subcommittees (one for each of the confessional documents) and finished this portion without much difficulty. The second element of our mandate, the replacement of archaic pronouns, was similarly uncontroversial. We have so far completed work on the Confession of Faith as well as the majority of the Shorter Catechism (through Q/A 75). Quite predictably, the third item of our assignment, “replacing or substituting archaic words,” has occupied the majority of our time.

Here are some examples of our tentative work, taken from our report to the Eighty-Seventh General Assembly (GA) this past summer. Please note that none of these have been approved, or even discussed, by GA, nor are they our final report.

In Confession of Faith 1.8, we suggest substituting *common* for *vulgar* in the phrase “[the Scriptures] are to be translated into the vulgar language.” This decision was reached after some debate, in which we weighed whether the connotations of *vulgar* in the seventeenth century included something low, base, or indecent (as the word does today). And, does the proposed word *common* capture the necessary meanings of *vulgar*? We concluded that it is the best available alternative.

A second example is found in Confession of Faith 1.10. There we suggest substituting *verdict* for *sentence* in this portion: “The supreme judge . . . in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture.” We decided this captures well the joint propositional and juridical meaning of “sentence” (Latin *sententia*). Today, the word *sentence* conveys to the reader either a simple grammatical construction or to the more learned a juridical meaning, while *verdict* captures both meanings better.

A third example is taken from Confession of Faith 3.8.

Here the word “vocation” (Latin *vocatio*) is better represented in the twenty-first century by *calling*, as *vocation* in common parlance now only refers to one’s job. And we decided that this is not a term of theological art (like *predestination* or *consanguinity*) that should be maintained despite the potential for contemporary confusion. After all, the Shorter Catechism uses the phrase *effectual calling* in two Q&As (30 and 31). This strongly argues that *vocation* and *effectual calling* were synonymous terms in the minds of the Divines. It is worth noting that we are suggesting no changes at all for Chapter 4, and only morphological changes for Chapters 7–9, 11–12, 14–15, 17, 21, 25, and 32.

### Looking Ahead

The work that remains for us is to finish making suggestions for the Shorter Catechism, including the difficult task of choosing an alternative, more contemporary Scripture translation for the Lord’s Prayer, and doing the same for all of the Larger Catechism. God willing, we will have this done for the Eighty-Eighth GA in 2022.

The process thereafter, should the church decide to update the language of the secondary standards, is much more involved. First, the GA’s advisory committee for our committee would need to bring our report to the whole GA with recommendations. GA would then need to decide what to do with it (which could include simply receiving the report as information, which would end the process). If the Eighty-Eighth GA decides to accept and act upon it, it is our view that another committee would need to be erected to make recommendations based upon our suggestions. If that committee’s work is adopted by a subsequent GA with a two-thirds majority, its decisions would then be submitted to all presbyteries. And two-thirds of the presbyteries would need to ratify the GA’s decisions before any changes would be made to the standards. The wheels of presbyterianism grind slowly. Why is this? Perhaps because, in the words of John Calvin, “all changes are dangerous, and sometimes even harmful.”

We as a committee humbly ask the churches to pray for our work, that we would be wise and judicious in our choice of words, endeavoring to fulfill the GA’s mandate faithfully without exceeding it in any direction. We all are blessed to belong to a church governed by Christ and no mere man, a church whose worship and life are regulated by the Scriptures with the standards as a fallible but reliable source of wisdom to instruct us.

*The author is an independent scholar and OP minister serving as a teacher of the Word at Reformation OPC in Grand Rapids, MI.*

## ☆ Congratulations

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

- **Patrick Grant, Mercy Grant, and Lily Grant,**  
Grace OPC, Vienna, VA

## The Grace Internship Fund: Information for Churches and Donors

The Grace Internship Fund is specifically intended for smaller, financially needy Orthodox Presbyterian congregations that in other respects meet the criteria for having a summer or yearlong internship. These are churches that may not be able to fund the 50 percent or more of an internship’s expense as currently required by the CCE’s Intern Program.

### As a Recipient Church

As a church you may apply on [OPC.org](http://OPC.org) under “Christian Education” for a Grace Internship Fund grant at the time of applying for an internship. There are just a few simple questions to answer on the second page of the application.

### As a Donor

Individuals and churches are welcome to make donations to the Grace Internship Fund. It is important that donors understand that the terms of the fund only allow the Committee to use annual income and market gains, and up to 10 percent of the fund principal in any given year. Thus, the Grace Internship Fund is designed to serve the OPC for many years to come and may only be used for internship funding. The fund is professionally managed by the same financial advisors who manage the OPC’s ministerial pension fund.

Cash gifts may be sent to the Committee on Christian Education at the offices in Willow Grove designated for the fund. Gifts of stock can also be received after first contacting the CCE general secretary ([danny.olinger@opc.org](mailto:danny.olinger@opc.org)) for transfer instructions.

## ● Out of the Mouth . . .

When my husband retired as pastor, the church, which includes my daughter’s family, began to pray for their next shepherd. A few weeks later, my three-year-old granddaughter, Gia, asked her mom when she could meet the new pastor. “We don’t have one yet,” her mom replied. Gia kept insisting that yes, they did. Finally her mom asked, “OK, Gia, what is his name?” “You know,” Gia replied. “His name is Way! Way Pastor Bedtime!”

–Sue Hollister  
Homer Glen, IL

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

## HOME MISSIONS

# THREE NEW TRACTS NOW AVAILABLE

// KATHARINE M. OLINGER

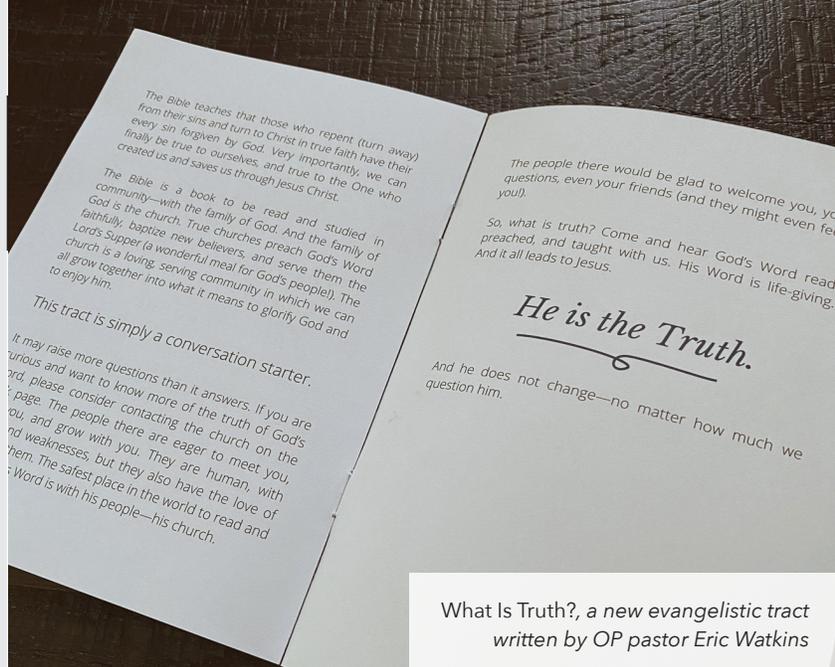
Three new tracts are now available for ordering online: *What Is Truth?*, *What's Your Story?*, and *Your Only Comfort*. They are published jointly by the OPC's Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension and the Committee on Christian Education.

Partnering on this publication project flows naturally from a long-standing CHMCE practice: covering the cost of CCE materials for church plants. When a plant begins to receive denominational support, it also receives in the mail a packet of the OPC's trifold *Christ Proclaims a Better Way*, as well other titles from the CCE online bookstore that the plant may find helpful.

Church plants use these pamphlets and tracts in a variety of ways. Yuma OPC in Yuma, Arizona, is working on an outreach and evangelism supply station for its members, outfitted with flyers, tracts, books, cards, and Bibles. Harvest OPC in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, manned a literature table at the Carolina Classics Fair in October. This year's fair saw 180,000 attendees over the course of ten days, and representatives of Harvest OPC were ready to greet them and invite them to worship on Sunday.

Church planters most often request titles like *ABCs of Presbyterianism*, *Why Christians Need Confessions*, and *Why Does the OPC Baptize Infants?* These pamphlets reflect our church's ministry to those new to the Reformed faith and to the underchurched. But CHMCE's manual, *Planting an Orthodox Presbyterian Church*, also emphasizes reaching out to the unchurched. The manual reads,

With the unchurched you do not have deep theological discussion to win them over. . . . With these you talk about basic truths and ultimate issues. Do you believe God can change their hearts? Can He call an unbeliever tomorrow afternoon from darkness into light? Yes, He can! (60)



What Is Truth?, a new evangelistic tract written by OP pastor Eric Watkins

### Written for the Unchurched

With this goal in view, Dr. Eric Watkins, pastor of Harvest OPC in San Marcos, California, and member of the Committee on Home Missions, has written several gospel tracts for Orthodox Presbyterian congregations and church plants to use when engaging with men and women who have yet to trust in Jesus Christ for salvation.

The first tract, *What Is Truth?*, was displayed at last year's general assembly in Sioux Center, Iowa, and is now in its second printing. The other two tracts, *What's Your Story?* and *Your Only Comfort*, were printed at the end of 2021 and are available for order online.

Eric Watkins brings a wealth of experience to this project. Together, he and General Secretary John Shaw teach a class called "Reformed Evangelism" for the OPC's Ministerial Training Institute. Watkins has planted two churches for the OPC, and he serves as the Director of the Center for Missions and Evangelism at Mid-America Reformed Seminary.

Watkins himself grew up in a non-Christian household. He came to know the Lord when he was twenty-one years old, after he had finished following the Grateful Dead across the country. In God's providence, his older sister gave him a Bible at the tail end of his rock music pilgrimage. Introduced to the person of Jesus Christ presented in God's Word, Watkins was convicted of his sin and misery, and he turned to God for grace and salvation. Today, Watkins shares the good news of the Bible both from the pulpit of Harvest OPC and with California beachgoers on his visits to the shore.

### 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 will be released on January 5 & 19.

Watkins's gospel tracts are a valuable tool because they're organized according to a biblical apologetic. First, Watkins establishes a point of contact using general revelation. *What Is Truth?* asks readers to take a count of life's many unanswered questions. Who are we? Where did we come from? What happens when we die? These questions can be overwhelming. Watkins goes on to explain that the Bible is also filled with questions—and answers. "In fact," he writes, "the first question in the Bible is arguably one of the most important ever asked: 'Has God really said?' (Gen. 3:1). If the answer is 'yes,' then we have answers to many of life's most important questions. If the answer is 'no,' then we are like rudderless boats, drifting hopelessly across a windswept sea of confusion." He stresses the importance of God's Word, the means of grace, and the fellowship of believers.

The second tract, *What's Your Story?*, speaks to men and women persuaded by postmodern philosophy. Watkins writes:

We all spend a lot of time and energy trying to understand who we really are (our identity) and finding our sense of purpose in this world (our calling). . . . [But] life is much more than a book without an author, and we are more than actors just winging it as we go. Our stories were written by God, and whether easy or difficult, they have meaning because he is the Author of Life who does all things well—for our good and for his glory.

Jesus reveals the truth about who we are and about who God is. Watkins continues, "If you are lost, [Jesus] is the way. If you are confused, he is the truth. And if you are dead in your sins, Jesus is the life. This is the good news of the gospel, and it is the greatest story ever told!"

*Your Only Comfort*, the third tract in the series, uses the wisdom of the Heidelberg Catechism to share why Christ is the believer's surest hope. Watkins acknowledges that "life is frail, often painful, and too easily taken." Some people look for comfort in distraction—using things like social media, television, or video games to escape. Others are left to face disappointment and despair head-on. Watkins helps his reader to consider just why and how this world has failed to provide satisfaction for the reader's heart-longings. In contrast, the Bible "comforts us with the hope that we belong to God, and that heaven belongs to us if we sincerely believe in the perfect life,

sacrificial death, and triumphant resurrection of Jesus Christ."

## Connection with the Local Body

While many evangelistic tracts are written to try to convert their readers, these three tracts aim to connect the reader to the living body of Christ in the church.

For example, in *Your Only Comfort*, Watkins writes, "Perhaps reading this has made you curious. It may have raised questions that are worth discussing. If so, please consider contacting, or even better, visiting the church listed on the back page. The people there are imperfect, but they are trusting in their faithful Savior. They would love to meet you and hear your story."

Each tract closes by inviting its reader to visit the local Orthodox Presbyterian church "stickered" on the tract's back page. Stickers, which are included in the cost of the tract, can be personalized with a church's address, contact information, website, or service times.

Ron Beabout, pastor of Grace and Truth OPC in McAllisterville, Pennsylvania, has used *What Is Truth?* to invite individual contacts to worship. In Grand Forks, North Dakota, Pastor Christopher Drew set up a basket of tracts inside Grand Cities Mall, where Faith Presbyterian Church, a presbytery mission work, currently meets for worship.

*Planting an Orthodox Presbyterian Church* encourages church planters, "You must intentionally and purposefully spend time with unbelievers, forming relationships with them, getting to know their needs and concerns, and earning the right to share your faith with them" (61).

*What Is Truth?*, *What's Your Story?*, and *Your Only Comfort* use colors that match the denomination's existing promotional materials (navy blue, green, gray, and white). The minimalist cover lets each tract's title speak for itself and the simplicity of overall design bolsters the tracts' shelf life.

The next tract in the series will be collaboratively written by a family team—former regional home missionary Dave Crum and his son-in-law and son, OP pastors Aijalon Church and Adrian Crum—with plans to translate the tract into Spanish, as well.

*The author is administrative assistant for the Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension.*

*what is*  
**TRUTH?**

*what's*  
*your*  
**STORY?**

*your only*  
**COMFORT**

## HOW TO ORDER

Tracts are available at [store.opc.org](http://store.opc.org). One packet of one hundred tracts costs \$10.00; five or more packets cost \$9.00 each; a bundle of the three titles (three hundred tracts) costs \$30.00. Include your church's contact information with your order to receive printed stickers for the back of the tract. For more information, please email [katharine.olinger@opc.org](mailto:katharine.olinger@opc.org).

# PLANTING A CHURCH IN NARIÑO, COLOMBIA

// RODRIGO ANDRÉS ESPINOZA  
AND ENER SANJUAN



The new work in Pasto, Nariño, Colombia, with church-planting pastor Ener Sanjuan in the back center

*In 2005, the Committee on Foreign Missions (CFM) made contact with the Iglesia Presbiteriana de la Reforma in Colombia (made up of a single presbytery). In 2017, the presbytery requested the CFM to assist it financially with its church planting in the Department of Nariño. The CFM has assisted with part of the budget to place Pastor Ener Sanjuan in Pasto, Nariño. Among others, OP ministers Carlos Cruz and John Shaw and elder David Nakhla have also taught in conferences in Nariño. We asked Pastor Rodrigo Andrés Espinoza of the overseeing session (Raah Presbyterian Church in Bogotá) and Pastor Ener Sanjuan to write this article about the church plant that was begun with no contacts in the fall of 2017 and was organized with a pastor and ruling elder in June 2021, during a time that included a year of COVID. The article was translated from Spanish.*

The Lord is the owner of God's flock; he is the one who, in his eternal counsel, wrote the name of his chosen ones in the Book of Life. By his own will, he decreed to raise a group of people in the southern province of Nariño, Colombia.

When members of our presbytery visited the area of Nariño for the first time in 2014, we rejoiced to see two small churches with a deep thirst to know Reformed doctrine. These churches were located in two villages, Túquerres and Sapuyes. After many visits, on September 19, 2017, the presbytery decided to send Pastor Ener Sanjuan to equip the members of those churches and to start a new church in the nearby city of Pasto. Pasto is the capital city of Nariño, population 350,000, where the Roman Catholic faith is widely spread and charismatic churches abound.

## Beginning of Jesús Rey Exaltado

In 2017, Pastor Ener relocated with his wife, Alba, from the warm city of Barranquilla along the north coast to this prosperous and cold city in the Andes mountains. When

Pastor Ener arrived, he had no contacts in Pasto. However, by the first Sunday, there were two women in worship who were eager to listen to God's Word.

For three months, the small group persevered, gathering to study God's Word every Sunday from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and every Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. at a small parking lot and in a small residential apartment that the Lord provided as meeting places. There, Christ was exalted and glorified through songs and hymns, without any instruments, but with grateful hearts, full of faith for the work that the Lord started in Pasto. Through God's grace, new visitors came, and people began to join the church.

While he was working at Pasto, Pastor Ener Sanjuan also made many trips to the surrounding small villages, including Túquerres and Sapuyes, to support the process of their organization into churches of the presbytery. Brothers Erasmo Paredes and Claudio Bustos, both students at the presbytery's seminary, accompanied him and not only prayed for the new church in Pasto but also assisted in the Sunday teaching at the Pasto church at times when the pastor was visiting the villages or on vacation.

The gospel is the pearl of great price and the priceless



Singing in worship at Jesús Rey Exaltado ("Jesus King Exalted")

treasure. The preaching of God's Word began with persistent evangelistic work and intense discipleship using the Westminster Confession of Faith, reaching out to neighborhoods from the houses of the people in the local church.

### Witness from the Worshipers

Church members Víctor Hugo and Ana Lida Bastidas are thankful for the church's ministry.



Church members Víctor Hugo and Ana Lida Bastidas

“It is important to highlight that during the time we started a spiritual foundation with Pastor Ener, we've perceived and felt his unconditional support, dedication, and desire to train us and to clarify our questions and doubts. He's also given us the confidence to approach him in counseling for some personal difficulties, relationship problems, parenting issues, and job problems. The feeling of the people who comprise the church is that, with Pastor Ener, we feel very well represented, supported, and most importantly, encouraged to grow in character and to be useful tools to extend the gospel.”

Due to so much goodness from the Lord, his people want to thank and worship the Lord for the fulfillment of God's great commission at Pasto. His grace and his powerful Word allow many people to be called to repentance, to be regenerated, and to desire to grow in the knowledge of our holy God.

### Organization and Ordinations

At the beginning of the work in Pasto, our presbytery's seminary worked with Erasmo, who is currently leading the work in the village of Túquerres, and with Claudio, who is leading a small group in the village of Sapuyes. Now we have six more students who are about to finish their theological studies.

In 2021, Erasmo received his *Licenciatura en Estudios Teológicos* (a bachelor's degree in Theological Studies) at our seminary.

In June 2021, Pastor Rodrigo Andrés Espinoza visited from Bogotá. As the presbytery's moderator, he presided along with Pastor Ener over the ordination to the holy ministry of Erasmo in the con-



At the ordination of Oscar Darío Paz Toro as ruling elder

gregation gathered at the village of Túquerres. Also during the visit, Pastor Ener was installed as pastor of the congregation of Jesús Rey Exaltado (“Jesus, King Exalted”) in Pasto; brother Oscar Darío Paz Toro was ordained as a ruling elder; and the congregation was acknowledged and received as a member of the presbytery.

Oscar wrote: “It has been God's grace that despite not being worthy of his mercy, he has placed me in the ministry as a ruling elder to serve the Lord and his holy ones. I ask the Lord to incline my heart toward his Word, to be faithful to it, and to serve with fear and reverence.”

Currently, the Pasto congregation has an average attendance of forty people, nineteen of whom are part of the church membership who have remained faithful to the Lord. We have eight people who will be making public professions of faith in December and giving testimonies of their faith in Christ.

### Future Growth

We've also been working in a small village called Las Mesas in Nariño. There, a small group is studying God's Word through the work of brothers Esteban Bucheli and Cesar Danilo Burbano, who are traveling every week to teach in this place. May the Lord help us next year to continue extending his kingdom to other places within Nariño, and of course, within the city of Pasto too.

May the Lord hold fast his church in this part of the country. May the Holy Spirit continue to grow the church of Nariño numerically and spiritually, adding to the church those who were predestined to be saved, and may he help us to continue preparing laborers to work in his harvest.

We are thankful to the Lord for the financial support, the prayers, and the encouragement that the OPC is giving to the church in Colombia. The fruits of your labor have been abundant to the glory of our holy God.



Members of Jesús Rey Exaltado

## What's New

### // Comings/Goings

The **Rev. Dr. and Mrs. L. Charles (Connie) Jackson** returned to Mbale, Uganda, in December 2021 after medical leave in the United States.

# THE HIDDEN MULTIPLIER

// BRADLEY M. PEPPO

One gives freely, yet grows all the richer; another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want. (Prov. 11:24)

It would be something of an understatement to say that I've never been very good at math. When God wired my brain, he certainly programmed it more for words than for numbers. But even someone with my deficient mathematical abilities should know that, in a subtraction problem, the remainder is supposed to be less than the minuend. That is to say, when one amount is subtracted from another, the amount that remains should be smaller than it was before the operation.

But Proverbs 11:24 says that this isn't always the case.

According to this verse, there is a certain kind of subtraction that actually produces a greater amount than that with which the operation began. This is the subtraction of generous giving. We read something similar in the next verse: "Whoever brings blessing will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered" (verse 25). The one who gives freely, Solomon tells us in these verses, the one who subtracts from his wealth to bless others, is one who ends up with even more than he had before he gave.

This is said of those who give to the poor: "Whoever has a bountiful eye will be blessed, for he shares his bread with the poor" (Prov. 22:9). And of those who give honor to our God: "Honor the LORD with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your produce; then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine" (Prov. 3:9-10). In the equation of charitable giving, it seems, the remainder ends up being greater than the minuend.

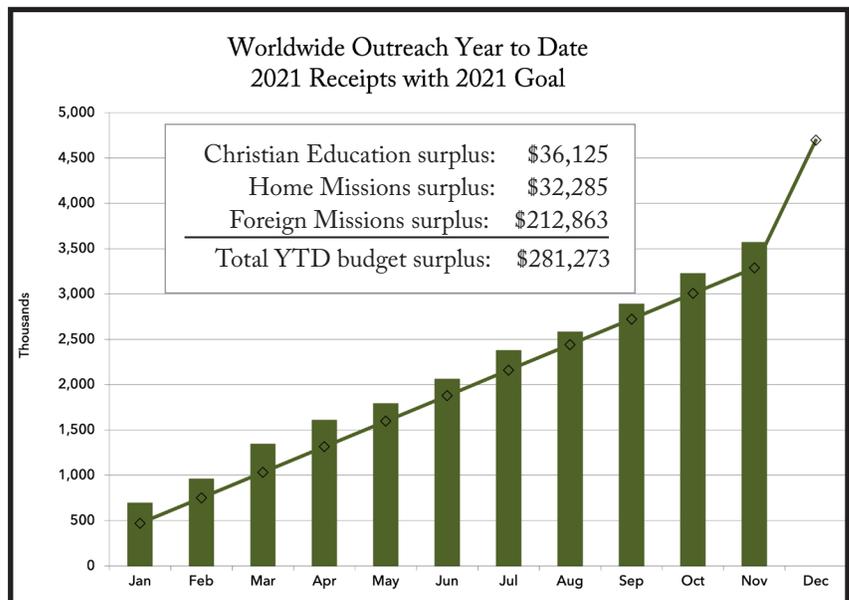
But how does this happen? Solomon is not here defying the laws of mathematics. The equation he is describing is not one of simple subtraction, but something more complicated. In the subtraction of charitable giving, there is, we see, an attendant process of multiplication.

As the one gives freely, there is another who enriches, another who waters, another who blesses, another who fills. Proverbs 19:17 makes explicit what is clearly implied in all the other verses: "Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will repay him for his deed." The one who gives freely, Solomon tells us, is repaid by the Lord himself.

If this is the case with giving to the Lord and to the poor, if the one who gives freely and generously is repaid by the Lord with an increase, then why are we still so reluctant to do it? Why do we give only meagerly and as if under compulsion? Well, one reason, I imagine, is that we have no way of knowing in advance how exactly God will respond to our giving, where the increase might come from, what form it might take, or when it might come. In the equation of charitable giving, the multiplier is not evident before the operation is performed. It is a hidden multiplier. And its hidden nature requires that our charitable giving be performed in "the assurance of things hoped for" and in "the conviction of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). That is, our giving must be performed in faith.

But the Word assures us that such faith exercised in our charitable giving will never be misplaced. As Paul, drawing on these same principles, reiterates to the Corinthians, we can be generous in the settled confidence that the one "who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply [our] seed for sowing and increase the harvest of [our] righteousness," and that in such giving, we "will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God" (2 Cor. 9:10-11).

*The author is regional home missionary for the Presbytery of Ohio in the Miami Valley region.*



# JANUARY



The Beabouts (day 1)



The Bennetts (day 11)

**1 BEN & HEATHER HOPP**, Haiti (on furlough). Pray for their family as they travel to churches and encourage prayer for the churches in Haiti. / **RON & CAROL BEABOUT**, McAlisterville, PA. Pray for five new families to join by summer.

**2** Pray for **MIKE (ELIZABETH) DIERCKS**, area home missions coordinator for the Presbytery of Ohio. / Pray for **DANNY OLINGER**, general secretary of Christian Education, as he directs the Timothy Conference and MTIOPC.

**3** Associate missionaries **OCTAVIUS & MARIE DELFILS**, Haiti. Pray that the Haitian people would turn to the Lord for comfort and hope in suffering. / **MARK STUMPF**, loan fund manager, and **CHARLENE TIPTON**, database administrator.

**4 CHRISTOPHER & SARA DREW**, Grand Forks, ND. Pray for Chris (Faith OPC) as he balances work as a tentmaking pastor. / Year-long intern **MATTHEW (HYOJUNG) WALKER** at Westminster OPC, Hollidaysburg, PA.

**5 KEVIN & RACHEL MEDCALF**, Cumming, GA. Pray that Providence would grow in grace and number as they move to a new location. / **Isaac (Esther) Zhou**, church-planting intern at Pasadena OPC, Pasadena, CA.

**6** Affiliated missionary **LINDA KARNER**, Japan. Pray for opportunities to share the gospel. / Yearlong intern **MARC (RUTHIE) SCATURRO** at Harvest OPC, Wyoming, MI. / **KERRI ANN CRUSE**, video and social media coordinator.

**7** Affiliated missionaries **Craig and Ree Coulbourne**, Japan. Pray that believers at Shin Urayasu Grace would know how to support each other in difficult times. / **ABBY HARTING**, office secretary for Christian Education, and **AN- NELISA STUDLEY**, office manager.

**8 CALEB & ERIKA SMITH**, Thousand Oaks, CA. Pray that God would provide the church opportunities to share the gospel. / **DAVID NAKHLA**, Diaconal Ministries administrator. Pray for those planning the National Diaconal Summit, June 2-4.

**9 CHARLES & CONNIE JACKSON**, Mbale, Uganda. Pray that the accreditation process for Knox School of Theology may open doors to train more men for the ministry. / Home Missions general secretary **JOHN SHAW**.

**10** Affil. missionaries **JERRY AND MARILYN FARNIK**, Czech Republic. Pray for their weekly Bible club outreach to children hearing the gospel for the first time. / Pray for missionary associates **DR. JIM & JENNY KNOX**, Mbale, Uganda, as they prepare to be a witness to those suffering physical trials in Karamoja.

**11 SHANE & RACHELLE BENNETT**, Grand Rapids, MI. Pray for Reformation to have strong intentional outreach. / Active duty military chaplains **JEFFREY (JENNIFER) SHAMESS**, US Army, and **CORNELIUS (DEIDRE) JOHNSON**, US Navy.

**12 MR. AND MRS. F.**, Asia (on furlough). Pray for seminary graduates who will begin preparing for licensure and church planting. / **STEPHEN PRIBBLE**, senior technical associate for OPC.org.

**13 MR. AND MRS. M.**, Asia. Pray that the Bible studies for students in the US may prove fruitful. / Yearlong intern **JEREMIAH (ANNA) MOONEY** at Covenant Community, Taylors, SC.

**14 PAUL & SARAH MOURREALE**, West Plains, MO. Pray that Covenant Reformed would be light in a dark place. / Home Missions administrative assistant **KATHARINE OLINGER**.

**15** Affiliated missionaries **DR. MARK & LAURA AMBROSE**, Cambodia. Pray for a smooth return to Cambodia after home assignment in the US. / Intern **PAUL (JOY) WOO** at Calvary OPC, Glenside, PA.

# JANUARY



The Sextons (day 17)

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**21** Associate missionaries **JAMES & ESTHER FOLKERTS**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for James and his preaching ministry at the church in Karamoja. / Yearlong intern **KELLE (ALEX) CRAFT** at Redeemer OPC, Beavercreek, OH.

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**22** Pray for **DAVE (ELIZABETH) HOLMLUND**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of Philadelphia. / Pray for stated clerk **HANK BELFIELD** and others preparing for the 88<sup>th</sup> General Assembly to be held June 8-14.

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**23** **JEREMY & GWEN BAKER**, Yuma, AZ. Pray for Yuma OPC's outreach to long-term Yuma residents. / Assoc. missionary **LEAH HOPP**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray that her research would help make outward connections.

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**24** Associate missionaries **CHRISTOPHER & CHLOE VERDICK**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray that the regular prayer meetings would be encouraging to the clinic staff. / **MELISA MCGINNIS**, financial controller.

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**25** Pray for missionary associate **JOANNA GROVE**, Nakaale, Uganda. / **MILLER & STEPHANIE ANSELL**, Waco, TX. Pray for officer training, shepherding, and outreach at Trinity.

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**26** **MICAH & EILEEN BICKFORD**, Farmington, ME. Pray that five new families would join Grace Reformed OPC. / Yearlong interns **BEN (VICTORIA) CIAVOLELLA** at Delta Oaks Presbyterian, Pittsburg, CA, and **GRANT (STORMIE) ALLARD** at Christ Covenant, Amarillo, TX.

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Tina DeJong (day 27)

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**27** Tentmaking missionary **TINA DEJONG**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray that recent trials will result in a deeper trust and witness in the Lord. / *New Horizons* proofreader **SARAH PEDERSON** and cover designer **CHRIS TOBIAS**.

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**28** Short-Term Missions staff **TRISH DUGGAN** and **SARAH KLAZINGA** request prayer for field prep for summer short-term missionaries. / Associate missionary **ANGELA VOSKUIL**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for safe travels back to Uganda.

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**29** **MARK & LORIE WHEAT**, Sugar Land, TX. Pray visitors to Good Shepherd would desire to join in communicant fellowship. / **Mark Lowrey**, Executive Director of Great Commission Publications.

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**30** **MARK & JENI RICHLINE**, Montevideo, Uruguay. Pray that the Lord would raise godly candidates for church office at Salvos Por Gracia Church. / **GREGORY REYNOLDS**, editor of *Ordained Servant*, and **AYRIAN YASAR**, editorial assistant.

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**31** Pray for **RETIRED MISSIONARIES** Cal & Edie Cummings, Brian & Dorothy Wingard, Greet Rietkerk, and Young & Mary Lou Son. / **JOHN & KATIE TERRELL**, Moline, MI. Pray the Lord would raise deacons and elders for Living Hope OPC.

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**16** Pray for **MARK (PEGGY) SUMPTER**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of the Southwest. / **HEERO & ANYA HACQUEBORD**, Lviv, Ukraine. Pray for new leadership for, and meaningful outreach, in the teenage ministry.

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**17** Home Missions associate general secretary **AL TRICARICO**. / Yearlong intern **TAYLOR (SOPHIA) SEXTON** at Heritage Presbyterian, Royston, GA. / **JOHN FIKKERT**, director for the Committee on Ministerial Care.

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**18** Pray for **BEN & MELANIE WESTERVELD**, Quebec, Canada. Pray for the session as they serve the St-Marc congregation. / Pray for **BRUCE (SUE) HOLLISTER**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of the Midwest.

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**19** **Mark & Carla Van Essendelft**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for Mark as he oversees several work projects for the Mission. / **JAMES (DANA) STAFFORD**, church-planting intern at Grace Presbyterian, Columbus, OH.

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**20** **CARL & STACEY MILLER**, New Braunfels, TX. Pray for New Braunfels OPC's continued progress toward particularization. / Yearlong intern **A. J. (CHELSEA) MILLSAPS** at Sandy Springs Presbyterian, Maryville, TN.

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# NEWS, VIEWS, & REVIEWS

## RESURRECTION PRESBYTERIAN ORGANIZED IN OSHKOSH, WI

*Robert Holda*

On the evening of Friday, October 22, 2021, Resurrection Presbyterian Church in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, was organized as a particular congregation of the OPC in the Presbytery of Wisconsin and Minnesota at a service of recognition and installation. Resurrection was a mission work of Apple Valley Presbyterian Church in Neenah, Wisconsin. My call as pastor of Apple Valley was dissolved upon my installation as pastor of Resurrection, and two ruling elders were also installed at Resurrection: Mr. Eric Johnson and Mr. Michael Smith, both of whom formerly served on the Apple Valley session.

Rev. Jim Hoekstra preached the sermon, Rev. Bruce Hollister charged the newly installed officers, and Rev. John Hartley charged the newly formed congregation.

## IN MEMORIAM: MARCUS JOHN RENKEMA

*Rob Van Kooten*

On November 5, 2021, Rev. Marcus (Marc) John Renkema, 54, went to be with the Lord. Throughout his short, five-month battle with pancreatic cancer, he looked forward to seeing his Savior Jesus Christ. Marc was born August 18, 1967, in Ontario, Canada, the son of a Christian Reformed Church (CRC) pastor. After graduating in 1989 with a psychology and theology double major from Dordt College in Iowa, he pursued a calling to the gospel ministry at Westminster Seminary in California. Marc married Kari Post in 1992; together, they cherished serving



*Marcus Renkema*

the Lord and raising their four children in the beautiful Pacific Northwest. From 1994–1997, he served First CRC, Chino, California, as pastor of Congregational Life and Outreach. From 1998 until his death, he was pastor of Trinity Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Bothell, Washington. Marc was also a counseling instructor at Northwest Theological Seminary and, for many years, he served as chair of the visitation committee of the Presbytery of the Northwest.



*At the organization service for Resurrection Presbyterian: Jim Hoekstra, Richard Duggan, Mark Huenink, Fred Fudge, Brian DeJong, John Hartley, Steve Veldhorst, Bob Holda, Eric Johnson, Brian Wingard, Michael Smith, and Bruce Hollister*

Marc evidenced a deep love for Christ and the church during nearly three decades of faithful ministry. He will be remembered as a faithful husband and father, Christ-centered pastor and teacher, wise counselor, and dear friend.

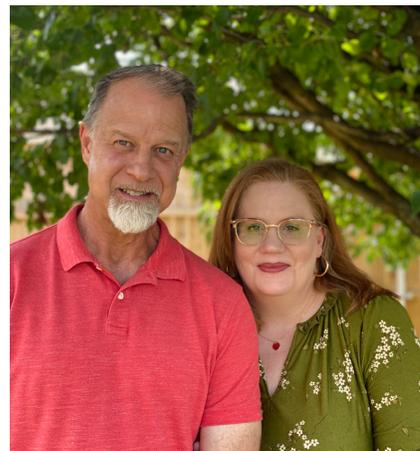
## WHEAT INSTALLED IN SUGAR LAND, TEXAS

On October 22, 2021, Mark L. Wheat was installed as an evangelist of the Presbytery of the Southwest to work with Good Shepherd OPC Mission in Sugar Land, Texas, in the southwest Houston area.

John Johnson, pastor of Tyler Presbyterian in Tyler, Texas, preached. Phillip

Hodson, pastor of Christ the King Presbyterian in Longview, Texas, gave the charge to the evangelist. Orthodox Presbyterian minister Nick Lammé led the worship service.

Wheat previously served as the associate pastor at Tyler Presbyterian in Tyler, Texas, and as pastor at Sovereign Grace Community (OPC) in Hughson, California.



*Mark Wheat with his wife, Lorie. In October, Wheat was installed as an evangelist to labor with a church plant in southwest Houston.*

## UPDATE

### CHURCHES

- On October 15, **Providence OPC** in Bryan/College Station, TX, became a particular congregation of the OPC.
- On November 19, First CRC of South Holland, IL, became a particular congregation of the OPC known as **First OPC of South Holland**.

### MINISTERS

- On May 21, **David S. Schexnayder** was ordained as a minister and installed as associate pastor of Calvin OPC in Phoenix, AZ.
- On May 31, the Presbytery of Northern California and Nevada dissolved the ministerial relationship between **J. Glenn Ferrell** and First OPC, San Francisco, CA, upon his retirement.
- On June 20, the Presbytery of Northern California and Nevada dissolved the ministerial relationship between **Mark D. Soud** and Covenant Presbyterian in San Jose, CA. His ministerial credentials were transferred to the Florida Presbytery of the ARPC.
- On June 25, **David E. Chilton** was installed as an evangelist to serve as Regional Home Missionary of the Presbytery of the South. Chilton was previously the associate pastor at Reformation OPC in Oviedo, FL.
- On September 17, **C. Mark Jenkins** was installed as pastor of Anaheim Hills OPC in Anaheim Hills, CA. Jenkins previously served as pastor of Providence Presbyterian in Madison, WI.
- On October 10, **John P. Canavan** was ordained as a minister and installed as teacher of the Word at Grace Presbyterian in Vienna, VA. Canavan will serve at the Westminster School in Oak Mountain, AL.
- On October 15, **Harry J. Monroe** was installed as pastor of Providence OPC in Bryan/College Station, TX. Monroe, ordained in the Southern Baptist Church, was previously licensed to preach in the



*At the installation of Geoff Willour at Grace OPC: (front) James Gidley, Jeremy Jones, Patrick Ramsey, Don Duff, Willour, James Berry, Dan Knox, Jonathan Hutchison, Joe Camp; (back) Steve Jantsch, Jeremiah Montgomery, Danny Olinger, Mark Graham*

North Texas Presbytery of the PCA.

- On October 16, the Presbytery of Ohio received **Matthew W. Kingsbury**, without call, from the Presbytery of the Dakotas.
- On November 5, **Silas P. Schreyack** was ordained as a minister and installed as associate pastor of Merrimack Valley Presbyterian in North Andover, MA.
- **Brian M. Guinto**, previously associate pastor at Reformation Presbyterian in Olympia, WA, has been removed from the roll of the Presbytery of the Northwest upon his installation in the EPC on November 7.
- On November 12, **Peder J. Kling** was ordained as a minister and installed as pastor of Covenant OPC in Amsterdam, NY.
- On November 19, **Geoffrey L. Willour** was installed as pastor of Grace OPC in Sewickley, PA. Previously, Willour was

pastor of Lake OPC in Mentor, OH.

- On November 19, **Daniel R. Svendsen** was installed as pastor of First OPC in South Holland, IL. Svendsen was previously a PCA minister laboring at First CRC of South Holland prior to its particularization in the OPC.
- **Dale T. Hanaoka** was installed as associate pastor of Reformation Fellowship in Roseville, CA, on November 19. Hanaoka previously served as teacher of the Word at Branch of Hope OPC in Torrance, CA.
- **J. Zachary Siggins** was installed as pastor of Cornerstone Presbyterian in Ambler, PA, on November 28. He was formerly associate pastor of Living Hope OPC in Gettysburg, PA.

### MILESTONES

- **Marcus J. Renkema**, 54, pastor of Trinity OPC, Bothell, WA, died on November 5, having succumbed to cancer.

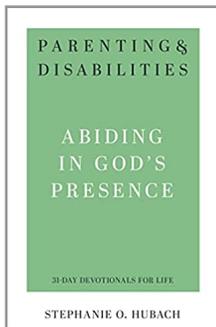


*Praying over John Canavan at his October 10 ordination and installation as a teacher of the Word in the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic*

## REVIEWS

***Parenting and Disabilities: Abiding in God's Presence*, by Stephanie O. Hubach. P&R, 2021. Paperback, 96 pages, \$7.50. Reviewed by George and Donna Hammond.**

Being the parent of a child with disabilities can be lonely. Aside from the social isolation from others (sometimes due to being overlooked or deliberately excluded, sometimes circumstantially unavoidable), there is a sense of isolation that comes from the fact that few people outside the family understand what day-to-day life is like. Having raised a son with Down syndrome, Hubach knows from experience the situation of such parents, and this one-month (thirty-one entries) devotional is written to help them. It is not a “one-and-done” work, but a guide to which parents of children with disabilities can return again and again for encouragement.



The book is arranged under eight headings: The Gift of Unearned Value in God's Image; The Gift of the Unwavering Faithfulness of God; the Gift of an Undeserved Substitute in Christ; The Gift of One who Understands Our Sufferings; The Gift of Undoing Our Old Nature through the Spirit; The Gift of Union with Christ; The Gift of an Unfailing Advocate in Jesus; and The Gift of Unending Dwelling with our Triune God. Beginning with a Scripture passage, each short, daily devotional thought (limited to two pages) contains rich biblical insights and practical applications to strengthen, encourage, and comfort parents who walk this often difficult road.

Who would benefit from using this devotional guide? Certainly, moms and dads of children who have disabling conditions. The book would also help pastors, elders, deacons, and church members who have families with disabilities in their midst better understand some of

the struggles such families go through. Finally, *everyone* would benefit from this book. Good theology is not proprietary to one subgroup of people. While a particular situation may help focus attention on overlooked aspects and applications of God's Word, we are all much more alike than we are different. While the insights and principles of this excellent book are particularly helpful to parents of children with disabilities, they are also applicable and uplifting to anyone who encounters suffering in life (in other words, everyone).

***I'm Praying for You: Forty Days of Praying the Bible for Someone Who Is Suffering*, by Nancy Guthrie. 10Publishing, 2021. Paperback, 176 pages, \$9.59. Reviewed by OP member Rebecca Sodergren.**

“I'm praying for you.” We say these words all the time, but what do we mean when we say them? Do we pray merely for our friend's physical situation, or for God generically to “be with” them? Do we have every intention of praying but then forget to do it? Do we have no idea how to *really* pray for someone in deep need?

Nancy Guthrie addresses the pitfalls we typically face when we promise to pray for struggling friends.

*I'm Praying for You* is a book of forty brief devotionals with accompanying prayers. Each day's reading is based on a Scripture passage that highlights a need that a hurting friend may have. For example: “I'm praying that the work of God will be displayed in your life” (John 9:3) or “I'm praying that you will know God's presence with you in the darkness” (Psalm 88:1–4). The book gives words to the things we want for our friends but struggle to express when we witness intense suffering.

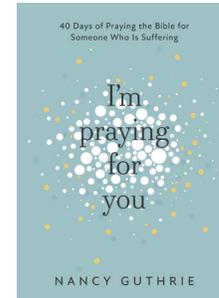
Christian readers will recognize the significance of the number of days Guthrie has chosen for this prayer journey: forty days of rain for Noah, forty years in the

wilderness for Israel. Scripture uses the number forty to represent a time of trial or testing. We help to carry a friend's burden when we promise to pray for them for forty days.

Each devotional includes a QR code that you can scan and then text a brief message to your friend, letting him or her know which passage you're praying that day. This is a handy tool. It helps you show your friend that you're praying, and it has the

potential to widen your friend's view of God's purposes in suffering. My one caveat is that I'd suggest employing wisdom before you text. You'll know whether your friend is ready to hear what you're praying. For instance, “I'm praying that you will consider this trial as an opportunity for joy” could stick in your friend's craw. It might be better to pray that prayer to God but save communicating it to your friend until he or she is beginning to see God's wider purposes in the situation.

I'm sure Guthrie herself recognizes this balance. She has lost two children to a genetic disorder, and one of her other books is called *What Grieving People Wish You Knew About What Really Helps (and What Hurts)*. Her experience helps her to understand what people truly need, how



## Position Available

**Pastor:** Established in 1987, Oakland Hills Community Church is a vibrant, growing, multi-generational congregation of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Farmington Hills, Michigan. We are looking for a lead pastor who will passionately proclaim all Scripture, persist in prayer, and devote himself to shepherding the flock. He should be gifted in relating to people of all backgrounds and patiently bringing to bear the truth of the gospel. Please send resume to: [greg.weigler@ohcc.net](mailto:greg.weigler@ohcc.net).

God shapes us through hardship, and how he uses our prayers.

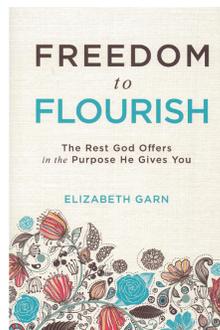
As I read this book, I found a double benefit. It helped me to pray purposefully for a friend, but it also helped me to see my own struggles in the light of God's compassionate, fatherly sovereignty. This is a deceptively simple book that can have a profound impact on our life of faith.

***Freedom to Flourish: The Rest God Offers in the Purpose He Gives You*, by Elizabeth Garn. P&R, 2021. Paperback, 200 pages, \$5.00. Reviewed by OP member Linda Jones.**

*Freedom to Flourish* by Elizabeth Garn is a substantive study from Scripture about what it means to be made in the image and likeness of God and to flourish in his universe. The book, directed toward Christian women, has short chapters followed by discussion questions, making the book suitable for group study.

In the introduction to each chapter, Garn describes a life experience that left her frustrated, defeated, and feeling like a failure as a woman of God, and then follows each narrative with a corrective principle from Scripture. The personal stories she recounts all serve to make an important point, that functionally even we Five Solas Christians, who should know better, are tempted to believe we must work hard to be good enough to earn God's love.

Part 1, Created, provides an overview of Genesis 1–3 and shows that we flourish by understanding that our purpose is not defined by what we do, but by who we already are as image-bearers. Through a detailed explication of the text, Garn unknots the thread of a common misunderstanding, that God's mission was entrusted to Adam as a man, and to woman secondarily, as a sort of afterthought. She walks the reader carefully through the Genesis account to make the orthodox argument that creation in the image of God is above the distinction between men and women, and it belongs to humankind. Before marriage or childbearing was in view, man and woman, together, were charged



with leading industrious lives, and were given instruction in God's Word that they were to know, obey, and pass on to their progeny.

Part 2, Restored, recounts the disastrous choice mankind made to reject God's Word, breaking our relationship with God and his people. These final chapters look at shame and the unholy comparison of ourselves to others, using the account of Adam and Eve lying and hiding from God in the garden after they sinned. I think this is a very strong section of the book, and Garn showcases her insight and storytelling as she describes God's love and grace as he clothed our first parents with garments he fashioned himself:

As a dramatic demonstration of his restoration-bringing promise, he clothes his children in beautiful garments that represent their status as both his children and his chosen representatives. (138–139)

Her conclusion is that, renewed in Christ, Christian women are freed from sin to flourish and fulfill the cultural mandate, by using our unique gifts and talents at home, work, and in the church to bring the fullness of God to the world by living as his image-bearers (159). Instead of exhausting ourselves to be good enough or do enough, we are freed from sin and shame to live in the image of God, "created in love, called with a purpose, and have been freed to live as images of God" (166).

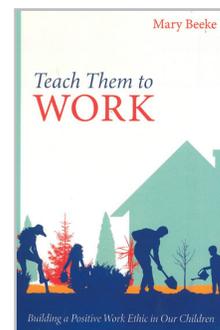
Key to Garn's thesis is that women must know the triune God well by reading, studying, and meditating on God's Word, which she models by her own study on this topic, drawing on G. K. Beale's larger works of biblical theology, as well as Currid, Kidner, and several others on Genesis, and Abraham Kuyper on common grace.

I wish that in addition to focusing on the provisional aspect of our work on earth, she had worked out eschatological glory and communion with God for eternity, via the work of Christ, as God's eternal purpose for his people. It's there, but

you have to look closely through the tinge of transformationalism. I hope someday to read a book addressed to women drawing from Vos, Bavinck, and others to develop more fully the life oriented to the paradise of God and the lives of worship we live out as image-bearers because Christ himself fulfilled the cultural mandate for us. Perhaps even such a book by Elizabeth Garn!

***Teach Them to Work: Building A Positive Work Ethic in Our Children*, by Mary Beeke. Reformation Heritage, 2021. Paperback, 224 Pages, \$7.00. Reviewed by OPC member Faith Nakhla.**

The short version of *Teach Them to Work*, according to the book's author, would be the four words, "just do your work." While we might be thankful if following this directive came easily to all



of us and to our children, "this book is for those of us who might not be naturally inclined to diligence or who have children cut from this mold. This book is for parents striving to instill a positive work ethic into the fiber of their children's personalities" (ix). In the rest of the book, Mary Beeke proceeds to share biblical principles and practical strategies to help parents achieve this goal in the lives of their children.

As one might expect and hope for from a book by an author with a solid Reformed background, Beeke (wife of Dr. Joel Beeke) first lays the foundation of biblical principles for work and for teaching our children and then follows up with many practical applications of these truths. Thus, the first part of the book presents "how to think," and the second, "what to do" (83). For example, Beeke reminds us that work was part of God's good creation and discusses how God redeems it since the fall. We are called to work for the glory of God and the good of our neighbor. Children are sinners and will need their wills

## The Law of Kindness: Women's Retreat

Presbytery of New York and  
New England

April 29-30 • Monterey, MA

- Speaker: Mary Beeke
- Teen speaker: Christen Wilhelm
- Details and registration information at [www.opcpnynewomensretreat.org](http://www.opcpnynewomensretreat.org), or contact Julia Eiten at [eitenartists@gwi.net](mailto:eitenartists@gwi.net)

subdued for their own good and maturation. Beeke includes practical ideas for working with our children, advice for speaking to our children, ways to work on our own attitudes, and much more. As one reads the book, one will notice overlap in these two larger sections and between chapters. This may seem repetitive at times, but it effectively keeps bringing us back to the foundational principles first presented, and it demonstrates again and again how our perspectives and attitudes (biblical or sinful) interweave with every area of life and work, affecting the process

and outcome of all we do. Readers will also appreciate the questions included for thoughtful study and application to one's particular household, an appendix of age-appropriate task lists, and a selected bibliography with resources for parents and kids.

Beeke writes with a no-nonsense tone, unapologetic to current cultural ideas of coddling and negotiating with children, relying instead on scriptural authority and practical evidence. However, she maintains a humble tone when it comes to recognizing our own sinful tendencies to selfishness, impatience, and laziness as parents. She continually calls us back to God's Word in examining our own attitudes and encourages us to rely on the Spirit and gospel to change our own and our children's hearts, hopeful of his doing just that for his glory, our good, and our witness to the world.

***Weak Pastor, Strong Christ: Developing a Christ-Shaped Gospel Ministry*, by Reuben Bredenhof. Reformation Heritage, 2021. Paperback, 144 pages, \$9.99. Reviewed by OP pastor Michael F. Grasso.**

Bredenhof's *Weak Pastor, Strong Christ* is a popularization of his ThM thesis on Paul's pastoral relationship to the Co-

rinthian church (ix). His goal is to provide a model for pastoral ministry based on Paul's example. He notes that often people go to the pastoral epistles (1 and 2 Timothy, Titus) for such guidance, but Bredenhof argues that there is much that can be gleaned from 2 Corinthians that is fruitful for understanding the role and function of pastors in the church (2). This is because there is a "basic continuity between Paul's relationship with the Corinthians and the modern-day pastor's relationship with a congregation" (5). I personally found this book to be very helpful. Bredenhof has a great grasp of 2 Corinthians, and his insights and organization of the material are helpful for understanding what it means to be a pastor.

According to Bredenhof the first thing a pastor needs to understand is what a pastor is. In chapters 2 and 3, Bredenhof analyzes the terms used by Paul to describe his role as a pastor. He notes three in chapter 2: apostle, ambassador, and slave. Though pastors are not apostles in the sense Paul was, Bredenhof notes that when Paul emphasizes his apostleship, it is not to lord it over the Corinthians, but rather to highlight his sufferings for them (21). In the same way, pastors must be willing to suffer for their people.

## Trinity Psalter Hymnal Android App Now Available

The Android mobile app for phones and tablets is now available for download for a one-time purchase price of \$9.99. Search the Google Play Store for *Trinity Psalter Hymnal* to purchase and download.

The TPH Android app features the full text and music of the songbook, as well as tune recordings. Some key features of the app include: searchable full text, browsable title and first line index, favorite songs list, advanceable bookmark for working through the songs one by one, and looping of a tune for the number of stanzas in each song. The mobile app is a great resource for planning worship, learning new songs, and singing along in family devotions.

Future Android app upgrades and features are being developed to include professional and high-quality MP3 tune recordings, browsable hymn table of con-



tents, and robust Scripture and tune indexes akin to those in the print editions. Future app releases are included in purchase. By purchasing and downloading digital editions of the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal*, the purchaser agrees to the TPH Digital End User Agreement.

OPC ministers who purchase the app are eligible for reimbursement of the cost from the Committee on Ministerial Care.

Visit [www.trinitypsalterhymnal.org](http://www.trinitypsalterhymnal.org) for more information.

In chapter 3, he highlights the fatherly care pastors are to have for their people. This means that pastors must be highly invested in the faith of individual members. Bredenhof writes, “He [Paul] identifies so closely with the Corinthians that their weaknesses and strengths, struggles and labors, become his own . . . while their progress is a sure reason for his delight” (39). Such descriptions in 2 Corinthians remind ministers of the need to cultivate genuine love for members in the congregation, even though such love may often lead to great suffering (46).

Bredenhof then discusses preaching (ch. 4) and facing criticism (ch. 5). He reminds us of the need to preach Christ rather than ourselves (57). This was balanced in Paul’s situation by a need to defend his own personal ministry against criticism. Sometimes pastors are called to defend themselves, nor for their own sake, but rather that there might be no obstacle to faith for others (64).

Bredenhof also touches on practical questions concerning the use of money, pulling from 2 Corinthians 8–9 (ch. 6) and reminds pastors to labor for the kingdom of God in light of the glorious return of Christ (ch. 8).

Overall, this book is very helpful. Bredenhof’s treatment of Paul’s pastoral ministry is both challenging and encouraging. May it be that God would raise up

many pastors like Paul, who will preach Christ, love their congregations, be above reproach, and labor to present all complete in Christ.

*A Sheep Remembers*, by David B. Calhoun. Banner of Truth, 2021. Paperback, 200 pages, \$8.80. Reviewed by editor Danny E. Olinger.

David B. Calhoun’s *A Sheep Remembers* is both a treasure trove of insights into Psalm 23 and a deeply moving account of the Lord’s love and faithfulness to Calhoun, longtime professor of church history at Covenant Theological Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri, in his decades-long battle with cancer. Published posthumously, with a heartfelt introduction by Ligon Duncan, *A Sheep Remembers* shares similarity with Charles Spurgeon’s *Treasury of David* as Calhoun quotes numerous theologians over the centuries and shares their insights. One of Calhoun’s favorite theologians to cite is Martin Luther. A typical gem from Luther on Psalm 23:1: “In this single little word ‘shepherd’ there are gathered together in one almost all the good and comfortable things that we praise in God” (8). Building upon Luther, Calhoun writes,

David does not pray that the Lord will be his shepherd, but he confidently and joyfully affirms that the Lord is his shepherd. There is no “if” or “but” or “I hope so” about it. (11)

But Calhoun’s treatment is also personal as he shares prayers, hymns, and his

own testimony about the Lord’s working in his life in every chapter. What comes through is that Psalm 23 is a salve for the afflictions of life, that when the shadows of this life are the darkest, the Lord is the nearest. In the powerful chapter on Psalm 23:4, “What I Learned in the Valley,” Calhoun quotes Flannery O’Connor, who said that “sickness is a place more instructive than a long trip to Europe . . . Sickness before death is a very appropriate thing and I think those who don’t have it miss one of God’s mercies” (83). Calhoun writes that, through his illness and “being in the valley,” he learned more about God, learned to treasure the Bible, learned to pray better, and learned the importance of joy, peace, and patience. He learned that time in the valley is not wasted.

Exegetically Calhoun points out such details as the dramatic change in language in Psalm 23:4 from the use of third person pronouns to second person pronouns. He concludes that in the opening three verses of Psalm 23 David is talking *about* the Shepherd (“He makes me lie down in green pastures”), but in verse 4 he starts talking *to* the Shepherd (“You are with me”).

Sadly, the book does not have an index of subjects, but it does have a beautifully laid-out addendum of additional versions of Psalm 23 from the likes of George Herbert, John Bunyan, and Johann Sebastian Bach. Also extremely profitable is the closing bibliography of books on Psalm 23 and shepherding with a verse or paragraph from Calhoun describing each selection.

