

# NEW HORIZONS

≡ *in the* ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ≡

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NOVEMBER 2022



“O TASTE  
AND SEE  
THAT THE  
LORD  
IS GOOD”

THANK OFFERING  
2022

Home Missions · Foreign Missions · Christian Education

# CONTENTS

## FEATURES

- 3** “O Taste and See That the Lord Is Good”  
*By John S. Shaw*
- 6** The CMC’s New Pastoral Compensation Tool  
*By Judith M. Dinsmore*

## DEPARTMENTS

- 5** Stewardship  
*What Is the Thank Offering?*
- 8** Foreign Missions (plus map)  
*An Interview with Douglas Clawson*
- 12** Home Missions (plus map)  
*Thanksgiving in North Texas*
- 18** Christian Education (plus map)  
*Timothy Conference 2023*
- 19** Prayer Calendar
- 21** News, Views & Reviews

# New Horizons

in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church

**Editor:** Danny E. Olinger  
**Managing Editor:** Judith M. Dinsmore  
**Editorial Assistant:** Diane L. Olinger  
**Proofreader:** Sarah Pederson  
**Cover Designer:** Christopher Tobias  
**Editorial Board:** The Committee on Christian Education’s Subcommittee on Serial Publications

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The Fifteenth Women’s Retreat of the Presbytery of Ohio was held September 23-24, 2022, at Camp Akita in Logan, Ohio. Sarah Ivill presented from her book *The God Who Hears: How the Story of the Bible Shapes Our Prayers*. Craft leader Lavonne Ritenour helped participants create dried flower pictures. The weekend was rich with sweet fellowship and the glory of God’s creation in the beautiful fall weather.



# "O TASTE AND SEE THAT THE LORD IS GOOD"



**JOHN S. SHAW // What is the mission of the church? How might you answer that question? If we are committed to praying and serving for the benefit of Christ's church, we need a clear answer. In Psalm 34, the Lord provides an answer through the example of King David. The anointed king of Israel, while fleeing from**

Saul and hiding in a cave, responds to his tribulations with what belongs to every Christian church: celebration and invitation. Or, as we often describe it, worship and witness. This is the mission of Christ's church and the primary call of the people of God: to celebrate the goodness of the Lord and to invite others to join in.

## **Celebration**

David begins with an expression of uninterrupted praise: "I will bless the Lord at *all* times; his praise shall *continually* be in my mouth (v. 1, emphasis added)." Have you ever doubted the goodness of the Lord? Then maybe the opening to this psalm seems unrealistic or even discouraging. Maybe you have thought, *How can I ever make David's expression my own?*

When you struggle with that question, it helps to know the context of this psalm. In 1 Samuel 21, we find the newly anointed king and celebrated hero of Israel running for his life from an angry King Saul. The threat is so serious that David looks for safety in Philistia, even though he recently slayed the Philistine giant. Soon David realizes that

safety will not be found there, so he puts on a show. He plays the role of a raging madman and then escapes to hide in a cave. It seems that he writes the words of Psalm 34 from that cave.

As he goes on to explain in this psalm, the author is a poor man (in other words, humble and weak) faced with many fears and troubles (vv. 4 and 6). Chased by dangerous enemies, David is now in hiding, deserted by his friends and alone. And yet, as a child of God, David is never alone. The Lord heard David's cry and saved him!

Only for that reason can David praise God at all times. For that reason, David celebrates the goodness of the Lord who saves. He lacks no good thing. He has tasted and even feasted on the goodness of the Lord. He has experienced the Lord's perfect grace. So much so that his whole being—what is meant by "soul" in verse 2—boasts in the Lord!

This psalm asks a question of those who read and sing it. Have you tasted the goodness of the Lord? When this psalm talks about tasting, it doesn't mean what we often mean by this word—a quick nibble or a small sample. Verse 8 has the idea of feasting. Have you experienced

his saving power and his gracious kindness again and again? Have you known his deliverance from trouble over and over? Do you know his deliverance from the power and guilt of sin as a daily experience? If you have feasted on the goodness of the Lord, then this psalm calls you to worship and celebrate that good God each day, and especially every Lord's Day with the people of God. Taste and see the goodness of the Lord!

## **Invitation**

David gives us a pattern to follow of daily worship in his psalm. But David is not satisfied with personal, individual worship. He also turns to others and invites them to join him.

First, David invites others to celebrate the Lord's goodness with him. "Oh, magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together!" (v. 3). David calls others to join his celebration of praise. Second, David doesn't stop with his personal reasons for praise, but welcomes others to learn from his example and to enjoy the goodness of the Lord that is available to them. He invites them by instruction: "Come, O children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the

# THANK OFFERING HYMN: TASTE AND SEE

1. Bless the Lord! I'll praise my God for - ev - er.  
 2. Seek the Lord, His ear will be in - clin - ing  
 3. Fear the Lord, your trust in Him be - stow - ing.

see the good - ness of the Sav - ior; He has

Mag - ni - fy His ho - ly name with me.  
 to the poor and hum - ble in their need.  
 Make His name your on - ly boast and plea.

been a safe re - treat for me. Come by

Come and prove His love which fal - ters nev - er,  
 Look to Him and feel your fac - es shin - ing—  
 He will fill your cup to o - ver - flow - ing;

faith and know His gra - cious fav - or. Sat - is -

**REFRAIN:**  
 free for all who come to taste and see.  
 ra - diant are the ones who taste and see. Taste and  
 you must on - ly come and taste and see.

fy your soul— O taste and see.

Based on Psalm 34  
 Jonathan Landry Cruse, 2020  
 TA'AMU URE'U 10.9.10.9. Ref.  
 Paul S. Jones, 2022  
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To hear a recording or for a free PDF download to use in your church, visit [hymnsOfdevotion.com/taste-and-see](https://hymnsOfdevotion.com/taste-and-see).

LORD” (v. 11). He invites them by pointing to the Lord’s faithful generosity: those who fear the Lord lack nothing; those who seek the Lord lack no good thing (vv. 9–10). And he invites them by appealing to their need: “What man is there who desires life and loves many days, that he may see good?” (v. 12). David appeals to that universal desire, and we can, too, in our evangelistic witness. In Psalm 34, we see a beautiful example of an evangelistic appeal through personal testimony that ends in gospel truth. In essence, David is telling needy sinners: Here is what the Lord has done for me, and he can do the same for you. I have reason to celebrate the goodness of the Lord, and I invite you to join in.

David even ends the psalm with the promise of a righteous Savior. Through

many afflictions, the Lord delivers the righteous one; he keeps all his bones; not one of them is broken (vv. 19–20). As the Apostle John recounts the events of Christ’s death and resurrection, he looks back on Psalm 34 and tells us that Christ is that perfect Savior (John 19:36). By faith in this Savior, you can be freed from afflictions, redeemed at the price of Christ’s blood, and find refuge from condemnation forever (vv. 21–22).

This is the gospel we the church are called to believe; this is the gospel we the church are called to teach to the nations. The freedom of that gospel calls us to celebrate Christ in worship, and then invite others—indeed the whole world—through our witness to join us in that celebration! We say to the nations, “Oh, taste and see that the LORD

is good!”

The Thank Offering gives us an opportunity to participate in both celebration and invitation. Through our giving, we support the work of Christian Education, which produces tools and supports the training of interns to teach the gospel to the nations. And through our giving, we support the sending of missionaries, both at home and internationally, to establish worshiping and inviting communities. Please consider how you might give to support these ongoing labors, and pray with faithful expectation, knowing that God honors the witness and worship of faithful churches like the OPC. □

*The author is general secretary for the Committee on Home Missions.*

# WHAT IS THE THANK OFFERING?

You may notice that *New Horizons* looks a little different this month. Inside its pages are three maps designed to be easily removed for display. The maps feature the work of the OPC’s three standing committees: Foreign Missions, Home Missions, and Christian Education. Their work, collectively known as Worldwide Outreach, is funded during the year by contributions from churches and individuals, and every November, a giving goal is set, which is called the Thank Offering. Since a quarter of the funding comes from the Thank Offering each year, a strong collection is needed to make up the current deficit. This year’s Thank Offering goal is \$1,300,000.

## How Does the Thank Offering Work?

Thank Offering promotional packages are sent to OP churches in early October. They include the Thank Offering poster, three sets of bulletin inserts (that present the work of each committee), and remittance envelopes. PDF versions of the inserts will be sent to all churches for posting on websites and distributing by email. Additional print material can be obtained from Annelisa Studley at the OPC administrative offices (215-935-1024 or [annelisa.studley@opc.org](mailto:annelisa.studley@opc.org)).

Videos highlighting the work of each committee in Worldwide Outreach are available at [OPC.org](http://OPC.org)—they could be shared in Sunday school or sent to members.

The inserts can be included in bulletins on consecutive Lord’s Days prior to the collection of the Thank Offering. We suggest using them from October 30 to November 13, with a collection being taken up on November 20. Some churches collect the Thank Offering on more than one day or at a special Thanksgiving service.

Checks collected in local churches should be made out to those churches with “Thank Offering” in the memo line. Using the envelopes included in this issue of *New Horizons*, you may mail a check made out to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church with “Thank Offering” in the memo.

## Requests for 2023

The 2022 General Assembly of the OPC determined to make the following requests for the financial support of the denominational ministries in 2023 (generally made through congregations):

**Worldwide Outreach:** \$5,287,200. This averages out to \$223 per communicant member. Smaller churches may not be able to give this much, so larger churches should give more than the average. Ideally, Thank Offering giving takes these missions and education ministries beyond the budgeted goal.

**GA Operation Fund:** Churches are requested to give \$20 per communicant member.

**GA Travel Fund:** Churches are requested to give \$12 per communicant member.

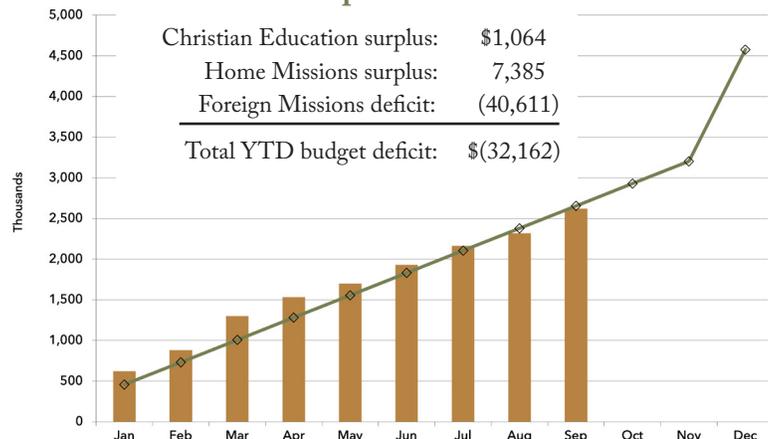
**Diaconal Ministries General Fund:** Churches are requested to give \$30 per communicant member.

**Ministerial Care:** Churches are requested to give \$20 per communicant member.

*Send contributions to:* Orthodox Presbyterian Church, 607 Easton Rd., Bldg. E, Willow Grove, PA 19090-2539. Checks should be made payable to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Contributions are credited to Worldwide Outreach and support all its ministries, unless specifically designated.

For the digital files to print your own enlarged copies of the maps found in this issue for display in church facilities or elsewhere, contact Judith Dinsmore at [judith.dinsmore@opc.org](mailto:judith.dinsmore@opc.org).

## Worldwide Outreach Year-to-Date 2022 Receipts with 2022 Goal



# THE CMC'S NEW PASTORAL COMPENSATION TOOL



JUDITH M. DINSMORE // Eric Johnson, a retired engineer and treasurer of the still-brand-new Resurrection Presbyterian in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, was in charge of putting together a call package for church planter Bob Holda in 2021. Johnson didn't start by crunching numbers, as he had ten years previously when on the

session of Resurrection's mother church and helping with a call. He didn't pull up research on what people of Holda's experience or education were making, and he didn't ring up a fellow presbytery member. He didn't even ask Google for cost of living adjustments or the federal poverty rate.

Instead, he visited the Committee on Ministerial Care's website, [opccmc.org](https://opccmc.org), scrolled down to a green bar titled "Explore Popular CMC Tools," and clicked on something called the "Pastoral Compensation Tool."

## It's Not Rocket Science

Johnson, previously an elder at Apple Valley Presbyterian in Neenah, Wisconsin, and now an elder at its daughter church, Resurrection, has known Committee on Ministerial Care director John Fikkert since Fikkert was a kid. Johnson pointed out that when Fikkert shared the compensation tool with him he thought, "it's about time! There's no rocket science behind figuring out

what your pastor needs to live on." The pastoral compensation tool is a fillable online calculator that allows the user to input information including family size, number of years of experience, housing allowance, retirement benefits, and insurance benefits. The tool then provides a salary figure, generates a pastoral compensation report with the highlights, and even generates a call letter that can be downloaded in Word or PDF.

"I was so glad when this tool became available to us," Johnson said.

The base salary, upon which the tool builds the rest of the entered data, is 1.5 times the federal poverty rate for the first three members of the household. This the CMC determined after some study, as it explains on the website. It further states that "a declining multiplier can be used for additional members, 1.25 for the fourth and fifth members of the household, and then by the sixth member and more, a family is sufficiently above subsistence level that it is reasonable to simply add the federal

poverty level increase per child without a multiplier."

A frequent question that the CMC receives about the tool is why it doesn't include a cost of living adjustment based on the region of the country of the user. "From the research that led to the development of this tool," the website explains, "it was determined that the two primary factors that lead to regional variance in living expenses are housing and health insurance costs. Because these items are separate line items in the Compensation Tool, amounts that fit a given area of the country can be entered into the tool. Even so, it may yet be worth considering if some of the expenses, such as food and clothing, that are in the base salary portion should have a further cost of living adjustment."

## Setting a Goal

The pastoral compensation tool gave Eric Johnson a clear figure. But, as Resurrection prepared for particulariza-

tion and calling their first pastor, they as a church were not able to meet it. “I was not confident that we could pay [Holda] the full amount that the tool said we should pay,” Johnson said. As treasurer, he laid it out for the congregation when they met to extend the call. “I explained to them that I didn’t think the tool was wrong, and that we weren’t going to be able to give him what the tool said.” However, what the pastoral compensation tool also allowed Johnson to present in that meeting was that they as a church were able to provide, in effect, a 10 percent raise from when Holda was church planter.

And looking forward, the church could have the goal of meeting the tool’s recommended salary.

Bob Holda, for his part, appreciates that the session can lean on the CMC and its guidelines, even as it takes a few years to transition to the figure provided by the tool. “It doesn’t require that the elders become masters of finance, economics. They don’t have to figure it all out.”

The session’s conviction, Holda explained, is rooted in the biblical principle that the pastor be free of worldly care and employment (BCO Form of Government 22.9, see also 1 Cor. 9:1–14 and 1 Tim. 5:18), so that he can focus his energy on the church and his household. The context for the salary conversation is then clear: “They’re not interested in enriching me, but they do want me to be free to serve where God wants me to serve.” And the compensation tool provides the categories for more detailed discussion.

That thoroughness has been helpful to Holda—it caused he and his wife to begin thinking about the cost of their children’s education. They are still young, but “that was a good prompt to think about that area of saving. It’s nice to see that stuff broken out because you realize that you can’t just enfold all these things into the basic salary.”

The tool also exposed a savings area that the session would like to see grow in the future: retirement. “It helps to have a sense of where we are with

these things. What’s reasonable, and are we doing our due diligence?” Holda said.

The categories included in the tool can be a catalyst for conversations about children’s education, about retirement, or about a host of other things. The third-party prompt can deflect interpersonal awkwardness.

“My elder [Johnson] has decided to take the initiative and say, let’s lean on this tool. But even if he didn’t, the fact that it’s being provided on a denominational level puts me in a position where I don’t have to force the conversation,” explained Holda. “The tool is an objective standard that hundreds of OP pastors all have access to.”

### Not Just for New Calls

Putting together a call package is not the only time for using the tool, Fikkert explained. “It’s also useful for sessions to review with their ministers on a yearly basis, as they’re planning an annual budget,” he said. Many pastors may have additional children in the years after first receiving a call. “The call may not have changed,” Fikkert said, “but their ability to pay for things may have gone down quite a bit because of the increase in their family size.”

Johnson agrees. “There are many ways to use the tool. Calling a man: for sure, absolutely. Checking and seeing if you’re keeping up with what he should have, absolutely.”

In fact, Johnson is using it this fall as he prepares the budget for 2023. “As treasurer, our bylaws say that I give a report quarterly to our congregation. So at the end of October, I will give a report to the congregation, telling them how God has blessed us, telling them we’re in the midst of budget planning, and telling them that once again, I’m using the salary planning tool that the denomination has made available to us.”

“I think it does help put the con-

## Pastoral Compensation Report

Print Report

Basic Salary

Category	Annual Cost
Basic Living Expenses	\$40,445
Experience Adjustment	\$0
<b>Total Salary Base</b>	<b>\$40,445</b>

Retirement and Insurance Benefits

Category	Annual Cost
Opted Out of Social Security?	No
SECA Taxes Contribution	\$5,060
Medical Care	\$4,200
Life Insurance	\$600
Disability Insurance	\$1,200
Retirement Contribution	\$6,615

An excerpt from a report generated by the tool, which is at [opccmc.org/pastoral-compensation-tool](https://opccmc.org/pastoral-compensation-tool)

gregation at ease,” Holda reflected. “When the elders present the budget to the congregation, they’re not just saying they pulled a number out of the air. They can say, ‘This is an objective thing, all the OP churches have access to this, we’re looking at all the different costs associated with the ministry and with raising a family, and this is where we think things should be.’”

As a member of the presbytery who serves on congregational visitation committees, Johnson also plans to use the tool when checking in with churches about their remuneration goals for their pastors.

Since the tool went live, Fikkert has received a great deal of positive feedback from both pastors and elders. From the website’s traffic, it seems many beyond the OPC are using the tool as well.

Looking at the big picture, Holda is grateful. “I’m thankful for God’s care for my family, and for me. And the CMC tool has been a part of that, it really has been a useful part of that conversation.” □

*The author is managing editor of New Horizons.*

# AN INTERVIEW WITH DOUGLAS CLAWSON



"I want the OPC to say, these are our missionaries," reflects Doug Clawson, here with Scott Johnson (then a CFM member) and some of the Uganda mission team

*In June, Rev. Douglas B. Clawson was installed as general secretary for the Committee on Foreign Missions, having served as its associate general secretary for twenty years. Here he reflects on his work.*

**NH:** You were ordained and installed as an OP evangelist in 1984. Did you always know that you wanted to be in ministry?

**DC:** By the time I hit eighth grade, I really believed, and the church encouraged me to think, that the Lord was calling me to gospel ministry. I grew up in a Christian home. My mother read the Bible to us since before I can remember. We went to worship morning and evening. Of course, we were always going to Sunday school . . . in other words, all my aunts and uncles thought my parents were weirdos because of how much time they spent in church-related stuff.

In junior high, I sort of wanted to be an astrophysicist, so I was reading a lot of books on science. But by eighth grade, I was reading the Bible over and over again, along with things like Jonathan Edwards's *Religious Affections*, Josephus, the Apocrypha, of course all the Hal Lindsey books that were out at the time, and missionary biographies. I was on a pre-college track for ultimately going to seminary. . . . I knew I *could* do other things, but I knew that ministry was who I was at the core of my being. There was never any question or doubt whatsoever.

**NH:** You served as pastor of Grace OPC in Hanover Park, Illinois, from 1987–2002. Did you ever anticipate that gospel ministry would lead you to foreign missions?

**DC:** Doing foreign missions was never anything even remotely that I had thought about. Even though I had read all these books—one sits there and imagines dying for Christ—there was never any thought about foreign missions. The only time I had been out of the country was my first year of col-

lege, when I had gone to a conference in Toronto, Canada. Much later, I crossed the border to visit Tijuana, Mexico, for a day. . . . I was never in a plane until 1986 when I went out to candidate at Hanover Park—one of the guys took me up into the air, and I was in a single-prop plane for a couple of hours. Travel just really wasn't my thing.

But Grace OPC in Hanover Park, when I was there, had many families and individuals who were first generation immigrants from Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean. As one told me, "Do you know why we come here? Because this is the only church where we feel we are welcome." Later on, that was one of the things that commended me to Mark Bube's attention, along with my engagement in presbytery and denominational issues. So after a CCE committee meeting [at the OPC administrative offices], Mark invited me into his office and said, "What would you think about becoming the associate general secretary of Foreign Missions?" I was absolutely stunned. I asked my spiritual uncles, Lendall Smith and Jim Bosgraf, and I was willing to think about it because these guys that I trusted told me that I ought to. That's how I ended up as the associate general secretary.

**NH:** You began in 2002. How steep was the learning curve?

**DC:** It was very steep. I spent probably the first three months reading. But then there was the travel. Three weeks to Africa, three weeks to Asia, Mark introducing me to everyone. . . . It's not the travel that I enjoy, it's the people; I love visiting with the missionaries, and I love spending time with brothers and sisters all around the world.

**NH:** How many weeks do you travel?

**DC:** My wife would tell you I'm gone for half a year. It's not literally true, but it feels that way. At the beginning, it was in excess of 150 nights per year. The most was the year that Matt Baugh died [a former missionary to Haiti]; I was away from

home 186 nights. That year, I was literally gone half the year. Pre-COVID, I got the number down to 135 nights a year.

*NH: How do you prepare for teaching and preaching internationally, sometimes even through a translator?*

**DC:** I guess one of the things I do is I spend time talking to people in the culture. I did a conference on marriage and the family in the Horn of Africa, and before I did, I sat down with the pastors and asked them, “What are the challenges to marriage and family here?” They all were very transparent with me. . . . I also look around at the flora and the fauna. For instance, Jesus curses the fig tree. Well, a papaya tree has a very few branches right at the top that the fruit grows on. If you had a papaya tree without any fruit, would it be worth anything? The answer is no. It’s not good for wood, it’s not good for shade, it’s not good for anything if it doesn’t grow papaya! So you would cut it down, just like a fig tree.

You may hit the mark, you may miss the mark. If you get the right translator who is himself a pastor, that sermon can be like a fiery freight train. The more you are excited about it, the more he reflects that same excitement about the passage. . . . I was in Haiti one time on La Gonâve, and I was being translated. Suddenly, the translator stopped. He looked at me and said, “Is that true? Is what you said really true?” I said, “It is absolutely true; it is the promise of Jesus Christ for you.” And he just started crying right there.

*NH: What are your other most memorable experiences from your travels to OP fields?*

**DC:** I’ll give you two. When I was in Asia with Mr. F. on one occasion, we were trying to get into a cyber café. A woman who worked there showed up, and we were all waiting for the manager to get there so that the place could be unlocked. I watched Mr. F. get into a conversation with her. He primarily speaks Korean, and she spoke another Asian language, so their common language was English. Within five minutes, he had not only showed a lot of care and interest in her own life, but he had shared the gospel, encouraged her to read the gospel of Mark, and invited her to church. It was one of the most beautiful and incredible things that I had ever seen.

Another time I was with David Okken in Uganda in Karamoja. David was doing gospel messages in the villages from Ruth chapter 1. The translator was a guy by the name of Emmy. (He is still associated with the mission.) We walked to one village and then to another village, and David presented the gospel from Ruth 1, through Emmy’s translation. Between the villages, we would walk and talk with Emmy about how Christ is clearly seen in that chapter. . . . And then we go to the third village, and David turns to me and tells me that this is the village that Emmy is from. He then tells Emmy that it’s his turn. Now it’s Emmy who is presenting Jesus Christ from Ruth chapter 1 to the people who know him the best. They know him, they know his life, they know whether or not his life is consistent with this teaching. That

was just absolutely fantastic to watch.

*NH: Witnessing the work of the foreign missionaries up close—how has it affected you?*

**DC:** I can still remember that Matt Baugh called me a month or so after they got [to Haiti]. I’m in the home of one of the members of the Chilhowie, Virginia, church, and I get this call from Matt that there is automatic gunfire, that he had climbed into a shipping container to hide, and that he just wanted somebody to know where he was. He didn’t want to call his wife, because she was at the house all by herself and didn’t have a support system. But he wanted someone to know and be praying for him.

Whether it’s Haiti or the Horn of Africa or Asia, these missionaries are people who are putting their lives on the line. I mean, Matt later died in Haiti. This is why, when I say goodbye to the missionaries, I give them a giant hug. I don’t know when I’ll see them again. And I love them. It makes me passionate about encouraging people to pray for them. I want the OPC to say, these are *our* missionaries.

*NH: How can the OPC pray for the work of the committee?*

**DC:** I want the people in the OPC to pray that the Lord would call their sons to be ministers of the gospel, to be pastors, to be missionary evangelists. I personally am the fruit of that prayer. My mother would tell me over and over again that she did not view me as hers—she viewed me as belonging to the Lord. My parents wanted me to be called to the gospel ministry. They never pushed me in that direction, but they certainly encouraged me. . . . My mother would later tell me that they had prayed every day that the Lord would use me and call me into the ministry.

I think we need to recapture that: *This child doesn’t belong to me; this child belongs to the Lord. I want Jesus to use this child however and wherever he wants to.*

## What’s New

### // Appointments

**Mr. and Mrs. Mark C. (Carla) Van Essendelft** (Covenant URC, Pantego, NC) concluded their term of service of four years and nine months laboring with the Uganda Mission in Nakaale, Karamoja, at the end of September 2022.

**Mr. Jedidiah T. Homan** (Immanuel OPC, Bellmawr, NJ) was appointed to serve as a missionary associate in Nakaale, Karamoja, Uganda, for six months beginning in September 2022.

Committee on

# FOREIGN MISSIONS

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Through the MOBILE THEOLOGICAL MENTORING CORPS, the Committee regularly sends non-residential theological instructors and mentors to encourage Reformed and Presbyterian churches in Austria and Switzerland (ERKWB), Colombia (PCRC), and northeast India (RPCNEI).

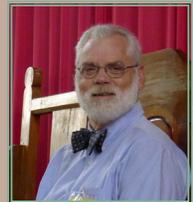
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Ben and Melanie  
WESTERVELD and family



Ben and Heather  
HOPP and family



Tony  
CURTO



Octavius and Marie  
DELFILS and family



Mark and Jeni  
RICHLINE and family



Steph



Heero and Anya  
HACQUEBORD and family

Mr. and Mrs. F.

Mr. and Mrs. M.  
and family



Joanna GROVE



Charles and Connie  
JACKSON



Angela Voskuil



Leah Hopp



Tina DeJong



hen and Catalina  
PAYSON



Christopher and Chloe  
VERDICK and family



James and Esther  
FOLKERTS and family

# THANKSGIVING IN NORTH TEXAS

// MARK SUMPTER with Nate  
Blank



Kids' Quest Catechism Club at Living Stone  
Presbyterian in Wichita Falls, Texas

**H**ello? Hello, my name is Mark Sumpter. I'm with the OPC. Picking up the telephone and having conference calls with dear saints who are making a first-time inquiry about starting an Orthodox Presbyterian Church makes up a good part of my work.

Back in late September 2017, just such a phone call led to an informational meeting and eventually a Bible study in a city in north Texas near the Oklahoma border called Wichita Falls. From the start, with two or three families and three or four singles, Living Stone Fellowship began to build.

## A Young Congregation

Wichita Falls, with a population of nearly 105,000, is home to Midwestern State University (5,000 students) and Sheppard Air Force Base (8,700 military residents).

Like most church plants, Living Stone has seen the ebb and flow of people coming and going. But with slow,

## Kids' Quest Catechism Club

Living Stone Presbyterian uses the Kids' Quest Catechism Club material for a weekly club for elementary-age children. What is Kids' Quest? Published by [Great Commission Publications](#), it is a fun-packed 36-week program designed to assist churches to incorporate the teaching and learning of catechism into their Christian Education programs. As the GCP materials describe, "Music, games, art, written activities, and lots of repetition reinforce the teaching and help the children memorize the answers to the questions [from the First Catechism]."

steady growth leading to twenty-two people ready to sign the petition to be recognized as an official mission work, our presbytery certified this action last year in September 2021.

Now, in recent months, Living Stone Presbyterian Church has witnessed the Lord working in mighty ways! Our God has been gracious in providing an overseeing session from Covenant OPC in Abilene, Texas, and he has been faithful in working through the presbytery to provide consistent pulpit supply, counsel, and prayer for the growing maturity of the mission.

Living Stone is a young congregation with nearly as many pre-teenagers as adults! You can hear regular prayer for the Lord to bring local, spiritually mature saints into the church to help shepherd the young families in the faith. That prayer is being answered. Weekly worship attendance has increased by twenty to over forty-five; a recent Lord's Day brought over fifty people.

Prior years' growth has mostly been from military families, which is wonderful but temporary. What is great about this last year is that most of the growth has been from local North Texas families. There are currently five couples (with a combined thirteen covenant children) and six singles who are seeking church membership—two of these are Air Force families.

Living Stone is thriving on the simple but nourishing ordinary means of grace. The congregation is hungry for the pure, unadulterated Word of God both read and preached. She is committed to intercessory prayer and congregational singing of praise to God with grace in the heart. We know that faith is strengthened by the regular administration of the sacraments, and we know that the ministry of the Word carries over into interactions throughout the rest of the week. A weekly fellowship meal provides the opportunity to have rich discussion after the service. Living Stone's midweek prayer

meeting is well attended, and the evening always begins with singing from the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal*.

### Learning Together

One growing signature feature of Living Stone's weekly ministry is using the program Kids' Quest Catechism from [Great Commission Publications](#). If you stop by on a Wednesday night, you'll hear parents asking, "Who made you?" "God!" say the kids. Next, "What else did God make?" The children sound off, "God made all things." Around ten children gather for the teaching, sharing, and fun. They participate in singing, memory games, and filling out the colorful handouts, all while learning the First Catechism.

This weekly ministry serves as a great way to fold in families and to help them feel that they are a part of the congregation. The adults who lead or help show a commitment to the nurture and discipleship of covenant children. Dads and moms take part in assisting with the activities. During the fellowship meal after worship on the Lord's Day, children practice their recitation for the rest of the congregation, who respond with applause and support.

The men meet bimonthly, once for a prayer breakfast and another time for a book study and fellowship. They finished *The Masculine Mandate* by Richard Phillips and are currently reading John Owen's *The Mortification of Sin*. A pastoral intern from the Fort Worth, Texas, area has graciously agreed to lead this discussion. The ladies meet bimonthly and have completed the Book of Job study series by Ligonier.

### Ministering to One Another and the Community

The biblical, Reformed doctrine sown during Lord's Day worship is working itself out in the saints with gratitude and love toward God and neighbor. Families are coming together to minister to each other's physical and spiritual needs.

When folks move across town or out of state, the church shows up to help them pack. If a family has a baby, the church organizes a meal train. Mothers help one another with cooking



*The congregation of Living Stone (Nate Blank is on the far left with his family)*

and cleaning, men assist with house projects. Members arrange weekly rides for four attendees, one who is no longer driving, one university student, and two with mental disabilities. When a single person or a family experiences hardship and the church is able, they provide temporary financial support. There is regular communication between families and a growing accountability to their temporary elders.

Living Stone has a website and posts its sermons to Sermon Audio. Its outreach also includes word-of-mouth invitations to worship, door-step visitation to neighborhoods, outdoor singing in a public venue, and setting up a prayer station outdoors to express the compassion of Jesus Christ. Recently a man at the downtown farmer's market approached an OPC intern, who serves at Living Stone from time to time, and asked questions. He's a man who is investigating the Christian faith. Follow up and care for him are ongoing. Pray for this man.

### From a Phone Call to a Mission Work

Pray for the mighty outpouring of the Spirit in the Living Stone saints of Wichita Falls. There's a growing need to consider calling a church planter to serve there. The mission work is gaining more and more momentum. What started in 2017 with a phone call has now turned into a stronger work, showing dependence on the Lord, and seeking to build a church community. Living Stone finds her spiritual union with her living Savior, the Lord Jesus, who is the chief cornerstone, as that vital, fruit-bearing strength for what's ahead.

In all this wonderful working of God—in her worship, service, witness, and fellowship—our mission church in north Texas relies on God's grace, wisdom, and power to bring to completion the work he has begun.

*The author is regional home missionary for the Presbytery of the Southwest. Nate Blank, member of Living Stone, contributed to this article.*

### Home Missions Today

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



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*watch this year's video*



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Thousand Oaks, CA



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Pasadena, CA



Andrew and Rebekah CANAVAN  
Corona, CA



David and Ash SCHEXNAYDER  
Scottsdale, AZ



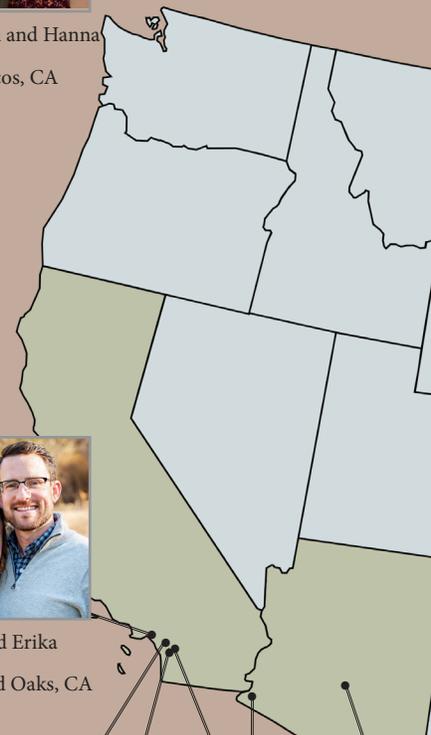
Mark and Celeste JENKINS  
Placentia, CA



Jeremy and Gwen BAKER  
Yuma, AZ



Miller and Stephanie ANSELL  
Waco, TX



# Church Planters



Chris and Sara  
DREW  
Grand Forks, ND  
(prayer support)



Paul and Sarah  
MOURREALE  
West Plains, MO



Michael and Naomi  
SCHOUT  
Zeeland, MI



John and Katie  
TERRELL  
Moline, MI



Micah and Eileen  
BICKFORD  
Farmington, ME



Nate and Anna  
STROM  
Sheboygan, WI



Markus and Sharon  
JEROMIN  
Battle Creek, MI



Tyler and Natalie  
DETRICK  
Dayton, OH



Chris BYRD  
Westfield, NJ  
(prayer support)



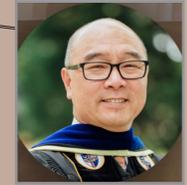
William and Margaret  
SHISHKO  
Deer Park, NY



Greg and Ginger  
O'BRIEN  
Downingtown, PA



John Paul and  
Corinne HOLLOWAY  
Manassas, VA



Peter  
LEE  
Howard County, MD



Andrew and Abby  
WANN  
Bluffton, SC



Calvin and Connie  
KELLER  
Winston-Salem, NC



Ethan and Catherine  
BOLYARD  
Wilmington, NC



Leigh



Shanie



Carl and Stacey  
MILLER  
New Braunfels, TX



Mark and Lorie  
WHEAT  
Houston, TX



Jay and Andrea  
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A. J. and Chelsea  
MILLSAPS  
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MEDCALF  
Cumming, GA



Melaku and Meron  
TAMIRAT  
Clarkston, GA



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Bradney and Eileen  
LOPEZ  
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of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church

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Richy & Neva  
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Wilmington, DE



Paul & Joy  
Woo  
Glenside, PA



Paul  
Yu  
Middletown, DE



Christian & Hanna  
REPP  
San Marcos, CA



Dominic & Martha  
SILLA  
Allentown, PA



*watch this year's video*



# TIMOTHY CONFERENCE 2023

// DANNY E. OLINGER



Westminster Theological Seminary

The Subcommittee on Ministerial Training of the Committee on Christian Education plans to hold the next OPC Timothy Conference on April 19–22, 2023, hosted by Calvary OPC in Glenside, Pennsylvania. Conference participants will be introduced to a seminary environment and attend classes at Westminster Theological Seminary (WTS), also located in Glenside.

Confirmed conference speakers include WTS professor John Currie, OP ministers Joel Fick and Danny Olinger, and former Timothy Conference participants and now OP pastors Zachary Siggins and Aijalon Church.

Mr. Siggins, pastor of Cornerstone Presbyterian in Ambler, Pennsylvania, will speak on the office of a minister with special attention paid to its accompanying responsibilities and privileges. Mr. Fick, pastor of Redemption OPC in Gainesville, Florida, will address the issue of the call to ministry, particularly what it means to be called and how one might know if he is called. Mr. Currie, professor of practical theology, will speak on why it is important to receive seminary training in preparation for gospel ministry and what that training involves. Mr. Olinger, general secretary of the Committee on Christian Education, will put forth the process of becoming an Orthodox Presbyterian minister from coming under care of a presbytery to being ordained and installed in a local congregation. Mr. Church, pastor of Covenant OPC in Sinking Spring, Pennsylvania, will address what the young men should be doing in preparation for a life of ministry even now.

## ☆ Congratulations

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

- Hazel Morthland, *Covenant OPC, Tucson, AZ*
- Dean Morthland, *Covenant OPC, Tucson, AZ*

The conference will include visiting historic Presbyterian sites in the Philadelphia area, as well as time for fellowship, giving the young men an opportunity to get to know one another.

### Applying for the Timothy Conference

Those eligible for the conference are young men between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one years old who are members of the OPC and have been identified by their local session as having potential gifts for ordained gospel ministry. If there is a young man who has demonstrated godliness and giftedness towards ministry, please consider approaching him about his willingness to attend. All expenses are paid.

Applications for sessions to submit candidates can be found on [OPC.org](http://OPC.org) under “Christian Education.” Completed applications should be sent to Danny Olinger ([danny.olinger@opc.org](mailto:danny.olinger@opc.org)). The application deadline is January 27, 2023. Please consider helping us to follow the Apostle’s instruction from 2 Timothy 2:2, “What you have heard from me . . . entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.”

*The author is general secretary of Christian Education.*

## FALL MTIOPC CLASS

Defending the Faith (Presuppositional Apologetics), taught by the Reverend Doctor William D. Dennison, will begin the first week of November with online reading and writing assignments. The intensive training, which is mandatory, will be held online on January 23–27, 2023. Tuition is free for OPC pastors, licentiates, and men under care. Tuition for OPC ruling elders is \$50 while non-OPC students pay \$100. To register, contact MTIOPC coordinator Judy Alexander at [alexander.1@opc.org](mailto:alexander.1@opc.org).

# NOVEMBER



*The Detricks (day 4)*



*The Jacksons (day 13)*

**1** **MARK & JENI RICHLINE**, Montevideo, Uruguay. Pray that the Lord would provide elders and deacons to serve the church with wisdom and compassion. / Pray for those planning **SHORT-TERM MISSIONS** opportunities for 2023.

**2** **CHRISTOPHER & SARA DREW**, Grand Forks, ND. Pray for new families and local university students to attend Faith. / Committee on Ministerial Care asks prayer for **ANNEKE FESKO**, care coordinator for ministers' wives.

**3** Tentmaking missionary **JOANNA GROVE**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for the well-being of the team. / Pray for Christian Ed. general secretary **DANNY OLINGER** as he visits today at Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson, MS.

**4** **TYLER & NATALIE DETRICK**, Dayton, OH. Pray that God would work through Light of the Nations' ESL program. / **RETIRED MISSIONARIES** Cal & Edie Cummings, Brian & Dorothy Wingard, Greet Rietkerk, and Young & Mary Lou Son.

**5** **PAUL & SARAH MOURREALE**, West Plains, MO. Pray for the Lord's favor upon Covenant as they reach the lost. / Pray for **MTIOPC** instructor William Dennison and students who begin online classes this week on apologetics.

**6** Associate missionary **ANGELA VOSKUIL**, Nakaale, Uganda, gives thanks that the KEO children are memorizing the Apostles' Creed and the First Catechism. / Stated clerk **HANK BELFIELD** and database administrator **CHARLENE TIPTON**.

**7** **STEPHEN & CATALINA PAYSON**, Montevideo, Uruguay. Praise the Lord as they settle in and work to build up Salvos por Gracia Church. / **MARKUS & SHARON JEROMIN**, Battle Creek, MI. Pray for fruit from evangelistic efforts and growth in the Bible study.

**8** **JEREMY & GWEN BAKER**, Yuma, AZ. Pray that more year-round, permanent residents would visit Yuma OPC. / Yearlong interns **ZACHARY JOHNSON** at Immanuel OPC in Bellmawr, NJ, and **COREY (ANDREA) PAIGE** at South Austin OPC in Austin, TX.

**9** Associate missionary **LEAH HOPP**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for the health team as they join the Mission's efforts to teach in the primary schools. / Yearlong intern **CHRIS (AMANDA) MANFREDA** at Covenant Presbyterian in Fort Worth, TX.

**10** **MILLER & STEPHANIE ANSELL**, Waco, TX. Pray for godliness in the young marriages and parents at Trinity Presbyterian. / Pray for missionary associate **JED HOMAN**, Nakaale, Uganda, working on maintenance projects in Karamoja.

**11** **LACY (DEBBIE) ANDREWS**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of the Southeast. / The staff of **NEW HORIZONS**, **ORDAINED SERVANT**, and **OPC.ORG**.

**12** Associate missionaries **JAMES & ESTHER FOLKERTS**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray that the Lord would fill the need for two missionary evangelists next year. / Yearlong intern **CHRISTIAN (HANNA) REPP** at Harvest OPC in San Marcos, CA.

**13** **CHARLES & CONNIE JACKSON**, Mbale, Uganda. Pray for the two new students from South Sudan at Knox School of Theology. / **MICAH & EILEEN BICKFORD**, Farmington, ME. Give thanks for new members at Grace Reformed.

**14** **MARK & LORIE WHEAT**, Sugar Land, TX. Pray for Good Shepherd OPC as they plan for outreach and welcome new families. / Yearlong intern **SAMUELIS (MILDA) LUKOSIUS** at Covenant Presbyterian in Barre, VT.

**15** **BEN & MELANIE WESTERVELD**, Quebec, Canada. Pray for the weekly instruction on covenant theology in French. / US Navy active duty military chaplains **JOHN (LINDA) CARTER** and **CORNELIUS (DEIDRE) JOHNSON**.

# NOVEMBER



*The Sillas (day 20)*

**21** **MR. AND MRS. M.**, Asia. Pray for upcoming exams for ministerial candidates whose preparations have been disrupted by persecution. / **MELISA MCGINNIS**, financial controller, and **MARK STUMPF**, Loan Fund manager.

**22** **CHRIS BYRD**, Westfield, NJ. Pray for evangelism and outreach taking place at Grace OPC. / Affiliated missionaries **JERRY AND MARILYN FARNIK**, Czech Republic. Praise God for a good English camp response.

**23** **MR. AND MRS. F.**, Asia. Give thanks for the local churches in the northeast and pray for God's grace and protection over them. / **JOHN PAUL & CORINNE HOLLOWAY**, Manassas, VA. Pray that the Word would go forth.

**24** Affiliated missionaries **DR. MARK & LAURA AMBROSE**, Cambodia, give thanks for the opportunity to set up a safe house for trafficking victims. / Yearlong intern **JACOB (LINDSAY) CASH** at Redeemer OPC in Beavercreek, OH.

**25** Pray for affiliated missionaries **CRAIG AND REE COULBOURNE** and **LINDA KARNER**, Japan. / **ANDREW & REBEKAH CANAVAN**, Corona, CA. Praise God for the fruitful discipleship initiatives at Corona Presbyterian.

**26** **BRAD (CINNAMON) PEPPO**, regional home missionary of the Miami Valley for the Presbytery of Ohio. / **CALEB & ERIKA SMITH**, Thousand Oaks, CA. Pray that the Lord would bless the church's leadership training class. / Yearlong intern **BEN (JOELLE) CAMPBELL** at Presbyterian Church of Cape Cod in West Barnstable, MA.



*The Hacquebords (day 27)*

**27** **HEERO & ANYA HACQUEBORD**, L'viv, Ukraine. Pray for the outreach to the internally displaced and traumatized people at a temporary housing complex. / **KERRI ANN CRUSE**, video and social media coordinator.

**28** **JOHN & KATIE TERRELL**, Moline, MI. Pray that evangelistic efforts would spur fruitful follow-up conversations. / **BEN & HEATHER HOPP**, Haiti. Pray for the Hopp children, continuing their schooling and awaiting return to Haiti.

**29** Home Missions administrative assistant **ALLISON HILL**. / Yearlong interns **CHRISTOPHER (LAURA) BARNARD** at Lake Sherwood OPC in Orlando, FL, and **NATE (SARAH) CROFUTT** at Redemption OPC in Gainesville, FL.

**30** Associate missionaries **OCTAVIUS & MARIE DELFILS**, Haiti. Pray that the leaders of Haiti would curb gangs and the threat of kidnappings. / Office manager, **ANNELISA STUDLEY**, and Christian Education office secretary **ABBY HARTING**.

**16** Home Missions associate general secretary **AL TRICARICO**. / Associate missionaries **CHRISTOPHER AND CHLOE VERDICK**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for grace in leadership and discipleship at the clinic.

**17** Pray for **CHARLES (MARGARET) BIGGS**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic. / Pray for **GREAT COMMISSION PUBLICATIONS**, a joint publishing ministry of the OPC and PCA.

**18** Tentmaking missionary **TINA DEJONG**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray that Christ's peace would prevail over traditional tribal conflicts. / Yearlong intern **RICHY (NEVA) BRASHER** at Escondido OPC in Escondido, CA.

**19** Home Missions general secretary **JOHN SHAW**. / **DAVID NAKHLA**, Disaster Response coordinator, gives thanks for those who have responded to the call to help with flood recovery efforts in Neon, KY.

**20** Pray for **CHRIS (MEGAN) HARTSHORN**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of Southern California. / Intern **DOMINIC (MARTHA) SILLA** at Living Hope OPC in Allentown, PA.

# NEWS, VIEWS & REVIEWS



Pete and Posey Gardner

## IN MEMORIAM: PEYTON H. GARDNER

Timothy Krizan

Peyton H. (Pete) Gardner, 93, entered glory on August 29. A mechanical engineer by training, he served as an elder since 1969 at Emmanuel OPC in Wilmington, Delaware. He was active at the denominational and presbytery levels, serving on the Committee on Christian Education (1974–1991), the Committee on Coordination (1991–1997), and the Board of the OPC Loan Fund (2001–2013). He also was a trustee and the treasurer of Great Commission Publications (1978–1991). Perhaps his most significant service to the broader church was as chairman of the Trinity Hymnal Revision Committee—the fruit of their labors was released in 1990. Pete took on many roles at Emmanuel including clerk of session, Sunday school teacher, chairman of the board of trustees, treasurer, musician, and chairman of the building committee. He was predeceased in February 2022 by his beloved wife of sixty-eight years, Betty Ann (Posey).

## UPDATE

### MINISTERS

• On May 7, the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic approved the transfer of the

credentials of **Stephen M. Brown** to the PCA. Brown was previously associate pastor at Grace Presbyterian in Vienna, VA.

• On September 11, the Presbytery of Central Pennsylvania dissolved the pastoral relationship between **Roth M. Reason** and Redeemer OPC in Danville, PA.

### MILESTONES

• **Peyton H. (Pete) Gardner**, 93, died August 29. Since 1969, he served as an elder at Emmanuel OPC in Wilmington, Delaware, and was active on denominational committees.

• **Rev. Dr. Carl W. Bogue Jr.**, 82, died September 18. A retired OP minister, Dr. Bogue served the UPCUSA, then the PCA and OPC in nearly fifty-three years of ordained ministry.

## REVIEWS

*Transformed: How God Renews Your Mind to Make You More Like Jesus*, by **Esther Engelsma**. **Reformation Heritage, 2021. Paperback, 160 pages, \$9.00. Reviewed by OP member Elisabeth Bloechl.**

In her short book, *Transformed: How God Renews Your Mind to Make You More Like Jesus*, Esther Engelsma gives us what many Christians desire. She provides a practical guide for how to be transformed into Christ's image by renewing our minds in God's Word. Though practical, it is no self-help book. Foundational to *Transformed* is an acknowledgment of our reliance on the One ultimately able to renew and transform us (7, 68, 78).

That said, her emphasis on God's work does not mean she ignores our responsibility. Engelsma ably walks the fine line of our utter dependence on God and our obligation to faithfully obey. "God holds all the power, but He still commands

us to obey" (10). God transforms us through faithful obedience (10–11). She dedicates the remainder of the book to explaining what this faithful obedience looks like in the renewal of our minds.

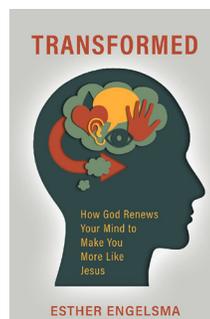
In chapter one, Engelsma explains that the mind is an interconnected web of what we say and do, feel and desire, look at and listen to, and think. She dedicates a chapter to each of these facets of our mind, explaining it further and giving us tips for how to conform that area to God's Word. In each chapter, she makes us more aware of the ripple effects one facet of our mind has on all the others. For example: "When our thinking changes, what we say and do changes. And when our words and actions change. God slowly but surely transforms our feelings and desires" (48).

The heart of each chapter's application is to spend more time in God's Word, prayer, and wholesome activities and less time doing, looking at, listening to, feeling or desiring that which is contrary to God's Word. For God chooses to transform us through the Holy Spirit's working in and through God's Word. As Engelsma writes: "When we replace sinful thoughts by reciting verses, preaching truth to ourselves, and reminding ourselves that we do believe and what we believe, we end up in a different place. What we say, do, think, feel, and desire begins to change" (37).

She indicates that the fruit of such active pursuit of a renewed mind is Christlikeness.

Engelsma's book is both encouraging and challenging. "Every decision we make, big or small, is a choice between gratifying the flesh or walking by the Spirit" (74). Sentences like this challenge the reader to strive for holiness (1 Peter 1:15–16), which means conforming our

every thought, word, emotion, and source of input to God's Word. Take out Engelsma's firm foundation in Christ's work applied and the Holy Spirit's sanctification in us, and we could easily slip into legalism or despair upon reading her words (6–8).



However, I believe it was her intent, not to present a manual for pleasing God, but practical tips for how to do what God calls us to do: conform our minds to his Word that we may be transformed. My only critique is that Engelsma lacked a clear explanation that we obey God out of gratitude for what he has done in and for us. If the reader has a firm understanding of that concept, this book is invaluable in helping us live transformed lives.

***The Primary Mission of the Church: Engaging or Transforming the World?* by Bryan D. Estelle. Mentor, 2022. Paperback, 448 pages, \$19.99. Reviewed by OP pastor Jonathan L. Cruse.**

A discussion on the mission of the church could not be timelier. In recent years, identity politics, election controversies, global pandemics, race riots, and economic instability—to list just a few of the societal ills currently plaguing the world—have all forced Christians to ask the question, “How should the church respond?” Thoughtful discussion and discourse on the nature and mission of the church is always welcome, especially if it sharpens our resolve to do those things for which we are called, and to that end Bryan Estelle’s new book, *The Primary Mission of the Church*, is a welcome resource.

Estelle, an OP minister and professor, takes up the doctrine of the spirituality of the church (SOTC), though he prefers to use the terminology of the church’s mission. I found this to be a helpful corrective to the counterclaim that the doctrine of SOTC makes the church impotent and irrelevant. Nothing could be further from the truth. The church does indeed have power, a power that is derived from Christ as the Head of the church (350–377), and a power that “is very specifically delineated in the Bible” (123).

The question, then, is not does the church have power, but rather, what does the church have the power to do? Estelle echoes the claim of Machen that “the responsibility of the church in the new age is the same as its responsibil-

ity in every age”—namely, to preach the whole counsel of God. As Estelle goes on to unpack, “ministers in their pulpits only have declarative authority, that is they may only be ambassadors of Christ and declare what he has authorized them to say, nothing more and nothing less” (27). This in no way immobilizes or disempowers the church, for even if it seems foolish to the world (and sadly, sometimes to the church, too) it is through preaching that God saves those who believe (1 Cor. 21). Nor does it mean that we should not care about effecting change in the world for the good of neighbor and the glory of God. But, as Estelle asserts, this is “the duty of individual Christian citizens to influence change within the culture that they find themselves in” (254).

The book roots itself in the historical discussion of the nature of the church up to this point, primarily by uncovering Presbyterian and Reformed treatments of the subject. Estelle exposes the reader to the ecclesiological thoughts of men like Calvin, Hodge, Roberts, Bannerman, Thornwell, and others, and denominational controversies over the decades and their key players. While taking care to trace the historical path leading up to the twenty-first century, he also engages with contemporary thinkers on the subject. Most significantly, a work by Sean Lucas and decisions by a recent PCA general assembly are noted as being impetuses for writing this book (34).

Estelle’s significant contribution to this important subject is approaching it from a biblical-theological lens. We are treated to his in-depth and expert handling of Old Testament texts in particular, helping us to think about these ecclesiastical issues in a new way (chs. 2–4). For example, who knew that the story of Joseph could teach us so much about the mission of the church? Similar exegesis of Daniel was a delight, and the key texts from Matthew’s gospel regarding Christ and the church were helpfully unpacked.

The depth of scholarship that Estelle brings to this sub-

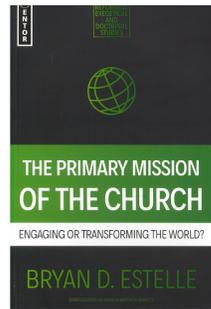
ject—exegetically, historically, confessionally, and theologically—may prove a challenge to some readers. This is probably not the first book you want to pick up if you are new to the subject of ecclesiology or SOTC specifically. But the payoff is well worth it. Readers will be better equipped to approach the current social issues of the day in a biblically informed manner. And preachers and pastors, like me, will be freed, emboldened, and compelled to fulfill their calling of preaching the gospel, “which is the power of God for salvation” (Rom. 1:16).

***Reformed Ethics, vol. 2, The Duties of the Christian Life*, by Herman Bavinck, edited by John Bolt. Baker Academic, 2021. Hardcover, 544 pages, \$33.99 (Amazon). Reviewed by OP minister and professor David VanDrunen.**

*New Horizons* readers may be familiar with Herman Bavinck (1854–1921), one of the most accomplished Reformed theologians of the past two centuries. Many of his works have been translated into English recently. Still, if you had asked a Reformed theologian about Bavinck’s “Reformed Ethics” several years ago, he probably would’ve responded: “Bavinck wrote an ethics?” The answer is: “sort of.”

Bavinck held two teaching appointments. The first was at the theological school in the Dutch town of Kampen. There he taught not only dogmatics (systematic theology), for which he’s best known, but also ethics. In middle age, Bavinck moved to the Free University of Amsterdam. He didn’t teach ethics there.

Scholars have discovered Bavinck’s notes for his ethics lectures and also a long manuscript on ethics, which he developed for his teaching in Kampen. The manuscript isn’t entirely intact, but notebooks



## Correction

In the October issue of *New Horizons*, the feature highlighting the work of Richard B. Gaffin Jr. incorrectly stated that he served on the Republication Study Committee, in addition to the fourteen other special committees on which he served. Also, Dr. Gaffin moved to Virginia in 2016, not 2018.

of three of Bavinck's students contain detailed transcriptions of his lectures. John Bolt and many assistants have compiled this material to give us what's now being published as Bavinck's *Reformed Ethics*. This is a review of Volume 2 (of three).

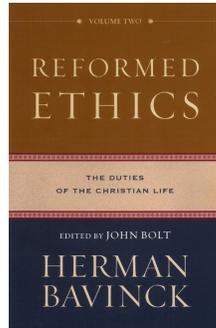
Reformed readers have much to be thankful for. These volumes provide insights into one of our greatest theologians and some excellent moral-theological discussions. Nevertheless, the circumstances of their publication raise some questions and frustrations for readers.

Volume 2 concerns Christians' duties. The first two chapters introduce the idea of duty, and the rest of the book is essentially a study of the Ten Commandments. Chapters 15–17 consider "Our Duties toward God," chapters 18–20 "Our Duties toward Ourselves," and chapter 21 "Duties toward Our Neighbor."

Bavinck's vast learning is evident throughout. He engages a multitude of patristic, medieval, and early Reformed theologians, ancient and modern philosophers, and a variety of scholars from other academic fields. Bavinck's frequent description of early Reformed ethical works may be of special interest, since these works are largely unknown to contemporary Reformed people.

Most of Bavinck's ethical conclusions and his biblical arguments supporting them reflect standard Reformed views. These discussions are generally helpful, although I admit to being disappointed at times not to see a man of Bavinck's learning offer more original or insightful analysis of issues. Nevertheless, some sections offer excellent spiritual and pastoral wisdom. I think for example of his brief discussion on "the pedagogical significance of illness" (301). I wish there had been more of this sort of material and less of some other sorts, which leads me to two final reflections.

First, readers should contemplate the fact that *Bavinck didn't want this material published*. He devoted enormous effort to developing his ethics manuscript, yet he evidently remained dissatisfied with it.



He didn't seek its publication upon writing it and also decided not to revise it later, even though he remained a productive scholar in his later decades and wrote voluminously on other topics. What Bavinck would've thought about this posthumous publication we'll never know. But readers should remember that Bavinck himself didn't present this to the world as his own great statement on ethics, and we shouldn't treat it as such.

Finally, the fact that Bavinck never prepared his manuscript for publication is repeatedly evident. Countless pages contain tedious recitations of other people's views. These sections sound more like Bavinck's personal reading notes than material designed for other people to read. Also, while some of the most interesting sections are very brief (such as that on illness mentioned above), other sections treat topics at disproportionate length. For example, there's an extended discussion of clothing (347–362) and it's not entirely clear why. If Bavinck were writing for posterity, I doubt he would've included passing advice, such as that pastors shouldn't visit church members "wearing a bathrobe" (359). Another example is his long section on suicide (371–384). It reveals that he read an immense amount of material on the subject, but scholars generally don't try to communicate *everything* they've learned about a topic including useless pieces of information, such as "the first bullfight held in Paris occurred on January 16, 1887" (383).

We can be thankful for this work and appreciate much of its content. But it remains an unpolished product of a (remarkable) scholar who didn't intend that we read it.

***Old and New: Jesus' Seven Parables of the Kingdom*, by Martin Emmrich. Wipf & Stock, 2022. Paperback, 114 pages, \$17.00. Reviewed by OP pastor Ken B. Montgomery.**

Marshall McLuhan memorably asserted, "The medium is the message." What point is he making with this aphorism? If you want to know what someone is saying, first pay attention to the means of communica-

tion that is being used. A nuanced theory will not be argued on the pinky-sized paper of a fortune cookie; a pithy joke will not take up the space of a five-volume tome.

The didactic vehicle that our Lord Jesus consistently chooses to use in his ministry is that of teaching in parables. "Indeed, he said nothing to them without a parable" (Matt 13:34b). In what way are parables so apropos given the content of Christ's message—namely, the coming of the kingdom of heaven? Most basically, the parables bring a separation between those who see and embrace Christ in faith, and those whose eyes are blind in unbelief and so fail to apprehend the glory of Christ. A parable is like an autostereogram—a 2D image with a 3D image hidden within: it takes a certain focus (i.e., faith) to see the reality that lies just beneath the surface!

Pastor Emmrich in *Old and New* has given us a cogent collection of theological and pastoral reflections on the seven parables of the kingdom in Matthew 13. He notes that these parables follow immediately on Christ's identification of his true family in Matthew 12:46–50. Part of doing the will of the Father in heaven (12:50) is to heed the kingdom-word announced through the parables. To perceive is to receive.

On the first "Parable of the Sower," Emmrich observes that in contrast to the old covenant era, the word of the kingdom is offered by Jesus "to everybody, with no distinction or discrimination" (16). The "good soil" is characterized not by a mere momentary heeding of the gospel, but an ongoing and persistent receiving of the word: "the kingdom calls for a decision, but also for a constant reaffirmation of the choice, which translates into endurance" (17).

Regarding the "Parable of the Weeds," we learn that the affliction of and opposition to the people of God are not obstacles to the kingdom's growth. Emmrich writes that the struggle between the followers and enemies of Christ is a divine necessity,



because “the battleground is the appointed sphere in which the good seed must grow” (41).

Especially insightful is Emmrich’s exposition of Psalm 78:2 as quoted in Matthew 13:35: “I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter what has been hidden from the foundation of the world.” The parables can be interpreted properly in part “as the divine remedy to the continuing tale of Israel’s sin and God’s covenant faithfulness” (70). The parables then not only reveal the manner of the arrival and growth of the kingdom of God, but they help solve the “riddle” that Paul references in Romans 3:3–4: “does their [the Jews’] faithlessness nullify the faithfulness of God? By no means!”

Each chapter of *Old and New* is leavened with supporting vignettes and references from history and present-day culture. This book will be profitable for any preparing studies or sermons on the parables of Jesus, as well as those who are looking for devotional material on this rich portion of Scripture.

***The Whole Counsel of God, vol. 3: God’s People in the Western World*, by Richard C. Gamble. P&R, 2021. Hardcover, 1216 pages, \$35.99. Reviewed by OP pastor Brian E. Belh.**

Richard C. Gamble, in his enormous tome, *God’s People in the Western World* (vol. 3, *The Whole Counsel of God*) gives a sweeping and, dare I say, breathtaking overview of the history of Western philosophy, theology, and the church, from the pre-Socratic Greek philosophers, to contemporary discussions and debates among our very own Orthodox Presbyterian theologians, and

nearly all points in between. It is important to note that this study has as its focus the Western church and its development. Gamble is clear on this point. He has intentionally limited the scope of this project to the Western tradition, and so if one is interested in historical, theological, and ecclesiastical developments in other parts of the world, this volume will be of limited value to that sort of research. However, if you are interested in the development of the Western church in history, as it grew from the Apostolic Fathers to our own day, this volume will be profoundly helpful.

This work divides into seven parts: The Church under the Cross, The Church Defines Herself, The Church and the World, *Post Tenebras Lux*, The Church after the Reformation, The Church in the Modern Western World, and The Postmodern World. Each of the seven parts begins with a chapter that describes the philosophy of the time. Thus, the first chapter of this book discusses, briefly, the major figures of Greek philosophy who influenced the thought of the world at the time when the Apostolic Fathers and the earliest apologists were writing. This is helpful, because it aids us in making sense of the thought-world that then existed and in understanding why the debates in theological development proceeded as they did. Gamble’s work in each of the sections really is a masterful blending of historical philosophy and theology in a way that enables the reader to understand each period in the development of the church in its

understanding of the Word of God.

But Gamble’s concern isn’t merely to give us a sweeping overview of the development of the church in history. His volume has an apologetic drive as well. In chapter 26, entitled “God’s People Respond to God’s Mighty Acts: Answering Questions,” he identifies questions that Christians need to be ready to answer and advises on how to answer them. In terms

of apologetics, Gamble has clear sympathies for Van Til’s presuppositional approach. He also relies heavily on the work of John Frame for his chapters on philosophy and his discussions on Van Til’s method. Those who appreciate the biblical theology of Geerhardus Vos will find a kindred spirit with Gamble, who expressly states that this entire three-volume

project is inspired by Vos’s approach (910). Gamble also aligns himself with the concerns of the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals and is clear that he believes that the broader Evangelical world needs Reformed Theology to keep its theological bearings (834–840).

This volume gives a lot of attention to our little corner of the Reformed and Presbyterian world. It was illuminating to read about current debates between Westminster Seminary California and Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. I warmly recommend this volume to officers of the OPC, men under care, seminary and college students, and those members who like to wade into deeper historical, philosophical, and theological waters.

