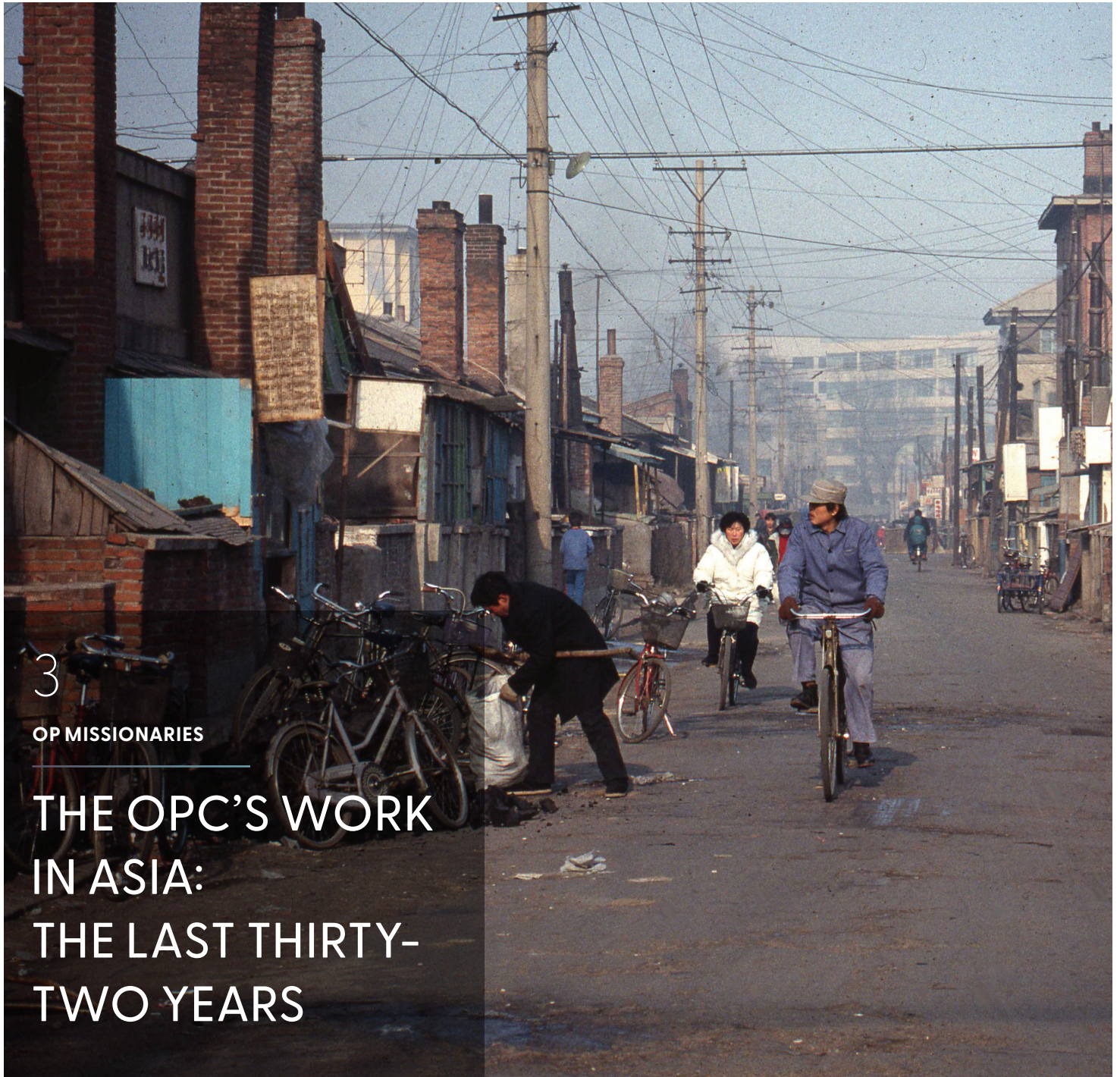


NEW HORIZONS

MAY 2026

IN THE ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



3

OP MISSIONARIES

THE OPC'S WORK IN ASIA: THE LAST THIRTY- TWO YEARS

10

Deacons as Unifiers
TIMOTHY HOPPER AND
CHRISTOPHER CASHEN

12

2026 OPC Summer
Camps and
Conferences

19

Review: Robertson's
*Christ of the
Consummation*
EVERETT A. HENES

NEW HORIZONS

IN THE ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

- FEATURES**
- 3** **The OPC's Work in Asia: The Last Thirty-Two Years**
by OP missionaries
- 10** **Deacons as Unifiers**
by Timothy Hopper and Christopher Cashen
- DEPARTMENTS**
- 12** **Christian Education**
This summer's OPC camps and conferences
- 14** **Home Missions**
Church planter Devin C. Gaye on a new mission work in Virginia
- 16** **Stewardship**
Daniel R. Svendsen on new seasons; Worldwide Outreach year-to-date giving
- 17** **Prayer Calendar**
- 19** **News, Views & Reviews**

Cover photo: The city where OP missionary "Paul" began his service in the 1990s

Editor: Danny E. Olinger
Managing Editor: Judith M. Dinsmore
Editorial Assistants: Ayrian J. Yasar
Diane Olinger
Proofreader: Caroline Reeves
Cover Designer: Christopher Tobias
Editorial Board: The Committee on
Christian Education's
Subcommittee on Serial Publications

© 2026 by The Committee on Christian
Education of the Orthodox Presbyterian
Church. All rights reserved. ISSN: 0199-3518

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Subscriptions: Free to OPC members. Nonmembers suggested donation: \$20.00 annually; \$30.00 for addresses in Canada; \$40.00 elsewhere abroad. A free email PDF subscription is available. Contact: 215-830-0900; or 607 Easton Road, Bldg. E, Willow Grove, PA 19090; or ccesecretary@opc.org.

Periodicals postage is paid at Willow Grove, PA, and at additional mailing offices.

Postmaster: Send address changes to *New Horizons in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church*, 607 Easton Road, Bldg. E, Willow Grove, PA 19090-2539.

Views expressed by our writers are not necessarily those of the editors or official positions of the OPC.

Send inquiries, letters to the editor, and other correspondence to the editor at **danny.olinger@opc.org**. Letters to the editor may be condensed for publication.

THE OPC'S WORK IN ASIA: THE LAST THIRTY-TWO YEARS

OP MISSIONARIES

Paul looked at the text that pinged on his smartphone. It was a coded message from a man interested in attending the English Bible study that Paul led. After deciphering that this man had a Christian background, Paul sent a photo of the Westminster Standards with some characters blacked out for security. The man messaged back, "I'm Reformed too! We can work together closely, brother."

In a society under an oppressive atheistic government, it's shocking to find Christians who "want to be Reformed." When the OPC Mission here began thirty-two years ago, in 1994, missionaries saw spiritual hunger, but no one that they talked to knew what Reformed theology was. Who would have guessed that God would be pleased to bring the Mission's commitment to consistent Reformed teaching and practice into participation with a full-blown Reformed movement reaching every corner of this nation? The glorious Sovereign God knew and has used the Mission and your "yarpers" (prayers) to do something really big!

What follows is the story of this ministry from seed to fruit. For the safety of the members of the Mission, believers and friends, local churches and their leaders, names have been changed, but not the account of how God has worked so powerfully in the region we generalize as "Asia." We hope that you'll be as encouraged in reading as we are in sharing the good news of God's building of his kingdom here.

A NEW OPC MISSION

In 1994, "Paul" was called by the OPC Committee on Foreign Missions (CFM) to serve as a missionary evangelist in Asia. He was called to one country, but with the hopes of eventually serving that country's neighbor—a land with closed borders and zero tolerance to the gospel. Paul had grown up as a Presbyterian missionary's kid in Asia, where he met his wife, "Sue," also Presbyterian. Both felt a calling to do gospel outreach to the people in this hostile nation, whose language they both spoke fluently. In the Lord's providence, their ministry instead blossomed inside their first country of service.

They connected with a Christian businessman who was opening a university. Paul was able to use his degree in teaching English as a foreign language to obtain residency for his family and labor as an English professor in this program, teaching mostly the ethnic minority who spoke the language that Paul and Sue had spoken all their lives.

Despite being monitored for political and religious teaching—this country has also been closed to foreign missionaries for decades—Paul was placed in classrooms where he could teach English and establish relationships with students who spoke "his" language. What a unique opportunity to establish relationships and to spread the gospel!

DOZENS OF MISSIONARY ASSOCIATES—AND ONE MISSIONARY

Realizing that this evangelism model could be expanded to set up an office to bring in more overseas Christians to teach conversational English, Paul actively recruited dozens of native English speakers from the OPC who could teach and live among students. Beginning in 2000, Paul developed a robust mission team system, working through the OPC's missionary associate program. Most missionary

associates taught conversational English to obtain a visa and connect with students just like Paul did. They also supported the work of the Mission by teaching Bible studies one-on-one, teaching at the local churches, and organizing community-wide evangelistic activities.

Over one hundred and fifty people (including families with children) from at least fourteen different Reformed and evangelical denominations visited the Mission. Some served for at least a summer in the missionary associate program; many committed a year or more to assist the Mission. The Lord used them to sow the seeds of the gospel and bring many to church for the first time. One Bible study that Paul began saw hundreds of people exposed to the Word of God and brought into contact with the church—and this Bible study is still running, thirty-two years later.

In the fall of 2001, a missionary associate named “Titus” arrived in Asia. Titus, an OPC licentiate, was interested in missionary service but not sure of where to serve. Paul sent him an out-of-the-blue invite, and Titus came as a missionary associate, planning to stay for two years. One of his efforts was teaching an English Bible study at a local church. While the Bible study was not especially fruitful, Titus did meet the preacher’s daughter, “Milly,” who was fluent in English. They were married a year later, and Titus’s original two-year commitment turned into a lifelong call. In 2004, he was called and ordained to serve as an OP missionary evangelist, focusing on service in the majority language of the country.

In God’s providence, the Mission in Asia now had two missionary evangelists and could reach two primary language groups in that country.

PARTNERING WITH LOCAL STATE CHURCHES

During the early years of the Mission, Paul, and then Titus, partnered with state churches instead of house churches. These two broad categories represent the two kinds of Protestant churches in this country: those officially registered and sanctioned by the government and those that are unregistered, unsanctioned “house churches” that frequently meet in homes. Certain compromises with the government characterized many of the state churches—such as allowing the government to vet all candidates for office—but other state churches, particularly in the ethnic minority that Paul served, maintained basic evangelical theology and practice. Paul found that the state churches in his area upheld some Reformed theology and practice and were more open to the Reformed teaching of the Mission. House churches, on the other hand, were free from government interference but tended to be all over the map theologically—Pentecostalism especially was widespread.



At the door of a house church

Then the Lord provided an amazing connection. Paul discovered that the senior pastor of the largest state church in his area had a tie to the OPC. The senior pastor’s mother had come to faith under the ministry of Bruce Hunt, OP missionary and charter member, when Hunt labored in this region prior to World War II. That connection provided a natural bridge between Paul’s work for the OPC and the local church.

An important aspect of Paul’s work at this time was leadership training in cooperation with local state churches. The earliest attendees of these classes were church staff. Paul taught men one-on-one, in small groups, and in several different situations in Bible schools. He taught in an official Bible school run by the state church and in a secret school. And he would participate in programs run by other missionaries. Paul most often taught the Westminster Standards, English Bible, the Gospel of John, and biblical language basics.

Paul’s teaching, as a foreigner, could have brought serious legal consequences for the churches. However, on the several occasions that a government inspector came, the church was given advance warning to avoid trouble—and so that the church could give a thank-you “gift” to the inspector for verifying that it met government standards. When the inspector was due to arrive, the students would bring Paul into a side room, give him plenty of coffee, and ask him to wait quietly. What the inspector said each time was clearly audible: “Use Christianity to help people to be morally good and to follow the [governing party]. Don’t have ties with outsiders.” After the speech was over, Paul would return to the classroom and continue his lectures.

A NEW DIRECTION: HOUSE CHURCHES

As Titus’s language abilities developed, he also began to teach and develop relationships among local leadership in

majority-language state congregations. He taught on the Westminster Standards, 1 Corinthians, the character and spiritual life of pastors and elders, and Presbyterian church government.

On one occasion, Titus was invited to a friend's ordination in the state church. The service included a female pastor who laid hands on his friend and a government official who proclaimed that the governing party was "the light of the world!" This was a pivotal moment for Titus. Compromise like this could not be tolerated. He began to think through how the Mission could work to establish majority-language Reformed churches outside the state system.

In 2009, Titus was introduced to "Phillip," a minister in a much larger city nearby. Phillip invited Titus to come and work with him and the house church he served, a "little group" with three elders. At that time, relocating to serve a small house church didn't seem like a wise move—and Titus was about to go on furlough with his family.

But the next year, Titus traveled to Phillip's city and discovered that the "little group" was actually a vibrant church network that served more than eight hundred believers and was led by three capable, well-trained men who had generically been ordained as elders. Originally, this network had been fundamentalist Baptist, but the elders, having been influenced by Asian ministers in the United States, desired the network to move in a more Reformed and Presbyterian direction. Quite quickly, it became apparent that there was a compelling case for Titus's family to relocate and serve this network, greatly extending the influence of the OP Mission.

In 2012, Titus's family relocated to the city where Phillip pastored, for what would be a two-and-half-year stay. He served as an advisor for the elders, and at one point assisted Phillip in starting and overseeing a couple of small

church plants. But Titus's main responsibility was training the three elders of the church, with the goal of preparing them to be examined and ordained to form a presbytery based in that city. In 2015, Phillip and another elder were ordained as ministers, bringing Titus's in-residence ministry in that city to a happy conclusion.

PROTO-PRESBYTERIES IN THE SOUTHEAST AND WEST

Titus's new location also served as a sort of base, from which he cooperated with other house churches all over the country who were becoming Reformed. In the winter of 2011, he traveled seventeen hundred miles to two cities, one in the southeast and another in the west. Each became significant to his ministry.

The city to the southeast held a network of churches that were in some trouble between themselves. There was division and infighting within the church, and Titus was being asked to advise them on moving forward in unity. The first few visits were nerve-racking, but he helped them to write a provisional constitution. He also helped prepare the way for the first three men of this church network to be ordained as pastors in 2016.

The city to the west held a church of around eight hundred attendees whose pastor, although well-known and established, wanted to become formally ordained in a Reformed church. Titus assisted in preparing church history exams for him and then was also asked to join a ministerial credentialing committee composed of this newly ordained pastor and two missionaries from a church of like faith and practice. By 2013, thanks to the work of the committee, two more pastors were also ordained in this city; then three ruling elders were trained and ordained, two sessions formed, and a presbytery was established adopting the Westminster Standards and a book of church



Worship at a "house" church in the west

order. That credentialing committee became the candidates and credentials committee of the presbytery in the west, but, not wanting to be separate from the work ongoing in other cities as well, it also assisted in the examination of ministerial candidates and the establishment of presbyteries in other parts of the country.

In the summer of 2016, Titus's family moved to the west to cooperate more closely with the churches and missionaries there. He assisted in the editing of the presbytery's book of church order for use of other presbyteries and, in 2017 and 2018, helped organize the first two pastors' fellowships—a provisional-general-assembly-like meeting—of the forming Presbyterian Church. When the chairman of the candidates and credentials committee stepped down due to other commitments, Titus was asked to serve as chairman, a role which he still holds today. With this committee, he has examined more than one hundred and thirty men for licensure and ordination.

REFORMED CHRISTIAN LITERATURE

How did Titus become the “church government guy” that Reformed Christians in this country knew they could come to with their questions? It was due, in part, to the Mission's writing, translation, publication, and distribution of Reformed Christian books and pamphlets—one of its most fruitful areas of ministry.

From the earliest days of the Mission, Paul aggressively reprinted and distributed thousands of Bibles, tracts, and Reformed literature, all in the language of the ethnic minority that he was serving. When Titus arrived, the work of distributing literature in the language of the ethnic majority greatly expanded as well.

Initially, Titus had the literature photocopied at a printshop with the permission of the original publishers. However, in early 2003, someone suggested that it would not be difficult to produce books with glossy covers from digital files, and a new phase of literature production began. The first title was a book of essays on Reformed theology, by a variety of authors. From that point on, the Mission translated, edited, and printed dozens of books and booklets. Notably, Titus's introduction to Presbyterianism, published in 2010, helped to establish Titus as a resource on Reformed and Presbyterian church government.

In total, the Mission has distributed over thirty thousand books, the majority of which have been printed by the Mission itself, and has maintained a database for the standardization of theological terms. Currently, Titus is a board member of a publishing company that is distributing in electronic form several titles produced or edited by the Mission.



Worship at a house church in the northeast

CHURCH PLANTING IN THE NORTHEAST— A BOLD STEP

While Titus was making connections and serving Christ's church throughout the country, Paul was experiencing changes in the local churches in the northeast.

Throughout the early 2000s, many of Paul's students inside the state church wanted a more thorough theological education. While appreciative of what they were receiving, they wanted formal biblical training. Paul, who had a growing relationship with a denomination of like faith and practice in the country where he had been raised, recommended that the men study at that denomination's theological academy.

Over the years, as the men Paul disciplined returned to their home country from their seminary studies abroad, many of them found that the dichotomy between what the Bible taught and what the state churches practiced was just too stark. Older state church leadership voiced respect for the Reformed standards as the most faithful summary of God's Word. However, in reality, they often would not follow that teaching when it did not match their management style, money-raising methods, or church-growth strategies. They felt they had to keep smooth ties with the government to keep their church buildings and licenses to operate. But many of the younger men, trained by Paul and the Reformed seminary abroad, were now coming to Paul and saying that their consciences would not allow them to be ordained in the state church. They felt God was calling them to plant a new Reformed church outside of the state system. They asked the OP Mission, “Can you help us?”

The answer was “yes,” but also that this bold step must be taken in a way which would please God—respectfully leaving the churches from which they had come, causing as little disruption as possible to the ongoing work, and



Pastors in the provisional presbytery in the northeast

focusing on evangelism rather than seeking to snatch believers from other churches.

Good ecclesiology is important in missiology. Because these men, not yet officers in the church, could not plant a church alone, the OP Mission lent its ordained missionaries to establish a new church, gather the people to worship, and receive the sacraments in the context of church accountability. With approval of the CFM, in 2014 the Mission began to hold worship services in both local languages and continued to cast the net by evangelism to gather in the people God was bringing.

During this time, Paul thought the Mission could continue working with its old friends in the state church, even as the Mission cooperated with house churches and planted a new church outside the state church system. But that did not prove possible. When the Mission's partners in the state church realized that the Mission wanted to plant a new house church and was strongly opposed to the non-Reformed practices they had fallen into, they felt they needed to act. In 2015, the state church leadership summoned Paul and told the Mission to either agree to ordaining women as ministers and to the teaching of ongoing revelation, or leave. The Mission had no choice but to say goodbye to the state churches with whom they had worked for over fifteen years, and to focus almost exclusively on working with the house churches.

It was also in 2015, in the fall, that the work of Paul and Titus began to come together. The ordination of the first pastor in the provisional presbytery in the northeast not only meant that the desires of the young men for a new and faithful church had been realized, but also they were introduced to the work happening in the other parts of the country. Titus and Paul had invited Phillip and another pastor from the presbytery to the north to attend the service.

To this day, while no formal ties have yet been made, the pastors seek advice from and occasionally visit each other.

ATTACKS, ARRESTS, AND EXITS

In 2018, the organized presbytery in the west came under intensifying persecution from the state. The government launched a major attack upon its most prominent church and its associated seminary. It arrested dozens of people, including the pastor, and ransacked their facilities.

Just before the arrests, Titus had traveled to the other side of the country to work with Christians there. He was en route to a pastors' gathering in the east when he, and the other pastors, learned about the arrests in the west. So great was their concern for the future of the church, not the present, that the pastors in the east persevered with their plans to meet and revise the book of church order—while in prayer for their persecuted brothers and sisters in the west!

Because of the close connection that Titus had with the seminary, however, the Mission and the CFM determined that it would be best for him to take an early furlough. He departed with his family three days later. Then COVID hit. That, and logistical issues involving the family's visas, made a return to Asia impractical. From 2018 until now, Titus has labored for the church in Asia from a base in the United States, including helping to prepare men for their licensure and ordination exams. Under an alias, he is well known among the country's Reformed Christians.

In the northeast, the house churches in the city where Paul first began his ministry need to keep their size below forty-five for security reasons. With such small numbers, the church has not yet been able to become financially independent. One congregation was shut down twice by the police—the second closure was such a great trauma to one of the ordained pastors that he had to lay down ministerial office. Although it has been eleven years since the establishment of the provisional presbytery, her affiliated Mission works are not yet particularized because they do not have elders. The training of men to be elders is underway again and should be completed by the end of 2026.

At times, to make the indigenous church thrive and grow, the Lord removes the foreign missionaries and makes the church stand on her own without external help. He is glad to use willing servants from afar, but he does not need them. In addition to Titus now laboring from the United States, in the last five years Paul has had to leave the country twice—the first time, in 2021, was because the university where he taught for twenty-seven years was closed. Currently, he is looking for a way to continue his ministry inside the country.

THE FRUIT OF THREE DECADES OF LABOR

While the OPC through its missionaries has sown seeds over the years, no one could have foreseen the abundant fruit God would produce in this country.

Now in the northeast, where Paul began his ministry with very little, there are three Presbyterian church plants, two worshipping in the minority language and one in the majority language, which are served by three ordained ministers. These ministers, along with a minister laboring out of bounds and Paul, constitute a provisional presbytery. This is primarily the fruit of the OPC Mission through her evangelism and church leadership training. They use the OPC's *Book of Church Order* as their own and recently began the hard and important work of adapting it. The congregations of this presbytery are characterized by their songs of praise expressing glory directly to the Triune God and their unity on Reformed theology and biblical practice.

Elsewhere in the country, forty-eight ministers of the gospel and approximately the same number of ruling elders, along with ninety licentiates, are organized into seven presbyteries (two of which are provisionally established) and constitute a forming Presbyterian denomination comprised of about seven thousand people. This body is the fruit of multiple mission organizations and missionaries, including the OPC Mission through the labors of Titus. However, it is especially the fruit of the work of the church herself and the work of the Spirit in the hearts and lives of men and women who want to faithfully serve their God and Savior Jesus. May God be praised! May the church ever be reformed and beautified by his Word and Spirit!

Paul and Titus are OP missionaries writing under pseudonyms.

MISSIONARY ASSOCIATE AND CHILD OF GOD

An OP member

Most missionary associates in “Asia” didn’t give much thought to imminent death even when serving close to the border of an enemy of the United States. We lived on the safer side, and most of us worked as college teachers. In fact, our sense of security was so normal that we dismissed a boom beneath our city as an earthquake. The US headlines reached us later: “Nuclear Test.” It was serious enough for an item to be scribbled on our faculty meeting’s agenda—evacuation plan. What would we do if war broke out? One teacher smiled and, while pointing upwards, said, “We have an evacuation plan.”

For OP missionary associates supporting the Mission, our everyday job was to teach English well and be a witness of Christ. We prayed that God would let us have conversations in and outside class about his grace to rescue sinners. The hundreds of students and people in the community that we were teaching had never heard the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ. For them, the message of their paternalistic atheist state was to achieve a good life through hard work and self-reliance—anything else was for the weak.

So, I shouldn’t have been surprised at the look of shock on one former student’s face when we read John 1:12–13, and I said, “Yes, I’m a child of God.” Trying to explain that Christians were adopted by God and that this made them his children did not mitigate her surprise. It was a moment of clarity for me to see that such a gift of God, which I took for granted, was beyond her comprehension!

A missionary associate with a student





Community outreach from the Mission

LIVING AS A CHILD OF GOD IN A PATERNALISTIC STATE

Living self-consciously as a child of God was crucial both for my own Christian witness and for the discipleship of the young believers and the seekers accompanying us to the local church.

At first, it was just a necessity to ask students who voluntarily came with us to the local state church to translate the sermons for us. One woman, “Mercy,” began coming to increase her English skills. For me, our twenty-minute walks to and from church became opportunities to share what it meant to worship God. I’d explain about the sacraments or the order of worship. On the way back, I’d ask questions about Mercy’s translation or the sermon topic, partly to see what she understood. Soon she joined a weekly Bible study with other students in my home.

Simple questions led to conversations that taught us about the people we served in this community. I’d been Mercy’s teacher for one semester when she was a freshman. I’d listened and learned from her and other students that many aspired to escape their circumstances through education, wealth, and influence. Many were left-behind children, their parents obliged by economic need to take jobs in far-off places. I prayed for the opportunity to offer the life that money cannot buy.

One young man saw something otherworldly in another missionary associate who was a seasoned OP minister. When I asked the young man what he thought about his teacher, he told me curiously that his teacher was “a good man.” He’d never met a man who would adopt and raise foreign children as his own. He saw a good father but didn’t realize that he was also seeing a man who was himself a child adopted by the Lord.

BRINGING PEOPLE TO CHURCH

The Mission had a clear goal that our evangelistic activity would lead people to the local church for ongoing discipleship. Mercy had made a private profession of faith while we were still attending the state church, but it was time for the next step. The Mission had planted a house church committed to biblical and Reformed worship. Going to the church plant could bring government scrutiny, yet my task was now to invite Mercy to attend the church’s Bible studies and Sunday worship.

I also attended the church plant to support the fellowship of believers—to pray, enjoy meals together, share lives, build friendships, and bring in the lost so that the seeds sown could organically flourish within the church community. Sometimes discipleship meant answering simple questions like, “Is it okay if someone kicks my chair at church?” Sometimes it meant encouraging someone like Mercy to consider whether she was ready to be baptized as a child of God even if her family and society might oppose it.

As missionary associates, we prayed regularly that the Lord would be pleased to use that pattern of going to Sunday worship and being his witnesses, sometimes under persecution and ridicule, as a sign pointing others to look upwards to his sovereign evacuation plan. We knew our own weakness, and we rejoiced and trusted the Lord to do what nobody in their own strength can do. In the face of something worse than a nuclear test, we prayed for him to bring all his children out of death into eternal life in Jesus Christ. **NH**

The author served as an OP missionary associate in Asia.

DEACONS AS UNIFIERS

TIMOTHY HOPPER AND CHRISTOPHER CASHEN

One of the most persistent problems among God’s people throughout the ages is disunity and its expressions: strife, conflict, and discord. When Abram and Lot’s flocks grew so large that the land could no longer support them both, conflict arose between their servants. The Israelites were a murmuring, grumbling, and complaining group who feared they did not have enough to eat or drink. Their murmuring exposed their lack of unity. In his epistle to the Philippians, Paul calls out by name Euodia and Syntyche, two members of the church, who could not agree in ministry. That same struggle for unity continues to surface today among God’s people.

A CONNECTION BETWEEN UNITY AND COMPASSION

A closer look at disunity seems to connect it, at least at times, to a lack of compassion and mercy. When Jesus told the disciples to feed the five thousand, they balked. They were not united with Jesus in his desire to provide for the hungry crowd. Their lack of compassion for the crowd caused a rift with their Master.

Division is even more explicit in Acts 6, where the Hellenist Jews raised a complaint regarding widows being

neglected. There was a split—a significant and even racial rupture in the church. Some were receiving more than others. Physical needs, even among Christians, can easily become a source of division.

So, what was the solution? Was this a theological problem, or a lack of mercy? Poor theology can certainly cause division. But in Acts 6, the path to unity came through mercy and compassion. By God’s grace and the leading of the Spirit, the apostles recognized the need and appointed seven men as deacons to oversee this ministry. As the widows’ needs were met, their complaints ceased, and unity was restored.

Cornelis Van Dam writes in *The Deacon: The Biblical Roots and the Ministry of Mercy Today* that deacons should be motivated by “protecting the communal joy” of Christ’s church. By restoring joy to the neglected widows, the first deacons restored unity to the congregation. The people could once again focus on the apostles’ preaching and teaching.

“NO ONE . . . MAY LIVE UNCOMFORTED”

Two thousand years after the events in Acts 6, the deacons of the OPC are called to “show forth the compassion of Christ in a manifold ministry of mercy toward the saints and strangers on behalf of the church” (*Book of Church Order*, chapter 11). We join with the deacons in Acts 6, caring for the saints and bringing peace to the widows and unity to the whole church. As our brothers in the Canadian Reformed Church state in their liturgy for the ordination of deacons, “No one in the congregation of Christ may live uncomforted under the pressure of sickness, loneliness, and poverty.” The ills of a fallen world and the resulting anxiety, fear, and discouragement can draw saints away from the unity and fellowship of the body. Deacons serve to pull them back.

In a 1903 article titled “The Deacon” in the *Union Seminary Magazine*, Southern Presbyterian minister R. C. Reed wrote: “To avoid friction between members, to promote happy pastorates, and to develop the grace of liberality, nothing is more important than a good deacon.” From the church’s earliest days through today, deacons are one of God’s key instruments of restoring unity through the compassion demonstrated toward the body of Christ.

Reed characterized a good deacon as “one who can be patient, who can smile at unreasonable people, and speak a soft word to turn away wrath, one who is willing to give time and take trouble on himself, and make himself ‘all things to all men’ in order to promote the interests of his Master’s cause.” Not every complaint rises to the level



OP deacons at a diaconal summit

of the disparity in Acts 6. Deacons often hear a variety of complaints, from air conditioning temperature to the color of the church's refrigerator. Yet how they respond shapes the tone and unity of the congregation. A deacon's guiding principle can be, as Reed advised, to "smile at unreasonable people" and to "speak a soft word to turn away wrath." With wisdom and gentleness, a deacon can turn complaints into contentment, fostering unity.

MODELING UNITY IN PRESBYTERIAN GOVERNMENT

Deacons also set an example of submission to the session. Though a distinct office in the church, the deacons serve "under the supervision and authority of the session" (*Book of Church Order*, chapter 11). The congregation watches its leaders. Deacons, through their words and actions, can either undermine unity through grumbling and dishonor, or strengthen it through respectful cooperation with the session God has put over them. This cooperation extends through the unique relationship the congregation has with each office.

Deacons set an example of submission to a church's session.



Matters of the elders, such as discipline, can be discouraging for congregants, even when they are not directly involved. Deacons, as compassionate leaders, can encourage the church to allow the session to do its work "with joy and not with groaning" (Heb. 13:17). Their words and example can bring the peace of Christ where tensions threaten unity.

Deacons also unify congregations through their support and close relationship with their pastors. As R.C. Reed writes, "A good deacon is the pastor's most valuable ally." By its vigilant care for the pastor and his family, and by offering wise counsel, deacons promote the pastor's joy in Christ—one that strengthens the unity of the body. However, the deacon's heart for pastors is not confined to the walls of a single congregation. Because of the connective nature of presbyterianism, this same compassion is extended to every minister within the regional church. Each of our presbyteries has a diaconal committee, made up in part, by deacons, that provides mercy ministry to ministers without calls as well as to retired pastors who may feel disconnected from congregational life.

Beyond our regional church, our denomination, through the efforts of the OPC's Committee on Diaconal Ministries (CDM), has discovered opportunities to build interdenominational unity through diaconal labor. The CDM's administrator, David Nakhla, serves as convener of the diaconal committee of the International Conference of Reformed Churches, of which the OPC is a member church. Through this ecumenical work, David has had the opportunity to minister to and learn from our sister denominations around the world about their diaconal work. These efforts contribute toward a unity of denominations in mutual service in Christ's church.

The diaconate is far more than writing checks or ensuring heat in a cold church building. Deacons have a unique and high calling to be examples and leaders of unity by ministering the grace of our Savior to the congregation through compassionate deeds and discerning words. **NH**

Timothy Hopper and Christopher Cashen are members of the Committee on Diaconal Ministries.

2026 OPC CAMPS AND CONFERENCES



Science Camp at Machen Retreat and Conference Center in McDowell, VA

CALIFORNIA—BLUE RIDGE BIBLE CONFERENCE

(Presbytery of Southern California)
PineCrest Christian Conference Center, Twin Peaks, CA
Family / all ages, June 15–18
www.brbcfamilycamp.org

CALIFORNIA—SIERRA CHRISTIAN CONFERENCE

(OP churches in Northern California)
Sierra Christian Conference Association,
Groveland, CA
Memorial Weekend Family Camp, May 22–25
For information, contact Brad DeBoer at 209-604-2940
or bradandjanetdeboer@yahoo.com

CALIFORNIA—SUMMER BIBLE CAMP

(Presbytery of Northern California and Nevada)
Redwood Christian Park, Boulder Creek, CA
Family / all ages, July 6–10
<https://pncnopc.org/summer-camp/>



At the family camp of the Presbytery of Northern California and Nevada

FLORIDA—REFORMED YOUTH CONFERENCE

(Presbytery of the South)
RYC High / Middle School Youth Camp,
June 15–20
Youth entering 6th grade (or age 11 by August 31)
through completing 12th grade
Lakewood Retreat Center, Brooksville, FL
www.reformedyouthconference.com

MAINE-NEW HAMPSHIRE—DEERWANDER BIBLE CONFERENCE

(Presbytery of New York and New England)
Junior High (entering 6th–8th grades), August 10–14
Camp Sentinel, Center Tuftonboro, NH
Senior High (entering 9th–12th grades), August 15–22
Chop Point Camp, Woolwich, ME
www.deerwander.org

NORTH CAROLINA—FAMILY CAMP

(Presbytery of the Southeast)
Camp Caraway, Sophia, NC
Family / all ages, June 30–July 4
www.psefamilycamp.org

OHIO—YOUTH CAMP

(Presbytery of Ohio)
Slippery Rock Baptist Camp, Slippery Rock, PA
Juniors (ages 9–12) and seniors (grades 7–12)
June 15–20
<https://camp-signup-form.replit.app>



Campfire devotions at OPC-PCA Bible Camp in the Black Hills, SD

OREGON—FAMILY CAMP

(First OPC, Portland, OR)
 Camp Morrow, Wamic, OR
 Family / all ages, August 12–15
 For information, contact office@firstopcportland.org
 or call 503-253-0695
www.firstopcportland.org/camp

PENNSYLVANIA—FRENCH CREEK BIBLE CONFERENCE

(OPC affiliated)
 French Creek State Park, Elverson, PA
 Grades 4–6, August 3–8
 Grades 7–8, July 27–August 3
 Grades 9–10, July 20–27
 Grades 11–12, July 13–20
 Post-High, July 10–13
 Labor Day Family Conference, September 4–7
www.frenchcreek.org

SOUTH DAKOTA—OPC-PCA BIBLE CAMP

(Presbytery of the Dakotas)
 Camp Judson, Keystone, SD
 Grades 4–12 (completed), June 27–July 3
www.opc-pca-biblecamp.com

VIRGINIA—MACHEN RETREAT AND CONFERENCE CENTER

(Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic)
 Machen Retreat and Conference Center, McDowell, VA
 Science Camp (age 10–high school), July 13–18
 Stronghold Foam Sword Camp (ages 10–17), August 2–8
 Fall Singles Conference, September 25–28
www.machen.org
(This retreat and conference facility is also available for private rental with a discount for OP members.)

SUFFERING UNTO GLORY

Excerpts from the *New Horizons* archives of saints alive in Christ while tasting the futility of this world.

***New Horizons* vol. 4, no. 1 (January 1983)
 by Catherine Porter, OP member, on prison ministry**

Our family became involved in befriending men in prison through our son. This son had been imprisoned for a crime of which he was later cleared, posthumously. After his death, I wrote to several of the prisoners with whom he had corresponded. Three of them wrote back showing an interest in continuing to learn about God and his Word. One of the means of helping these men has been providing them with good Christian literature. They all had Bibles, but they were also receptive to other books. . . There needs to be a caution given not to send books too quickly nor too many at one time, so that they can be read and discussed—thus being a full benefit to the reader. Getting books to an inmate can be difficult because of institutional regulations, but it is not impossible when approached with prayer and ingenuity.

Writing to a prisoner will take some time if you try to apply scriptural solutions to the everyday problems he presents to you. But it will be worthwhile as you see him grow in his Christian attitudes and actions. . .

Prayer for the inmate is probably the most important activity in which you can engage on his behalf. As you discuss this with the inmate, you will see him developing his own prayer life and learning to include his fellow prisoners in his prayers.

WISCONSIN—CAMP WESTMINSTER

(Presbytery of Wisconsin & Minnesota and Presbytery of the Midwest)
 Green Lake Conference Center, Green Lake, WI
 Family camp (all ages): June 22–26
<https://www.pwmopc.org/love-from-and-for-god/>

OTHER RETREATS

Retreats for women, men, singles, and youth are sponsored by presbyteries and local congregations and are held at various times during the year—not just in the summer! Check out the listing at opc.org/cce/camps.html.

A NEW CHURCH PLANT IN SHORT PUMP, VIRGINIA

DEVIN C. GAYE

In early 2022 a group in Richmond, Virginia, reached out to the OPC. Their desire was for a church plant in the western reaches of the greater Richmond area. The area, called Short Pump, is affluent, pluralistic, and growing. Such a place is ripe for the gospel of Jesus Christ. Affluence eases earthly hunger but never satisfies eternal longing. Religious pluralism, demonstrated by the mosques, Hindu temples, and historic mainline churches with flags signaling diversity and acceptance, is no respite for the soul, which desires a one, true God. Short Pump is also rapidly growing through immigration and regional transfers. These residents need a local “family.”

WEST CREEK PRESBYTERIAN

I first heard of this fledgling work from my pastor while living in Virginia Beach, but, at that point almost halfway through seminary, I listened with only half an ear. Of course I was thankful the Lord was moving in that area. But it sounded like a challenging field. Would those in such earthly comfort forsake it for heavenly riches? Could the call to worship be heard amidst all the competing voices?

In October 2022, the small Bible study of Christ-loving believers met for their first evening worship. They were served by two regional home missionaries: Lacy Andrews and Charles Biggs. Local oversight came from Knox Reformed Presbyterian Church in Mechanicsville, Virginia (just east of Richmond). Additional support came from the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic’s home missions committee. “West Creek OPC” was placed on the prayer rotation at our church for mission works. I rejoiced to hear of their continued existence. Though attendance was small—worship averaged around twenty—it was apparent at a distance that they were all committed to the church and to each other.

In December 2023, I was able to observe their love firsthand. Invited to preach, I was welcomed like family to their weekly fellowship meal. When the call to worship came, the fellowship continued but with a far greater



Bible study with West Creek Presbyterian members

object. They worshipped their Savior as sheep who love to sing his praises and hear from his Word.

GRIPPED BY THE LORD

Then the Lord began to work on me. Initially, I had thought only a fool would go straight from seminary into a church plant. The Lord corrected me using two means. First, I had the distinct privilege of meeting many “fools” for the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 4:10). I count several church planters as friends. They did not see their inexperience or their fear as a reason not to answer a call but as a reason to further rest upon Christ. Second, my wife and I read missionary biographies, of men like William Hamilton Burns, his son William Chalmers Burns; of Rutherford and Davies; of Duff and Paton. I realized to my own shame that I had a low view of what the Lord is able and willing to do.

Did I really believe that that same Spirit who worked through them works through men now? The theologically right answer is yes. The honest answer was no. How kind the Lord is to grip the hearts of his children! Is not his strength made perfect in our weakness (2 Cor. 12:9)? Is not the same Spirit who raised Jesus Christ from the dead empowering his people now (Rom. 8:11)? The light which adorned the preaching of God’s Word in the eighteenth century has lost none of its luster in the twenty-first.

In April 2025, my family moved to the Richmond area to join the ranks of the “fools” resting on the power of Christ, and the congregation has continued to shower us with love and support. One year later the fellowship is still sweet, the worship still centered on Christ, and the church is steadily growing.

SHOWING HOSPITALITY

The center of church life and the source of our growth remains the worship of God. The goal of our congregation is to embody 1 Peter 2:9:

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

A people chosen by grace, established upon Christ, and consecrated to worship the Lord will most naturally be outward facing. As blood-bought sinners, Christians declare to their neighbors what it looks like to be God’s possession. One way to demonstrate this is to show hospitality (Lev. 19:34; Rom. 12:13; Heb. 13:2; 1 Pet. 4:9). Biblical hospitality is not something only church officers do. It marks a Christian as a Christian.

Everyone has different capacities for hosting. Some may have financial, familial, or logistical constraints. But I encourage you to consider the question: Do I have a genuine desire to open my home to church members, visitors, and strangers? If the answer is yes, but you don’t know how to find the time, then here is some advice. The Lord’s Day is a day already set aside from all worldly employments and recreation. It is the most natural day to host! Invite a family from church. If you can manage, make enough food to invite a visiting individual or family whom you might meet at church. If this visitor is passing through, they will be thankful for the meal. If the visitor

Short Pump is northwest of Richmond, Virginia.



Devin and Megan Gaye

is looking for a church, they have now experienced the warmth of your congregation’s fellowship. Here is where Christian hospitality gets exciting (and evangelistic): Consider inviting your next-door neighbor. Let them know that you are hosting in between Sunday services and that they are welcome to come. They may even join you for worship. At the very least you are demonstrating to a watching world what Christian friendship looks like.

If you are searching for a desire to be hospitable, I present you with this consideration from Psalm 23. Our Shepherd takes us from the green pastures and gentle fields, through the valley of the shadow of death—into where? A house where he sets a table before us in the presence of our enemies, that we may dwell with him forever (vv. 5–6). Are we not warmly welcomed into his family? Let us extend the warmth shown to us.

One of the great privileges of planting a church in an area like ours is demonstrating Christ’s hospitality to sinners. To the affluent, Christian hospitality shows the riches found only in the household of God. To the religiously diverse, Christian hospitality brings them into contact with the great enemy of darkness: the light of Christ (Matt. 5:14–16). To the ever-growing mass of humanity that moves into the area, Christian hospitality offers friendship, community, and a family.

The call of God through Christ still echoes in the streets of Richmond. The Lord still summons sinners into his banqueting house (Song. 2:4). He beckons sinners to come and feast at his table without money and without price (Isa. 55:1). May you and I be swift to enter his bountiful hospitality and quick to extend such love to others.

The author is a church planter in Short Pump, Virginia.

NEW SEASONS, NEW BEGINNINGS, AND CHRIST'S LORDSHIP

DANIEL R. SVENDSEN

I am writing this reflection shortly after the beginning of the new year. If you're like me, you probably have lived many times through December feeling like your annual plan is hanging by a thread, and that the new year provides an opportunity to reset plans, goals, and schedules (your commitment to which will certainly not wane this time). By the time you read this, you may be seeing the blooming of spring, another season of renewal and reset.

Hopefully, spiritual renewal is a part of our mindset as well. While churches today may celebrate the new year, they certainly do not equal the pageantry of Tishri 1 for Israel, which became their civil new year feast later called Rosh Hashana.

Leviticus 23 and Numbers 29 prescribe it as a day of solemn rest, a holy assembly marked by trumpet blasts and sacrifices, remembrance and renewal. It was a liturgical proclamation that Yahweh reigns as King over his creation. And it is for this reason that many believe that Israel's kings were usually crowned on Rosh Hashana; Yahweh was King of kings, and Israel's king was to rule accordingly (and subordinately). In this way, creation was symbolically set right again.

The "beginnings" we experience give us this kind of opportunity to recognize God's worthiness and his lordship over our lives. Woven into the life of Israel was that every year's beginning hearkens to the very beginning (creation), and Yahweh upholds all things now just as he did then. In other words, He is first and best, and we are to give to him our whole hearts, and our first and best. "Bless the LORD, O my soul! O LORD my God, you are very great! You are clothed with splendor and majesty" (Ps. 104:1).

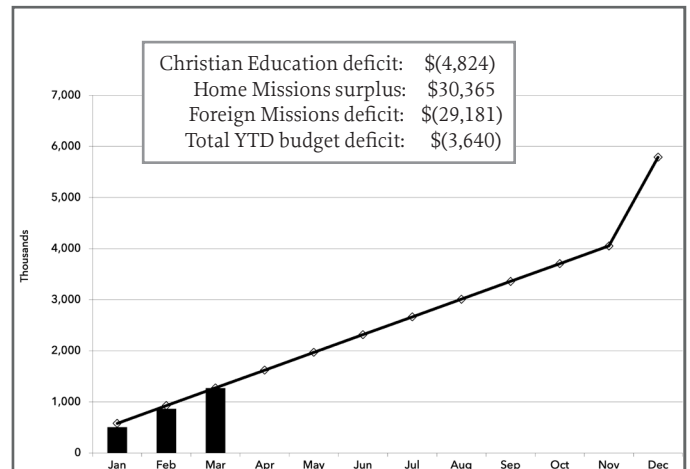
Our new beginnings should cause us as believers to turn our hearts and affections onto the God who created all things, and who makes all things new. We look not only to creation but to the beginning of the new creation, effected by the same God who spoke all things into existence.

One of the great blessings of our common bond in the OPC is the confidence in knowing that Worldwide Outreach exists for the glory of God. It exists so that through the gospel, many would come to make the God who "hangs the earth on nothing" (Job 26:7) the God who has first place in everything.

As you watch the world awaken in spring, as you remember the empty tomb and the Lord who reigns from it, consider how your stewardship reflects the One who is "before all things" and in whom "all things hold together" (Col. 1:17). Each beginning points us to the beginning of all things, and the beginning of all things made new. Our new life in Christ should warm us to renew our commitment to give generously, joyfully, and sacrificially to the work of the kingdom—to make him first, with the prayer that many others would also come to do so through the gospel of Christ.

The author is pastor of First OPC of South Holland in South Holland, Illinois.

WORLDWIDE OUTREACH YEAR-TO-DATE 2026 RECEIPTS WITH 2026 GOALS



This prayer calendar has two entries per day of those individuals and families supported by the OPC's Worldwide Outreach, to the end that we might support them not only financially but also in prayer.

1 Pray for **Jim & Lydia Jordan**, Uruguay, as they adapt to the local culture and continue to develop proficiency in Spanish. / Pray for Home Missions general secretary **Jeremiah (Beth) Montgomery**.

2 Pray for **Lacy (Debbie) Andrews**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of the Southeast. / Pray for the stated clerk, **Hank Belfield**, and his assistant as they complete administrative preparations for GA.

3 Praise God with **Stephen & Catalina Payson**, Uruguay, for the young adults who have recently joined the Montevideo and Maldonado congregations. / Pray for **Judy Alexander**, administrative coordinator for the Committee on Christian Education.

4 **Jefferson & Ellen De Oliveira**, Springfield, OH. Pray that the Lord would bless the outreach efforts of Iglesia Presbiteriana Alfa y Omega. / Pray that ministry of the **Mobile Theological Mentoring Corps** will encourage members of the Sudanese Reformed Church experiencing harsh conditions.

5 Pray for Home Missions associate general secretary **Al (Laurie) Tricarico**. / Pray for the work of the **Presbyterian and Reformed Commission on Chaplaincy and Military Personnel**.

6 **Heero & Anya Hacquebord**, Ukraine. Pray for the safety and witness of their church members in the military. / Pray for ruling elders and congregations to be uplifted by *The Ruling Elder Podcast*.

7 Pray for joy and fruit in the lives of retired missionaries **Cal & Edie Cummings**, **Mary Lou Son**, and **Brian & Dorothy Wingard**. / Pray for **Devin & Kelle Gaye**, Short Pump, Virginia (see pages 14–15).

8 Pray for **Mike (Elizabeth) Diercks**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of Ohio. / Pray for **Short-Term Missions** team leaders and members as they prepare to serve this summer and for the fields receiving them.

9 Pray for our **missionaries in Asia**. / Pray for yearlong intern **Jooho Lee** at Calvary OPC in Glenside, PA.

10 **Eli & Esmé Hirtzel**, Kapolei, HI. Pray that the Lord will provide seasoned saints who can encourage the young Christians of Covenant Kapolei. / Pray for **Joanna Grove** and **Tin Ling Lee**, administrative coordinators for the Committee on Foreign Missions.

11 Pray for Home Missions director of revitalization **Steve (Katie) McDaniel**. / Pray for yearlong intern **Cliff (Bre) Foster** at Central Presbyterian Church (OPC) in Irvine, CA.

12 Pray for Foreign Missions general secretary **Ben Hopp** as he travels and teaches pastors and elders in Ethiopia. / Pray for yearlong intern **Zac (Caroline) Reeves** at Community Presbyterian Church in Kalamazoo, MI.

13 **Fred & Kaling Lo**, Mbale, Uganda. Pray that third-year students at Knox School of Theology would finish their classes and graduate well. / **Jim (Bonnie) Hoekstra**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of Wisconsin & Minnesota.

14 **A. J. & Chelsea Millsaps**, Athens, TN. Pray that Zion OPC would reach young families in the community. / Pray for **Landis Presbyterian**, Marion, NC, as they continue to minister to those rebuilding after Hurricane Helene.



The Andrews (day 2)



The Hirtzels (day 10)

15 Pray for associate missionary **Leah Hopp**, Nakaale, Uganda, to have refreshing times of fellowship with family and friends during her furlough in Canada. / Pray for yearlong intern **Joshua (Kami) Smith** at Covenant OPC in Mansfield, OH.

16 **David & Leah Vogel**, Kannapolis, NC. Pray for fruitfulness in the ministry of Kannapolis OPC. / Praise the Lord with missionary associates **Jeff and Gloria Davis**, Nakaale, Uganda, for their deepening relationships with local people and teammates.

17 Pray for Home Missions administrative coordinator **Lauren LaRocca**. / Pray for **Trish Duggan**, communications coordinator, and **Rachel Kinney**, administrative coordinator, for the Committee on Diaconal Ministries.

18 Pray for associate missionaries **Christopher & Chloe Verdick**, Nakaale, Uganda, to have wisdom and perseverance in preparation for the short-term VBS team. / Pray for **Danny Olinger**, MTIOPC director, and for the MTIOPC courses held in South Holland, IL, May 19–21.

19 Pray for missionary associate **Ben Gifford**, Nakaale, Uganda, as he supports the Uganda team with maintenance projects. / Pray for **Brad (Cinnamon) Peppo**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of Ohio.



The Emmetts (day 24)

20 **Samuelis & Milda Lukosius**, Springfield, OH. Pray that new attendees would join the weekly community college Bible study at Living Water OPC. / Pray for those preparing to speak and serve at the **National Diaconal Summit** to present the Lord's encouragement to our deacons.

21 Tentmaking missionary **Tina DeJong**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for the women of Nakaale Presbyterian Church to love the Lord and his Word. / Pray for yearlong intern **Juhan (Jessie) Song** at Trinity OPC in Easton, PA.

22 Pray for **Brian (Nicole) Tsui**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of Northern California & Nevada. / **Mike & Jenn Kearney**, Mbale, Uganda. Pray for **Knox School of Theology's** graduation this week and that graduates would faithfully serve Christ.

23 **Matt & Christine Ezzell**, Holly Springs, NC. Pray for fruitful officer training at Zion Presbyterian Church. / Pray for Loan Fund Executive Director **Mark Stumpff**.

24 Pray that **Travis & Bonnie Emmett**, Nakaale, Uganda, on medical leave in the United States, would have spiritual and physical refreshment. / Pray for *New Horizons* managing editor **Judith Dinsmore**.

25 Affiliated missionaries **Mark & Laura Ambrose**, Cambodia. Pray that the girls they serve will come to know Jesus as Savior and Lord. / Pray for **Eric (Heather) Watkins**, evangelist for Chicago, IL, and Daytona, FL.

26 **Christian & Hannah Repp**, Doylestown, PA. Pray for God's provision of a new building for Park Presbyterian Church. / Pray for *New Horizons* proofreader **Caroline Reeves** and cover designer **Chris Tobias**.



The Smiths (day 15)

27 Associate missionaries **Octavius & Marie Delfils**, Haiti. Pray for the Reformation Reading Room and arrangements for transporting books to Haiti. / Pray for **Ayrian Yasar**, editorial assistant for *New Horizons* and *Ordained Servant*.

28 Pray for **Chris Byrd**, regional evangelist for New Jersey. / Pray for leaders of the **Ethiopian Mercy Reformed Church** as they receive training from Ben Hopp and another OP pastor.

29 **Nate & Amy Jeffries**, West Norriton, PA. Pray that the Lord would bless the evangelistic efforts of Good News OPC. / Pray for **Linda Foh**, assistant technical associate for OPC.org.

30 Pray for Foreign Missions general secretary **Douglas Clawson** as he introduces Ben Hopp to churches and missionaries in Uruguay. / Pray for **Anna Hall**, administrator for the Committee on Ministerial Care.

31 Pray for **three imprisoned pastors in East Africa** who are deprived of medical treatment and facing death in prison. / **Matthew & Hyojung Walker**, Yorktown, VA. Pray for faith and perseverance among the older members of Peninsula Reformed Presbyterian Church.



Members of the presbytery at Bowen's March 27 ordination and installation

NEWS

BOWEN ORDAINED AND INSTALLED AT ROCKFORD, IL

On March 27, Brian Bowen was ordained and installed as pastor of Providence OPC in Rockford, Illinois. The Rev. Dr. Marcus A. Mininger preached the sermon; the Rev. Dr. Alan B. Strange gave the charge to Bowen; and Rev. John R. Hilbelink gave the charge to the congregation. A graduate of Mid-America Reformed Seminary, Bowen previously served as a yearlong intern at Providence.

CATECHISM CONGRATULATIONS

Annika VanDrunen, member of Bethel Presbyterian in Wheaton, Illinois, has accomplished an impressive feat. Her goal was to recite all of the catechism questions and answers before she turned eighteen. She accomplished this goal one week before her eighteenth birthday. She recited the First Catechism (150 questions), the Shorter Catechism (107 questions), the Heidelberg Catechism (129 questions), and the Larger Catechism (196 questions). This is a total of 582 questions and answers. Congratulations, Annika!

UPDATE

MINISTERS

- On March 13, **Todd P. Dole** was installed as a teacher at Grace OPC in San Antonio, TX.
- On March 14, the Presbytery of the Midwest dissolved the pastoral relationship between **William D.**

Barnett and Grace Presbyterian Church in Doniphan, MO.

- On March 20, the Presbytery of Northern California and Nevada erased **Andrew J. Preston** from the roll of the presbytery.
- On March 27, **Brian Bowen** was ordained and installed as pastor of Providence OPC in Rockford, IL.
- On March 27, the Presbytery of the Southeast dissolved the pastoral relationship between **Zecharias A. Weldeyesus** and Redeemer OPC in Atlanta, GA, at his request.

REVIEWS

Christ of the Consummation: A New Testament Biblical Theology, volume 2: The Testimony of Acts and Paul, by O. Palmer Robertson. P&R, 2025. Paperback, 576 pages, \$22.99. Reviewed by OP pastor **Everett A. Henes**.

Christ of the Consummation, volume 2: The Testimony of Acts and Paul is the ongoing scholarly work of O. Palmer Robertson. The author is considered by many to provide a formative approach to Scripture and covenant theology that has shaped the last generation of Reformed scholars and pastors. Robertson's writings span biblical theology, covenant theology, prophecy, the Psalms, the New Testament, and pastoral application. But *one* clear thread holds his entire corpus together. You can see this same theme whether he is writing *The Christ of the Covenants*, *The Flow of the Psalms*, *The Israel of God*, *Christ*

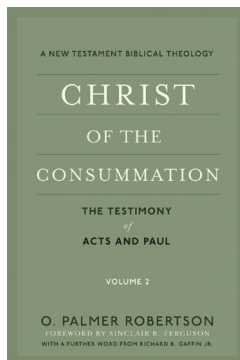
of the Consummation, or his commentaries. Robertson's works are held together by a covenantal, Christ-centered, redemptive-historical reading of Scripture that sees the whole Bible as one unfolding story of God's sovereign plan of redemption, culminating in and governed by the exalted Christ.

Robertson sees Acts and Paul not simply as historical or theological artifacts, but as *testimonies to Christ*. That is, their writings are not detached theological reflections, but part of the ongoing apostolic witness to who Christ is and what he has inaugurated. Indeed, the whole of Acts and Paul is the outworking of Christ's command in Acts 1:8 that his disciples will be his witnesses to the ends of the earth—"only then will the programmatic design of Acts 1:8 for the gospel reach its final goal" (70).

The structure of the book itself reflects this redemptive-historical sweep. Part 1, "The Testimony of Acts," opens with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, signaling the "Inauguration of the Age of the Spirit." Robertson then traces how themes first presented in the Gospels (what he calls "themes from Luke's Gospel") are expanded, developed, and fulfilled in the book of Acts. From there he examines apostolic preaching, early Christian proclamation, and how the historical progression narrated in Acts reveals the unfolding drama of redemption as God moves from Jerusalem to Rome, from Jew to Gentile, and from promise to fulfillment.

Part 2, "The Testimony of Paul," offers a canonical reading of Paul's letters in three

phases: the early epistles (such as 1 and 2 Thessalonians, Corinthians, Galatians, and Romans), the so-called prison epistles (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon), and finally the pastoral epistles (1 Timothy, Titus, and 2 Timothy). Through that tripartite division, Robertson demonstrates how Paul, always conscious of redemptive history, unfolds the implications of Christ's consummation for the church, for gospel mission, for eschatology, and for pastoral order.



The volume is written in a flowing narrative style that draws the reader into the unfolding drama of redemptive history. Rather than presenting his insights in a rigidly academic or overly technical format, Robertson guides the reader as a fellow traveler, inviting them to trace the developing contours of the New Testament witness with him. The result is a work that feels less like a lecture and more like a guided exploration, richly theological, yet highly readable.

At the same time, the narrative form should not be mistaken for a lack of scholarly rigor. The volume is meticulously researched and generously footnoted, demonstrating Robertson's careful engagement with both the biblical text and the wider field of scholarship. Every interpretive move is supported with precise documentation, allowing readers to follow his sources, assess his arguments, and appreciate the breadth and depth of his study. In this way, the book combines accessibility with academic integrity, making it useful for pastors, students, and scholars alike.

Robertson writes as a pastor-theologian whose scholarship is never detached from the life of the church. Even in his most technical works, he maintains a deep concern for how Scripture shapes a covenant people. For him, covenant theology is not merely an academic framework but the foundation for the church's worship. Biblical theology is meant to guide and form the Christian life. The consummating work of Christ calls the church to live in hope and obedience, and pastoral application is always rooted in the unfolding drama of redemptive history. Thus, Robertson's writing, scholarly as it may be, remains consistently pastoral, devotional, and oriented toward the health and holiness of Christ's people.

Because Robertson refuses to turn the gospel into a set of abstract ideas, and instead presents it as real history and the sovereign work of God unfolding in time, readers are able to see much more clearly how the whole story of Scripture comes together in Christ. Pentecost, the preaching of the apostles, the spread of the gospel to the Gentiles, the planting of new churches, and Paul's letters to ordinary Christians facing ordinary struggles—all of these become chapters in the one great story of God's redeeming work.

Seeing Acts and Paul this way is especially helpful for pastors and teachers. In a day when Christianity is easily reduced to moral tips, vague spirituality, or isolated devotional moments, Robertson reminds us of the bigger picture. The gospel is not small; it is God's world-reshaping work in Christ. And God's people are not simply individuals trying to make it through the week, but a covenant community called to bear witness to Christ's kingdom until he returns.

This book is a genuinely important contribution to understanding the New Testament. It builds on Robertson's earlier work but also stands on its own, bringing Acts, Paul, and the life of the early church together in a way that is both deeply faithful to Scripture and deeply accessible. Few

WHAT'S NEW FROM FOREIGN MISSIONS

Associate missionary **Miss Leah J. Hopp** (Parkwood Presbyterian Church, PCC, Ontario, Canada), returned to Canada from Karamoja, Uganda, for a six-month furlough beginning in April 2026.

books manage to be this readable and this serious at the same time; pastoral without being shallow, scholarly without being intimidating.

For anyone who wants to see how the New Testament fits together, not as scattered stories and letters, but as one living testimony to the risen Christ, this volume is an excellent guide. And in a time when the church can easily lose sight of the big story of redemption, Robertson reminds us with clarity and conviction that God's work in Christ is the greatest story ever told, and that we are invited to live within that story until the day he comes again.

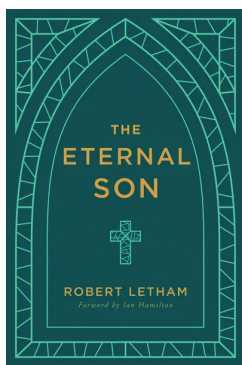
***The Eternal Son*, by Robert Letham. P&R, 2025. Paperback, 432 pages, \$29.99. Reviewed by OP pastor Christian Repp.**

Knowing who Christ is stands at the very heart of the Christian faith. For those who confess him as Lord, this is not a secondary or speculative question but a vital one. When the church deviates from orthodox teaching concerning the person of Christ, it rarely creates new errors so much as returns to old heresies in fresh forms. It is precisely here that Robert Letham's *The Eternal Son* proves especially helpful. In this volume, Letham offers a careful and historically grounded account of the person of Christ, guiding the reader through the doctrinal contours that have safeguarded the church's confession through the centuries.

This book is the second in a planned trilogy on the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, complementing Letham's earlier work, *The Holy Trinity*. Whereas his volume on the Spirit treated both person and work, *The Eternal Son* concentrates primarily on the Son's person, with Christ's work addressed only briefly toward the end. Letham begins with the Son's eternal relation to the Father and the Spirit, emphasizing that the names "Father" and "Son" describe who God is in himself and are not dependent on creation or redemptive history. From there, he traces the historical development of Christology, following the church's debates and controversies as it sought to speak faithfully about

Christ as one person in two natures, without confusion, change, division, or separation.

One of the book's greatest strengths is its historical approach. Letham carefully explains the rise of major heresies such as modalism and subordinationism and shows how they threatened the church's confession of Christ. His treatment of the fourth-century Arian controversy and the resolutions reached at Nicaea and Constantinople makes clear that these councils were not abstract theological exercises but necessary responses to serious doctrinal dangers. Importantly, Letham demonstrates that christological debate did not end with Chalcedon. Questions concerning person, nature, action, and will continued for centuries, and differences between



Eastern and Western theologians—often rooted in distinct emphases and the way key terms were understood—played a significant role in ongoing tensions. By leading the reader through these developments, Letham shows why careful attention to this history matters if the church is to avoid repeating the same errors in new forms.

The book becomes particularly engaging in its treatment of key theologians such as Cyril of Alexandria, Maximus the Confessor, John of Damascus, Aquinas, Luther, Melancthon, Calvin, Peter Vermigli, and Beza. Cyril emerges as a central figure, especially in shaping the church's articulation of the hypostatic union. In the later chapters, Letham addresses a range of significant christological questions, including Christ's presence in the Lord's Supper, kenotic Christology, and

the peccability of Christ. His interaction with both Lutheran and Reformed positions on the Supper is especially helpful, bringing questions of the communication of attributes into sharper focus and showing how easily christological reflection can drift toward Nestorian tendencies if care is not taken.

One weakness of the book lies in its writing style. At times, Letham relies on extended quotations from primary sources followed by restatement, which can make certain sections feel dense and slow-moving. Nevertheless, the breadth of research and command of the tradition are undeniable, and the historical detail significantly deepens the reader's understanding of how the church has confessed the Son across time.

The Eternal Son is a substantial and rewarding contribution to classical Christology. It reminds the reader that right belief about the person of Christ is not optional but essential, and that the church's careful doctrinal formulations remain necessary for preserving the truth of the gospel. For pastors, students, and theologians seeking to think deeply and responsibly about Christ, this book calls for careful reading and reflection—*tolle lege*.

***Christ and His Church-Bride: Meredith G. Kline's Biblical-Theological Reading of the Book of Revelation*, by Danny E. Olinger. Reformed Forum, 2025. Hardcover, 554 pages, \$49.99. Reviewed by OP minister and professor Peter Y. Lee.**

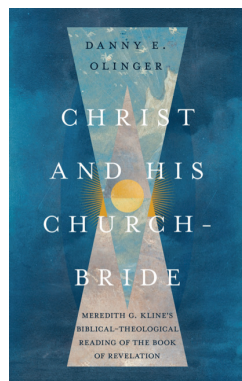
Those who have had the pleasure of studying with Dr. Meredith G. Kline know that his lectures and writings were saturated with references to the book of Revelation. This may seem unexpected since his academic career was focused primarily on the Old Testament. However, he had an impassioned joy as he reflected on the glorious blessings that the church receives through the consummated Christ. Revelation exemplifies this concept with remarkable clarity. Accordingly, a comprehensive understanding of Dr. Kline's

biblical theology requires consideration not only of Christ as depicted in the New Testament, but specifically the glorified Christ as presented in Revelation. Danny E. Olinger has demonstrated this point in his tour de force, *Christ and His Church-Bride: Meredith G. Kline's Biblical-Theological Reading of the Book of Revelation*, providing a creative and innovative analysis of Kline's rich biblical theology of this New Testament apocalypse. The four sections of the book organize Kline's view from an academic, ecclesiastical, exegetical, and encyclopedic perspective.

In the first section, Olinger summarizes Kline's view on Revelation from several of his published works. Readers familiar with Kline will recognize this portion as a concise review of his analysis of redemptive history as viewed through its consummated conclusion. Of the numerous observations Olinger makes, a significant one was Kline's view on the image of God. In several places, Olinger shows that Kline saw the consummated church as renewed in the glory-image of her Redeemer. Contemporary theological discourse frequently reflects on the image of God, and Kline's work offers a noteworthy, albeit undervalued, contribution to this ongoing conversation. These recent discussions on image center around a unity-diversity theme, meaning that as God is both a unity (one God) in diversity (three persons) so we see a unity-diversity in humanity (one humanity, yet two genders, multiple races, etc.). Kline, however, focused on the glorified image. There is much to gain from the unity-diversity view, but this applies to the reprobate as well as the elect. In other words, this is a common grace analysis of image. Kline, in contrast, concentrated on the one aspect of image that is exclusively a blessing for the elect, thus redemptive and Christ-centered.

While the first section effectively highlights Kline's academic expertise on Revelation, the second section of the book, which provides an opportunity to review Kline's sermons, is even more exciting.

This is because these sermons provide a small glimpse into an aspect of Kline's ministry that students rarely experienced, namely Kline the Preacher. What became evident upon reading was the pastoral care and regard he had for the spiritual well-being of God's people. While Kline's principal focus was to highlight the glory of Christ, he also sought to encourage the church by proclaiming the benefits they may experience through their union with Christ, both in his sufferings and in his glory. It was this insight that led Olinger to the title of this book, using Klinean hyphenations—*Christ and His Church-Bride*.



These sermons show Kline's conviction that an amillennial eschatology most consistently and accurately depicts the riches of redemptive blessings. Yet, his critique of rival eschatological views (dispensational premillennialism and theonomic postmillennialism) was not merely for academic reasons. He saw Christ most glorified in an eschatological pattern of a long church era, followed by a final crisis, that led to the eternal state. His sermons demonstrate this conviction.

Kline's sermons also demonstrate that Revelation provides opportunities to preach on all occasions—Lord's Supper services, Easter Sunday, even Christmas—and to emphasize various subjects, like religious intolerance, missions, and prayer. His sermons show a pastoral sensitivity, and he communicated the Word knowing that he was proclaiming to the laity, not to seminary students. Yet, the content of his materials was like those from his courses.

He did not withhold from God's people the riches of the Word, but rather, he expressed them so that they were accessible to all peoples. Since many only know Dr. Kline as a seminary professor, one almost would anticipate his sermons to be filled with technical jargon that are too cerebral for the layperson to appreciate. That was not the case. He preached the Word with Christ-centered devotion and with clarity, cohesion, and concision. In that regard, Kline the Scholar was not too different than Kline the Preacher. Indeed, these sermons were reminiscent of the *Grace and Glory* volumes of Geerhardus Vos.

In the third section of the book, Olinger reconstructs a Klinean commentary on Revelation based on previously published works and sermons. In doing so, Olinger shows how Kline begins in the Old Testament, but always ends in the New, specifically in Revelation. Exegetically and theologically, Kline argues persuasively for the following: 1) the recapitulation hermeneutic is the most reliable approach to understanding this book; 2) the life of the church follows the model of her Redeemer—suffering then glory; 3) Revelation depicts the pattern of the last days in three successive eras: long period of the ministry of the church (i.e., the millennium), followed by a brief Har-Magedon final crisis, where Satan and the wicked nations that followed his rebellion are condemned, which then leads to the consummation of creation and the revelation of Christ as the king in a glorified, consummated kingdom.

The final section of the book provides an “anthology” of theological terms associated with Kline's teachings on Revelation. It is a systematic reorganization, listing and defining various Revelation themes from Kline's view. This final section will be helpful for those who desire to know more about Kline's comments on these specific themes.

As a student of Kline, it is gratifying to see his biblical theology increase in recognition. Several of his former students

have contributed to popularizing his teachings through sermons, podcasts, and other forms of publications. At an Evangelical Theological Society meeting in 2022, I was pleasantly surprised to hear Kline's works positively referenced in several presentations. In addition to this is the work of John Muether in the recently established Kline archives—a treasure chest of theological resources. Danny Olinger's book contributes to this growing appreciation for Dr. Kline, arguably the most significant Reformed Old Testament scholar of the latter half of the twentieth century. Olinger is to be commended for the thorough work he has done, thus providing an important resource for anyone who desires to preach, teach, or publish about the book of Revelation. He has also demonstrated that a true biblical theology presses readers of Scripture forward, always towards its eschatological goal of the glorified Christ with his church-bride in eternal glory. This is the message of Revelation; this was the heart passion of Dr. Kline. I have no doubt that this work would have pleased this faithful man who spent his entire life in service to Christ and desired to see nothing more than Christ's name exalted to the highest place.

***Let's Study Romans*, by Sinclair B. Ferguson. Banner of Truth, 2025. Paperback, 452 pages, \$18.00. Reviewed by OP pastor J. Mark Sallade.**

Few books of the Bible have shaped the church as profoundly as Paul's letter to the Romans. From Augustine to Luther to Calvin, Romans has been used by God to awaken, reform, and steady his people. For many Christians, however, Romans can also feel intimidating—towering in doctrine, sweeping in scope, and densely argued. Sinclair Ferguson's *Let's Study Romans* proves to be an able and deeply pastoral guide through this majestic epistle.

Part of Banner of Truth's well-loved Let's Study series, this volume spans forty-four chapters across nearly four

hundred pages. While it is not a technical, academic commentary, neither is it slight. Ferguson offers sustained engagement with the text while keeping the needs of ordinary believers constantly in view. The result is a commentary that is accessible without being simplistic, doctrinally rich without being cumbersome.

I have personally found this book immensely helpful in preaching through Romans. Again and again, Ferguson's careful phrasing and theological clarity have illuminated Paul's flow of thought.



He has a gift for identifying the hinge of an argument, the hidden assumption behind an objection, or the pastoral burden driving Paul's theology. His prose is marked by what might be called "economy with depth": he wastes no words, yet consistently presses into the heart of the matter.

One of the great strengths of this volume is the way it keeps the gospel central. Commenting on Romans 1–3, Ferguson unfolds the universal sinfulness of mankind with clarity and gravity. For chapters 3–5, he carefully expounds justification by faith alone, helping readers grasp both its legal precision and its liberating joy. He is particularly strong in showing how union with Christ undergirds Paul's teaching in Romans 6–8, so that sanctification is never detached from justification. His treatment of Romans 8—especially on the Spirit's ministry, adoption, suffering, and assurance—is both theologically careful and spiritually stirring.

Chapters 9–11, often neglected or

avoided, receive thoughtful and reverent handling. Ferguson does not shy away from the sovereignty of God in election, treating it not as a speculative puzzle but as doxology-inducing truth. Likewise, the practical exhortations of chapters 12–16 are shown to be the necessary outworking of the mercies of God expounded earlier in the letter.

Throughout the book, Ferguson writes as a pastor-theologian. His reflections are probing and experiential. He repeatedly asks questions that search the conscience and warm the heart. Romans is not presented as a theological system to master but as a gospel to believe, love, and live.

A particularly helpful feature is the inclusion of discussion questions in the back of the book, organized into twenty-six studies. These make the volume highly suitable for adult Sunday school classes, home groups, or family study. The questions are substantial and text-driven, encouraging both understanding and application. A congregation could profitably work through Romans over the course of a year with this book as a guide.

For members of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, *Let's Study Romans* will feel like familiar and nourishing fare. It reflects the strengths of our Reformed heritage: careful exegesis, confessional clarity, and pastoral warmth. It would pair well with a sermon series, serve as a helpful supplement for elders and teachers, or provide rich devotional reading for individuals seeking to deepen their grasp of the gospel.

In an era when many resources on Romans tilt either toward the highly academic or the overly devotional, Ferguson strikes a rare and valuable balance. He helps readers think clearly, feel deeply, and worship gladly.

Let's Study Romans is not merely a book to consult; it is a companion to keep close at hand. Those who take it up will find themselves better grounded in the gospel and better equipped to live in the freedom and obedience that Romans proclaims.



SMART & POWERFUL GIVING

The OPC partners with Barnabas Foundation to help you give in ways that honor God, provide for your family, and further the important work of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

- Give stock, real estate, or other non-cash gifts to reduce your taxes.
- Talk to a planner to ensure your will reflects your family and charitable goals.
- Make gifts that pay income for life.
- Establish a donor-advised fund to streamline and simplify your giving.

LEARN MORE



Visit opc.org/planned_giving.html
or contact Barnabas Foundation today.



BarnabasFoundation.org



planning@BarnabasFoundation.org



888.448.3040



Proud partner of

