

# NEW HORIZONS

— in the ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH —

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*by Richard M. Dickinson*

FEBRUARY 2020

**23** Review: Innes's *Christ and  
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## A CHAPLAIN IN THE LORD'S SERVICE

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Articles previously published may be slightly edited.

**New Horizons** (ISSN: 0199-3518) is published monthly except for a combined issue, usually August-September, by the Committee on Christian Education of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, 607 N. Easton Road, Bldg. E, Willow Grove, PA 19090-2539; tel. 215-830-0900; fax 215-830-0350.

Letters to the editor are welcome. They should deal with an issue the magazine has recently addressed. Their language should be temperate, and they may not charge anyone with an offense. They should be brief, and they may be condensed by the editor.

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Send address changes to [ccesecretary@opc.org](mailto:ccesecretary@opc.org). Allow six weeks for address changes.

The digital edition (PDF, ePub, mobi) and an archive of previous issues are available at [www.opc.org](http://www.opc.org).

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

Copies are distributed free to members and friends of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Nonmembers are asked to donate \$20.00 for an annual subscription (USD \$30.00 if sent to addresses in Canada; \$40.00 elsewhere abroad). A free e-mail PDF subscription is also available. Requests for a subscription should be sent to [ccesecretary@opc.org](mailto:ccesecretary@opc.org) or the address below.

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 N. Easton Road, Bldg. E, Willow Grove, PA 19090-2539.

A small lamppost of the OPC in the Middle East: Jake Swink (middle) and his family, members of Bethel Reformed Presbyterian in Fredericksburg, VA, are currently stationed at an airbase in Qatar, as is Bethel Reformed’s elder Ian James (far left). And, in God’s providence, also stationed at the same base is a chaplain in the presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic, Daniel Halley (far right).



# A CHAPLAIN IN THE LORD'S SERVICE



**CHRISTOPHER H. WISDOM // One important reason that we send OP ministers into the military to serve as chaplains is because members of the OPC and other Reformed churches who serve in our nation's armed forces need and benefit from God's ordinary means of grace as administered by OP chaplains.**

This year marks the thirty-first anniversary of my meeting OP ruling elder Michael C. (Mike) Cloy and his family while I was serving as chaplain. We have now enjoyed three decades of mutual military active duty and military retirement.

## **A Church Membership Interview in Germany**

In 1989, Mike was a US Army captain, and I was a military chaplain in the same rank. We had been deployed separately to Friedberg, Germany, and met for the first time at the US Army's Ray Barracks Chapel. I preached a sermon titled "Not Ashamed of the Gospel" from Romans 1:16-32 at the chapel's Protestant service. Mike later told me that, as he listened to the sermon, he nudged his wife, Debbie, and whispered, "This chaplain is preaching the text! We need to find out who he is." As I was shaking hands with exiting worshippers at the front door,

Mike introduced himself and his wife and asked, "What church are you with?" I answered simply, "I am an Orthodox Presbyterian." Mike replied, "I knew it! I knew you had to be Reformed." Thus began an abiding friendship in Christ that has borne fruit in many ways over the years and around the world, by the grace of God.

Previously, the Cloys had been members at the OP church in Santa Cruz, California, where Al Moran was

the pastor. When the church at Santa Cruz was dissolved by presbytery at the congregation's request, the Cloys, serving in Germany, found themselves without a home church.

Since 1986, I had been serving under a call as associate pastor for military ministry by Grace OPC in San Antonio, Texas, during my tenure on active duty. So, at the Cloys' request, I asked our church's pastor, Jack J. Peterson, if he would gain the session's approval to visit Germany and interview the Cloys on behalf of the session for communicant membership in Grace OPC.

On October 8, 1989, upon reaffirmation of their membership vows, the Cloys were received into communicant membership of Grace OPC with Peterson representing the session during the evening worship service I was leading. With the session's approval, I also baptized Mason Cloy, as he and his sister Melanie were received as non-communicant members.



*The Cloy family in 1989 being received into church membership while overseas, alongside Jack Peterson and Wisdom*

## A Gift of Night Vision Goggles

But our fellowship was by no means a one-way ministry relationship.

In August 1990, Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait. Although Mike and I were in different combat units, we both deployed to Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, in January 1991 for Operation Desert Storm because our units served under the same high-level commander. Mike, serving as a company commander, invited me to conduct field services and preach to his soldiers in his company's tactical assembly area. I gladly accepted, and on one occasion preached a sermon, "Living in Tents and Longing for Home," on the nearness of death and the hope of our resurrection in Christ from 2 Corinthians 5:1–21.

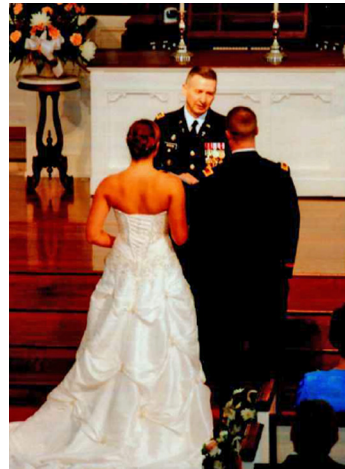
When the time came for our division to support the invasion and liberation of Kuwait, and my unit was undersupplied for night vision goggles, Mike generously issued me a pair. It was an invaluable asset for me, because as a noncombatant chaplain it was my duty to drive 120 miles through the desert into Iraq during the first night of the ground war as our brigade defeated opposing Iraqi forces and then pushed into Kuwait by the end of the last week of February 1991.

Following the victory over Saddam Hussein's forces, Mike and I redeployed to Germany, rejoined our families, and continued to enjoy our fellowship as we each prepared to go our separate ways at the end of our overseas tour.

Our mutual military ministry, however, did not end in Germany. We managed to stay in close touch over the years as our Army careers progressed and our children grew up. When Mike was assigned to the US Army Southern Command in Miami, Florida, he and Debbie encouraged our son, Tom, then a freshman at University of Miami in fall 1997, to attend Lord's Day worship services with them. They provided Tom with regular reminders and rides to the services at Sharon OPC in Hialeah, Florida, where Dr. Jeffrey Boer

was and still is pastor.

When the Cloys' daughter, Melanie, later became engaged to be married to West Point graduate Second Lieutenant Ed Murdock, I was honored to be asked by them to provide counseling and to conduct their military wedding service on June 2, 2007. On this solemn occasion, I preached from 1 John 4 on how Christ declares to us and demonstrates for us the foundation and fruits of God's faithful love to us.



*Wisdom officiating at the Cloy-Murdock wedding*

## Retirement

In June 2008, after an exceptional career that included combat commands at the battalion and brigade level, Mike retired from the active duty Army, having served in the rank of full colonel. At his retirement ceremony at Fort Monroe, Virginia, on June 13, 2008, I was honored to offer prayer on behalf of the Cloy family. I especially rejoiced to be able to give public thanks to God for Mike's faithful testimony as a Reformed Christian and for his exemplary competence and blameless conduct as an Army officer and field commander.

The next waypoint in our ministry journey with the Cloys was the joy of seeing Mason Cloy, the little boy I had



*Wisdom (right) taking oath upon his recall from retirement*

baptized over twenty years earlier, grow to maturity and become a communicant member in Christ's church. Upon his college graduation, Mason was commissioned as a second lieutenant of infantry in the US Army on August 9, 2012. In 2016, we had the joy of traveling to Fort Benning, Georgia, to attend his Army Ranger School graduation, following his successful completion of the grueling 61-day combat leadership course.

Today, Mike and Debbie Cloy are active members of Reforma-

tion OPC in Gastonia, North Carolina. Mike serves on the session as a ruling elder and on the provisional session for Landis OPC in Marion, North Carolina. He is also active periodically as a ruling elder delegate to the meetings of the Presbytery of the Southeast and serves on the diaconal committee of the presbytery. He is a member of the OPC Committee on Chaplains and Military Personnel as well as the Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension. Their daughter, Melanie, her husband, Ed, and their six children are currently members of Covenant Community OPC in Taylors, South Carolina. Their son, Mason, and his wife, Shannon, with their two children and a third due this month, are members of Covenant Presbyterian Church of the Low Country, an OP mission work in Bluffton, South Carolina.

Our story provides but one illustration of the fruit that God has been pleased to bear over the years and around the world by his sovereign grace alone, through military chaplain ministry. "Pro Deo et Patria—Soli Deo Gloria!" □

*The author is an OP minister and former member of the Committee on Chaplains and Military Personnel.*

# SUPPORTING ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHAPLAINS



**RICHARD M. DICKINSON // Imagine that you are not certain of a loved one's spiritual condition. When they come to mind, you pray that, more than anything else, they would come to know Christ—or rather, to be known by him and experience the strength and sweetness of his life and love. Now imagine that your loved**

one's vocation regularly exposes them to real danger. When they go to work, they are likely running toward life-threatening events, so that others may survive and live.

Whether a firefighter, a law enforcement officer, a paramedic, a soldier, a sailor, an airman, or a marine, service personnel see things, hear things, and do things (and fail to do things!) that weigh heavy on their hearts, minds, and spirits.

Wouldn't you be thankful to God for a gospel minister who is trained and equipped to come alongside your loved one with a listening ear, an understanding heart, and the healing balm of God's covenant love and faithfulness? Wouldn't it be an answer to your prayers for your unsaved loved one to come through "the nightmare" as one redeemed by sovereign grace and comforted by sovereign love, so that they live out their days with an eternal song of gratitude upon their lips?

It is the privilege and calling of OP ministers who are chaplains to be instruments in the hands of the Redeemer

in challenging mission fields like these. Yet many labor in an environment far removed from the institutional church. Our commitment to biblical principles of accountability obligates our presbyteries to redouble their efforts to maintain contact with their ministers who are chaplains. Many, if not most, labor in isolation from a godly session and in an environment of religious diversity and

moral ambiguity. How can we support them best?

## How Can OP Members Support Chaplains?

Prayer is always our first order of business in relationship to one another. As brothers and sisters who care about our chaplains, we can pray:

- that God would protect and bless our chaplains and military personnel (and those dear to them).
- that God's Word would dwell in them richly, enabling them to grow in grace and godliness so that they remain strong in the Lord.
- that they would have a tender heart sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading and an inward desire to keep in step.
- that they would enjoy a growing acquaintance with the Lord Jesus and grace sufficient to will and do what is pleasing to him.
- that they would look for opportunities to share the gospel with their colleagues and those they



*OP chaplain Jeff Shames, here with his family, serves as the Battalion Chaplain for the 1-504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, NC.*

serve in ways that reflect both the sensitivity and sovereignty of our triune God.

OP members can also correspond and communicate with chaplains. A letter, e-mail, phone-call, or visit is a practical way of saying, “I am thankful for you and all that you do.”

### How Can OP Church Sessions Support Chaplains?

The godly men who our Savior gives to his church to rule over and minister to his sheep should be:

- first in prayer on behalf of all church members who are “away” for a season, including chaplains and military personnel.
- first in service, demonstrating a carefulness to maintain contact on a regular basis and expressing a sincere interest in their spiritual welfare and temporal well-being.
- willing to explore and recommend spiritual oversight and care that is proximate to their new location.
- ready to encourage young men contemplating the ministry, seminary students, and interns to



OP chaplain Cornelius Johnson (left) with a marine

prayerfully consider serving as a chaplain.

### How Can OP Presbyteries Support Chaplains?

The ministers and other elders who assemble and serve the regional church within the geography of their presbytery should be especially diligent to:

- pray for their brothers.
- correspond with and nurture the accountability of these ministers, in order to stay abreast of prayer needs, career developments, and circumstances that are likely to affect them.
- request that their chaplains send copies of their quarterly PRCC update/reports.
- insist on an annual report and their physical presence at presbytery as frequently as vocational obligations allow. (Many organizations that employ chaplains—notably, the DOD—afford chaplains two weeks of annual administrative leave precisely so that they can maintain accountability to their ecclesiastical body and keep their credentials up to date.)
- ensure that their geographically

remote ministers are maintaining their ordination commitments to God’s Word and our denominational standards.

- encourage candidates for the ministry, seminary students under their care, interns laboring within their presbytery, and men licensed to preach but without a call, to prayerfully consider serving our Savior as a chaplain.

### Committee on Chaplains and Military Personnel

The Committee on Chaplains and Military Personnel serves the Savior and his church and answers to general assembly. The committee currently has a combined 155 years of military service spanning each of the branches of the military. This wealth speaks to the ability to provide counsel on matters involving OP chaplains, the chaplain corps of our military services, and military personnel in general. Please keep all the members of this committee and those they serve in your prayers as we desire to excel in fulfilling our mandates in ways that are honoring to God, healthful for his servants, and beneficial for all. □

*The author is an OP minister and chairman of the Committee on Chaplains and Military Personnel.*

## Becoming a Chaplain

Back in the 1970s, the US military required an ecclesiastical body to include at least 100,000 members in order to endorse chaplains. To hit that number, the endorsing agency Presbyterian and Reformed Commission on Chaplains and Military Personnel (PRCC) was formed in 1978, with the PCA and OPC as its prominent members. Although the US military has since dropped that policy, the interdenominational PRCC continues strong.

The OPC has six chaplains endorsed by the PRCC and serving on active military duty; another eight endorsed OP chaplains serve in the Reserves or National Guard. Ten ministers serve as civilian chaplains, endorsed by the PRCC either by requirement or request. Civilian chaplaincy includes chaplaincy at hospitals, correctional facilities, and police departments (see pages 7–9).

Not all such civilian positions require endorsement like

military positions do, but the OP Committee on Chaplains and Military Personnel encourages those interested in or engaged in service as a chaplain to consult with the PRCC about whether it’s in their best interest to be endorsed. Endorsement can be an important safeguard to the chaplain personally and the denomination more broadly; the dues for volunteer chaplaincy positions are minimal.

Are you a minister or seminary student prayerfully considering service as a chaplain? For more information about endorsement with the PRCC, contact Richard Dickinson at [dickinson.1@opc.org](mailto:dickinson.1@opc.org).

Are you a minister already serving as a chaplain but not included in the OP’s Roll of Chaplains? Please contact Michael Jennings at [jennings.1@opc.org](mailto:jennings.1@opc.org).

Are you an experienced woman prayerfully considering service to other women in hospitals or correctional facilities? Please contact Richard Dickinson at [dickinson.1@opc.org](mailto:dickinson.1@opc.org).

# HOSPITAL CHAPLAINCY



CHARLES A. MCILHENNY // *After thirty-two years serving as an OP pastor in San Francisco, I took on a new career: hospital chaplaincy. I must have chaplaincy in my blood, if such a thing is possible. My father, who pastored several local congregations for years, also served as a chaplain. He was in the army during World*

War II and his experiences always intrigued me. When I left the pastorate, I immediately applied for training and certification with Healthcare Chaplains Ministry Association, an evangelical organization my father had also joined when he retired from the pastorate. I joined, studied, and was certified. That was fourteen years ago, and I haven't looked back since. Finally, here was a world where the best of both desires could be exercised: medicine and the ministry of the Word.

## The Role of the Hospital Chaplain

Historically, hospitals have Christian roots. What other calling of God suits the work of the hospital better than the pastorate—a minister of the Word in the institution of life and death? I love this ministry of mercy. I love the hospital. As part of the medical team, the chaplain is integral to the modern approach to healing as well as the death and dying experiences of patients and staff. What I learned from my education at three seminaries and one Bible school, I put into practice every day.

When I step into the waiting room—whether it's medical-surgical,

psychiatric, sub-acute, or ER—I am the pastor for everyone. Most people think chaplains pray just with patients, but in my service to six hospitals in Los Angeles County, I minister to the staff more than anyone else. Patients come in and out, “the sooner the better,” but it is the doctors, nurses, and ancillary staff members who are there 24/7. They need as much medical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual help as anybody; I am there as their pastor to counsel, pray for and with, advise, and minister to.

The ER doctor, who is a well-known unbeliever, needs me when it comes close to calling it quits on the lifeless child he couldn't save. The ob-



*McIlhenny with a patient he led to Christ*

stetrics nurse needs me when a patient delivers an anencephalic child who dies three days later. The sub-acute nurse needs me because the family of a patient wants pastoral care as their vegetative-state child lies motionless in his bed. The respiratory therapist needs me because he's getting married soon. The ICU nurse needs me when a patient dies on her shift. A wife needs me when she's stressed over the seeming lack of care for her husband. The code blue team needs me to encourage them after they've worked forty-five minutes to revive a patient and have just lost the battle. The hospital needs me when a staff member dies of a drug overdose. What do they do with their shock, their grief? Who's there to mourn her, to celebrate her life, or to give them the only message of hope? These are just some of the true-life dramas going on in my hospital every day. I'm their 24/7 pastor.

I'm also the area director for Los Angeles County, which means that I serve as a sort of district representative and, under the auspices of the executive director, oversee the everyday affairs of the chaplains and students in

*[Continued on page 22]*

# MINISTERING AS A POLICE CHAPLAIN



**RALPH A. REBANDT II //** On one of my first days as a police chaplain, I walked into the police department and a detective asked me, “Chaplain, do you believe in hell?” That loaded question was the beginning of a two-year, once-a-month lunch session with this man, an avowed agnostic.

We discussed why Christians believe the Bible is the Word of God and Jesus is the Son of God who came to earth to die for human beings. For two years, I answered question after question. After a while, he began to ask the same questions over again, so I told him, “The issue here isn’t that you haven’t had your questions answered. It’s that you don’t really want to accept the answers. I’m going to pray that the Lord will bring something into your life that will break your hard heart and show you your need for Jesus.” (Later, he told me that he wanted to pull out his gun and have me meet my Maker right then.)

Several months later, on Good Friday, I received a phone call from him. He said that nothing was going right for him—which he blamed on me and my prayers—and that he was ready

to confess his sin and trust in Jesus as his Savior and Lord. He and his wife joined our church where they remained members until they retired and moved away. Just recently, he himself was ordained as a chaplain.

## The Need for Police Chaplains

I have been a police chaplain for almost thirty years. I began while an OP church planter here in Farmington Hills, Michigan. I was looking for ways to help out in our community. The police



*Rebandt with an officer*

chief saw my desire and offered me a position as a chaplain in the Farmington Hills Police Department. After that, one door after another seemed to open, first to chaplaincy at a neighboring city’s police department, then to the Southeastern

Michigan Police Chiefs, and then as chaplain for the Michigan Association of Chiefs of Police.

Several years ago, I was discussing evangelism over lunch with a group of pastors. Some of the pastors expressed that they knew very few non-Christians, and one pastor said that he was not even sure he could name five! I realized then that I actually knew more non-Christians than Christians. Police chaplaincy has provided a unique platform for the gospel to a group who may not hear it otherwise.

Think about this: law enforcement officers do works of necessity on the Lord’s Day, which keeps them from being able to attend worship. On the day and afternoon shifts, most officers work at least two Sundays per month. Midnight officers rarely attend worship anywhere.

Police officers are some of the most hardworking, selfless individuals you will ever meet. They get up in the morning unsure if they will return to their families after their shift, and they do that day in and day out. Especially in



our current environment, they are often disrespected and quite often unappreciated. Statistics show that they have high divorce rates. The stress of job and home can be overwhelming. The field is white unto harvest.

### Chaplaincy and Church

Chaplaincy also allows our church to have a presence in the community. For the past eleven years, Oakland Hills OPC has sponsored a Law Enforcement Appreciation Sunday on the first Sunday in May, in coordination with National Law Enforcement Appreciation Week. Officers from the surrounding communities are invited to a baked goods reception prior to our morning worship. We raise money for an officer who is in a particular financial need—the candidates usually have a medical condition that has prohibited them from their work. Donations are received from our own congregation, from police department benevolent associations, and from command and officer associations on the local, state, and national level. The average final gift to the officer (or officer's family) has been anywhere from six to fourteen thousand dollars.

Opportunities abound locally for chaplains to connect to the law enforcement community through hosting Bible studies, offering video series like The Truth Project, accompanying on ride-alongs, officiating marriages, or offering church parking lots to local police for internet access or donut breaks.



Rebandt with police heroes on special assignment

Eternal friendships begin and are built from these opportunities.

After one Law Enforcement Appreciation Sunday, an officer gave me his phone number and asked me to do a “ride-along” with him. I rode with him weekly for several months, sharing the gospel. He professed faith in Christ and began attending worship. On a subsequent ride-along, he shared with me



Law Enforcement Appreciation Sunday

that he was struggling with forgiveness and thought he could never forgive his wife for what she had done to him. They had been divorced for some time, but, because of the children, had stayed in communication. I asked him to pull over, opened my Bible to Matthew 18, and asked him to read about forgiveness. I then told him that, if he couldn't forgive his wife, I wasn't sure he understood God's forgiveness.

Two weeks later, he called me and asked if I could come over to his house. He said he would explain when I got there. I arrived and was introduced to his ex-wife. She was just as surprised to be introduced to me as I was to her. The officer explained that he wanted to forgive his wife for leaving him and that he wanted to re-marry her. She began to cry but explained that she couldn't because she had become a Christian, and since he was not, she didn't think it was right to marry him. They then began to share with

each other what the Lord had done individually in their lives. They forgave each other, and I performed a marriage that day! There were tears of joy that afternoon.

### My Work as Chaplain

Police chaplaincy is one of the most rewarding things I do as a pastor. As chaplain for the Michigan Association of Chiefs of Police, I present a short devotional at monthly meetings before offering a prayer (and always in Jesus's name). In addition, for the past twenty-five years, I have been asked to join the chiefs from all over Michigan at their summer training conference, and to lead a prayer breakfast. In February 2018, I was able to present at the Michigan Association of Chiefs of Police winter conference a course on principles of leadership from the Bible. In June 2020, I will present in a plenary session “In God We Trust,” expanding on the phrase's history, theology, morality, and legality. (On my bucket list is having “In God We Trust” on every police car in Michigan.)

Many of the situations a chaplain faces are emotionally overwhelming. We assist spiritually in tough situations, from sudden infant death syndrome to suicide. However, in our weakness, God's strength is made perfect.

Every pastor and every chaplain needs support and encouragement. I've been blessed with a lovely and supportive wife. She writes, designs, and brainstorms ideas with me, hosts the conference prayer breakfasts, and makes everyone feel welcome. In addition, our congregation at Oakland Hills has caught the vision of police chaplaincy. They are energetic, enthusiastic, and evangelistic, and the ways in which they've contributed to this ministry are astounding. God sees what they do; God knows. My prayer is that God will continue to use this ministry to the praise of his glory. □

*The author is pastor of Oakland Hills Community Church in Farmington Hills, Michigan.*

# WILLINGLY SERVING IN WEAKNESS

// MARK AND CARLA  
VAN ESSENDELFT



*In 2018, Mark experimented with a two-acre cotton field. It was successful, and in 2019 he grew a fifteen-acre crop.*

**I**n Isaiah 6:8, God asks, “Whom shall I send and who will go for us?” and Isaiah answers, “Here am I! Send me.”

We have heard that verse many times and know that we are all called to go when and where the Lord wants us to go. But it is easier said than done, especially when we see all the roadblocks in our particular circumstances. Yet what God wants is a willing heart, not the most gifted people.

This has been particularly true of our family. The need for a mission facilities engineer in Uganda was brought before us almost three years ago. At first, all the excuses came: “I don’t have the qualifications, I’m not an engineer,” “I am too old,” “I have eight children.” We were happy following the Lord in North Carolina by running our businesses and serving in our local church. But after much turmoil and prayer, the Lord developed in us a willing heart and led us here. We came, trusting that our God who knows all will use us along with all our weaknesses and ignorance.

When we came to Uganda early in 2018, my (Mark’s) biggest fear was failure. I feared that we would not meet everyone’s expectations and that they would send us home in six months. When we arrived, there had been no mission facilities engineer here for almost a year, and much of the infrastructure was in a state of neglect. Thus, most of my time here so far has been spent trying to get the facilities back into working order while working with the local Karimojong, training and providing discipleship as time permits. We weren’t sent back in failure, and now I see how much the Lord blesses a willing heart rather than great qualifications.



*Loading cotton for the market*

## Farm Project

This past year I hired a young man, Lochoro, who had graduated from the Timothy Discipleship Training program run by David and Rashel Robbins, to oversee our Farm Project. I was so satisfied with his management abilities that he is now overseeing all the mission compound’s casual hire workers, which number between twenty to forty individuals per day. In February, we hope to send Lochoro to school for further education so he can gain some skills to start his own business and be a self-sustaining member and possible leader in the local church.

My family and I have also spent a considerable amount of time on the Farm Project. This was one aspect of the work for which I didn’t feel overly qualified. I am not a farmer, and the mission has no tractor or implements. I had worked on a farm when I was young but had never planted a field myself. The mission explained that growing food was a big mistake because it would be stolen. So I thought, “I’ve worked on a cotton farm. Let’s grow cotton!” We were happy with the results of our experiment last year. We started with two acres, planted, weeded, and harvested by hand. Though we had rains that damaged some of the crops, the harvest for the two acres yielded the most compared to others bringing cotton to the cotton gin. This year we expanded to fifteen acres and had similar yields.

The purpose of this project is to train the local people in better methods of farming and thus improve their standard of living. (The Karimojong are historically nomadic cattle herders, not crop farmers.) Due to other demands on my time, this training has not developed as much as I would like. I hope in the coming years to spend more

time developing this program, which allows me to build relationships with many people in the community. At times we have as many as thirty people working in the field per day. Before the harvesters go out, they join with the compound workers for a time of devotions. It is a privilege to minister this way in Word and deed.

### Other Needs on the Field

We have also been busy for the past seven months renovating the “Okken house” for the Folkerts family, who just arrived on the field in December. We added two rooms to help accommodate their seven children, and we built a pavilion with an office and a teaching area. This has been a large project, and God in his providence sent two missionary associates, Joshua Marcoux and Joanna Grove, who have been a huge help in getting this project done. I have been very encouraged by their willingness to serve. God also sent Raun Treible, the superman of construction relief work. Raun came from Florida twice since I have been here and was a tremendous blessing both times.

I am also dealing with diaconal cases almost on a daily basis. Since Karamoja is one of the poorest places in the world and has a huge amount of sickness, there are great diaconal needs. To help with these needs, we want to establish a board of deacons in the local church. I hope to identify qualified men so we can start working with them in the coming year to develop a fully indigenous, self-sustaining, self-supporting, and self-governing church.

One of the biggest challenges my wife Carla and I have faced is managing a large family on the field. We had eight children when we came, and now we have nine; our youngest, Jordan, was born in January 2019 on the field. It is difficult in the United States to have a large family, but here it is compounded by the many inconveniences, such as no washing machine, no dishwasher, no microwave, and being two hours—four or five when the roads are bad—from the grocery store. Sickness has hit us again and again. Micah, one of the



*Adding to the Folkerts's home*

twins, has had malaria six times in five months, twice escalating into a serious case. One week we had five people in our family sick, which drained all our energy for anything else. I am very thankful for my wife, Carla, who has spent many nights up with sick children. We are thankful for the clinic across the road that we visit weekly. We are also very thankful for the prayers of the saints both here and back home! We have been so blessed by the emails and cards that the OP congregations

send us. We are praying that God would send us someone to help with caring for the little ones, sick ones, and the running of the home, which is often overwhelming.

God is doing a mighty work in Karamoja, both in Word and deed, and although we don't see progress every day, we see it when we look back over our time here thus far. We ask that you join us in prayer that the Karimojong will take up the mantle and bring the gospel to their own people in a way that we cannot. “God has chosen the weak things of this world to put to shame the things that are mighty” (1 Cor. 1:27). We willingly serve in weakness. To God be the glory. May his kingdom come! Thank you for your love, support, and prayers.

*The authors are missionaries in Uganda.*

## What's New

### // Comings/Goings

Associate missionaries **Rev. and Mrs. H. James (Esther) Folkerts** (Faith Reformed Church, URCNA, Telkwa, British Columbia, Canada) and their seven children arrived safely on the field in December 2019 to begin their labors with the OP Uganda Mission in South Karamoja, Uganda.

**Rev. Dr. and Mrs. L. Charles (Connie) Jackson** returned to their labors with the Uganda Mission in Mbale, Uganda, in late January 2020 following a six-month furlough.

**Dr. and Mrs. Flip (Anneloes) Beardman** completed their term of service with Akisyon a Yesu (“Compassion of Jesus”) Presbyterian Clinic in South Karamoja, Uganda, and returned to the Netherlands in late January 2020.

**Mr. Jonathan Robbins (First Baptist Church, Ferndale, WA)** has been appointed to serve as a missionary associate in South Karamoja, Uganda, for a six-month term beginning in January 2020.



*The Van Essendelft family*

# GETTING YOUR FEET WET IN PASTORAL MINISTRY

// ELISABETH BLOECHL



*Nathan and Anne Strom and family at a farewell party at Immanuel OPC. On October 4, Strom was ordained as associate pastor of Bethel OPC in Oostburg, WI.*

“The internship affords a candidate the closest experience he can have of pastoral ministry without actually being a pastor,” Nate Strom said. In 2019, Strom, a graduate of Westminster Theological Seminary, served as a church-planting intern jointly for three churches: Immanuel OPC in Andover, Minnesota, Covenant Presbyterian in Hammond, Wisconsin, and Providence Reformed in Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin.

## Relationships with Experienced Pastors

Each of these churches have pastors with church-planting experience, and Strom spent time working with and learning from these wise men: Jim Hoekstra at Immanuel, Shane Lems at Covenant, and Kim Kuhfuss at Providence Reformed. He worked most closely with Hoekstra and Lems.

“Ironically, one of the most distinct moments of my internship was when I learned what I already knew,” Strom said. He saw clearly how important it is for the pastor to consider himself first as a sheep under the Great Shepherd—not as the church’s savior. But he also witnessed first-hand the power of God’s Word. “My seminary education certainly provided me with a robust doctrine of Scripture, but the internship helped me ‘feel’ the psychological battle for faith in God’s purpose, God’s Word, and God’s Spirit to accomplish what he intends,” he said.

As part of his internship, Strom exhorted regularly, joined session meetings, and met with various church members. He was involved in Immanuel OPC’s Leadership Training Class (which was one of Hoekstra’s favorite times with him). Despite the temporary nature of an internship, he was intentional about getting to know individual church members.

Throughout the internship, these three pastors saw first-hand Strom’s strengths and weaknesses. They taught “a healthy self-awareness by being humbly transparent and by lovingly and honestly evaluating my work,” Strom noted.

The relationship wasn’t just one-way. Both Hoekstra and Lems remarked that Strom also helped them to grow as ministers. Strom’s zeal and love for the people stimulated and encouraged them. In teaching Strom, they learned and saw things that they had overlooked or forgotten. Hoekstra in particular was encouraged to see how Strom cared for the congregation of Immanuel OPC, the body whom he spent the most time with during his internship.

## Preparing the Pastor’s Family

Strom’s wife and children were folded into the church, too, making this internship feel like a family effort. Serving at Immanuel helped them to prepare as a family for Strom’s calling. “The internship provided Anna with the opportunity to test and grow in what it means for her, in particular, to be a pastor’s wife,” Strom said. And, as a family, they learned how to manage the Lord’s Days “when daddy is occupied with preaching and leading worship.”

The Stroms not only learned how to interact with the local congregations but also the wider community, believers and non-believers alike. As his internship was focused on church planting, Strom organized and participated in various outreach events. He also successfully started a Bible study in the southeastern metro area of the Twin Cities. Through it all, he was given the freedom to work independently, while still having three excellent pastors available to him. These many responsibilities gave Strom the opportunity to prioritize well and learn the skill that one of his mentors called “planned neglect.”

It may seem discouraging as a seminary graduate, eager to pastor his own church, to have to spend a year (or more) as an intern. However, Strom, Lems, and Hoekstra all agree that it is an excellent opportunity. It allows the graduate to get his feet damp. He is able to interact with real pastors in real congregations—as opposed to hypothetical situations in seminary—without bearing the full weight of responsibility.

“It was a wonderful way to get a foretaste for ministry, sharpen skills, grow in faith through doing things that made me uncomfortable, and observe godly men fighting the good fight,” Strom said.

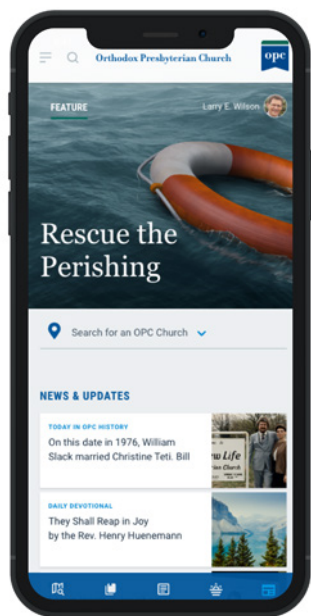
*The author is a member of Immanuel OPC in Andover, MN.*

## NEW OPC WEBSITE

Gregory E. Reynolds

Soon you will see another new face for [OPC.org](http://OPC.org). Once again the Committee on Christian Education’s (CCE) Subcommittee on Internet Ministries (SIM) has managed the redesign of OPC.org with the indispensable help of web designer Chris Tobias and a very competent technical engineer.

In 1995, the OPC initiated its first website (1.0). The minutes of the March 14–15 meeting of the CCE record the passing of the following motion, “The CCE encourage connectivity by the members of the Committee by December 31, 1995.” Sometime that fall, the website was launched. It was remarkably simple, as were most websites of the day, consisting of our name with a series of hyperlinks. By 1998, the graphics were slightly improved with an expanded and highlighted introduction. By 2003, a sidebar was added for the hyperlinks, which had been expanded to seventeen. A logo was also designed and added as a banner on the top left.



In 2005, the CCE realized that a more professional design was needed to ensure a contemporary web presence, with greater access to the expanding content of the website. This was a major project. To achieve this goal, web designer Chris Tobias, webmaster Stephen Pribble, technical expert the late Barry Traver, and programmer Jonathan Barlow, were engaged to create a website, meeting the sophisticated standards of the day. It was launched November 1, 2005. In 2014, the same team updated the website with a more visual aesthetic, making the feature articles more prominent.

Now, in 2019, we have redesigned our website to accommodate the pervasive use of mobile media devices (3.0). Our focus has always been on the dissemination of gospel truth throughout the world. Our content-rich site has not changed its purpose.

*The author is an OP minister.*

## Favorite Psalms and Hymns

*Trinity Psalter Hymnal no. 444*

### “Come to the Waters”

*Text by James Montgomery Boice, music by Paul S. Jones, 2000*

*Lou Ann Shafer*

Come to the waters, whoever is thirsty;  
 Drink from the Fountain that never runs dry.  
 Jesus, the Living One, offers you mercy,  
 Life more abundant in boundless supply.

This beautiful hymn of invitation presents a metaphor for salvation through water images. The main theme of the text comes from Isaiah 55:1, “Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters.” The text describes a progression: come to the waters, come to the River, come to the Fountain, come to the Well, and finally come to the Savior, the God of salvation. As music writer Jones puts it, Boice’s text “distills the thought and theology of Revelation 22, the Bible’s final chapter. Descriptive of the New Jerusalem and specifically of the throne of God and of the Lamb of God from which the river of the water of life proceeds, this picture in poetic language invites us to ‘drink deeply’ of Jesus.” Other scriptures alluded to in the hymn text are Ezekiel 47:1–12, Zechariah 14:8–9, John 4:10–14, and John 7:37–38.

Jones has written a remarkable tune, which notably amplifies and adorns the text with its gentle melodic turns and twists in a flowing 3/4 time, punctuated by subtle harmonic dissonances which undergird the text’s meaning.

The beautiful marriage of text and tune in this meaningful hymn is not to be understated. The more you sing it, the richer it becomes.

Come to the Savior, the God of salvation,  
 God has provided an end to sin’s strife.  
 Why will you suffer the Law’s condemnation?  
 Take the free gift of the water of life.

## Out of the Mouth . . .

A visiting minister read his text from the pulpit, then posed a rhetorical question to the congregation: “Who is Jesus?” The congregation sat silently, waiting to hear how the minister would follow up. Again, the minister asked, “Who is Jesus?” Again, the well-trained congregation sat quietly. But before the minister could continue, a wee voice from a covenant child broke the silence with his clear and confident answer: “God!”

—Karl A. Hubenthal  
 Harrisville, PA

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

## HOME MISSIONS

# FROM THIRTEEN MEMBERS TO THREE CHURCHES

// AYRIAN J. YASAR



Pastor Paul Browne teaching a children's sermon during Sunday morning worship at New Life

Imagine a beautiful redwood tree towering above you. Now imagine filming that tree as it grew through the centuries from a tiny seed to full height. If you sped up the video, the tree would appear to sprout and grow before your very eyes. God stuns us by his beautiful handiwork of creation, and he also gives reason for wonder as he transforms hearts and draws a people to himself. This article is a sped-up look at the planting and growth of New Life OPC in Williamsport, Pennsylvania. Although it began just as a small church plant, New Life has now planted two other congregations in central Pennsylvania.

### Seed

New Life Orthodox Presbyterian Church was planted by the Presbytery of Philadelphia nearly thirty-five years ago. "New Life shows the surprising providence and graciousness of God in that it is a kind of resurrection of an earlier OP church in nearby Lewisburg, Pennsylvania," pastor Paul Browne explained. "That church had closed and sold their building. The funds went to presbytery in order to fund another church plant in central Pennsylvania."

Bob Marsh was the organizing pastor of this new church plant in Williamsport in 1985. Along with new visitors from Williamsport, old members from the Lewisburg church attended, including ruling elder Thomas Hogg who served as the link between the church and the presbytery. After a few years, Marsh took another call, and the church was without a pastor for a season. "During this time between pastors the attendance was often very small—sometimes the Hogg family and a student from Westminster Seminary in Philly were the only ones in attendance," Browne said. But then in 1989, Ted Georgian became the pastor of New Life, and the church was particularized with its own elders in 1994.

### Seedling

After six years, Georgian retired, and Browne, who had just graduated seminary, accepted the call to New Life. After filling in as stated supply for a summer, Browne, his wife, Lynne, and their new baby girl moved to Williamsport in 1995. The church was still small. "Thirteen members signed my call," Browne remembered. "Like so many small churches and mission works, we bounced around seeking a good facility to meet for worship."

When they had about thirty members, they began the process of building their own church facility through the OPC loan fund, worshipping for the first time in their new building in August 1999.

### Sapling

New Life, with guidance from the session, took active measures to reach those in the community. Outreach is still a part of New Life's activities and includes visitor Sundays, chili cook-offs, and movie nights. Central to this outreach mind-set is prayer, Browne explained. "The session was well agreed that we need to push ourselves to do evangelism. I think that is one of the hardest parts of church life to keep going. Most of us don't feel very gifted at it and are all the more intimidated by a somewhat hostile culture. We emphasized the need for all members to pray for the success of our outreach and evangelism, since prayer is something that every member should be doing."

### *Home Missions Today*

For up-to-date news and prayer requests, receive our newsletter by e-mailing [HomeMissionsToday@opc.org](mailto:HomeMissionsToday@opc.org). New editions: February 5 & 19.

## Flowering

Once it had grown, New Life became active in planting more outposts of the kingdom of God. The impetus behind New Life's first church plant was the number of students traveling thirty to sixty minutes from Bucknell and Bloomsburg Universities near Danville, Pennsylvania, to attend the church. Over time, more families from that area were attending the church. At this point, New Life was around 130 members, and church planting seemed to be the obvious next step.

"In 2007, we called Rev. Roth Reason to begin that work with thirty-some of our members and attendees. The Lord blessed it, and they organized as Redeemer OPC in 2011," Browne said. "After about a year the Lord replaced the number of people that we had sent away!"

And this was just the beginning. The same year that Redeemer was organized, New Life had more news for the presbytery. "In 2011, we asked presbytery to recognize our new mission work, Omega OPC, under our former intern, Reverend Adcock, now called as an associate pastor of New Life for this work," Browne remembered. Omega OPC—also in Williamsport—was organized in 2018.

Establishing a mission work in the same city took much more explanation to the New Life congregation than the obvious need for a church in Danville. It's difficult to separate a congregation for the purpose of church planting. Yet Browne is confident that it blesses the body.

"Established churches should rightly expect that members will mature into lifelong places of leadership and service. But where can newcomers go to mature in the same way? Church planting provides a kind of hothouse where believers can grow quickly in such immensely useful ways. Church plants fertilize the whole kingdom," Browne explained.

## Bearing the Fruit of the Spirit

There are several other blessings of church planting. One is the growth in faith and reliance upon God. As Browne shared, "It requires an outrageous faith that the Lord will bless you even though you send off a big clump of people that you struggled to gain the last several years. The lesson for all of us is that the kingdom is about the Lord's glory, not our comfort. The Lord blesses faith, not just as the instrument of justification, but as expecting him to do great things when we ask him to." As a mother is kept limber by caring for a young child, so too a planting church is kept healthy by tending to a new daughter congregation.

Planting a church and practicing faith "pushes the mother church from sitting back on her laurels to overseeing and supplying the daughter while also renewing her evangelism to fill the empty seats and gain more brothers and sisters," Browne said.

But as we all know, leaving friends is never easy and the sorrow of planting a church and seeing loved ones depart is



*Worshippers at New Life: (top) Paul Browne, (middle) Ayrian Yasar, and (bottom) Leif McDermott and Merilee Baxter*

difficult. "Christ rewards such faith and labors, though not always in the ways we expect," Browne said. For those contemplating the blessings and challenges of church planting, be encouraged. In the same way that some blossoming plants require you to remove the blossoms in order to bloom again, so church planting, although it takes members away, can provide "an ongoing rejuvenation in the mother church," Browne said.

Today, New Life continues evangelizing and also focuses much effort toward discipling the covenant youth and ministering to the church families in a systematic way. For this purpose, in 2017 New Life called former intern Bulut Yasar as full co-pastor to serve alongside Paul Browne.

*The author is a member of New Life OPC in Williamsport, PA.*

# CARING FOR MINISTERS THROUGH WEBINARS

// JUDITH M. DINSMORE

Since 2018, the Committee on Ministerial Care has been producing quarterly webinars for OP pastors and ministers on a variety of topics including, “Will I Ever Be Able to Retire?” and “Practical Advice for Pastoral Ministry Challenges.”

They chose webinars as a medium instead of articles or books because they wanted to do something more personal for OP ministers.

“We want our ministers to feel like we are thinking as specifically as we can about the challenges that they face and not just pointing them to off-the-shelf resources,” said Greg De Jong, vice president of the Committee on Ministerial Care and a financial adviser.

Those challenges, as any OP minister knows, go far beyond the financial. Financial concerns are the committee’s “marquee item,” as De Jong put it, but he thinks they are, in one sense, less significant than the personal, spiritual, and social concerns. “It seems like we’ve got a lot of men who are in places of discouragement and feeling overworked,” he said. The committee seeks to care not only for ministers who might be wondering about saving for retirement but also those who are too overworked to even think about retirement.

In July, the committee produced the webinar “Fatigue and Burnout in Pastoral Ministry,” hosted by Lendall Smith and featuring John and Lindsay Fikkert. John Fikkert is an OP minister and licensed mental health counselor, and his wife, Dr. Lindsay Fikkert, is a licensed clinical psychologist.

## What Is a Webinar?

Of course, if a pastor is overworked and discouraged, the forty-five minutes it takes to watch a webinar are a precious

commodity. “The challenge we seem to be facing is how to break through ministers’ busy lives and overflowing e-mail inboxes,” De Jong said. “My hope is that we can gradually win over enough men to thinking that this will be a worthwhile investment of their time.”

Webinars—a combination of “worldwide web” and “seminar”—are simply video conferences streamed over the web. They became big in the nineties as a cheap alternative to large, in-person meetings. Sometimes the video is pre-recorded, and sometimes it’s live. Even if the video is pre-recorded, webinars are more than a static video; they are posted at a specific time so that people “attend” as if attending a live meeting. Viewers of recent CMC webinars could submit questions via a chat feature, which were then answered live by the speakers.

For those not tech-inclined, “just click on the link in the email,” De Jong said.

The first two webinars did not include video, and one participant commented their surprise. That comment was enough for the entrepreneurial De Jong. “I, somewhat naively, thought, ‘I bet I can do this!’ and thus launched headlong into becoming a videographer,” De Jong laughed.

De Jong has had quite a few hobby interests throughout his life, but this was one that interested his wife, too. Together, they “crammed the SUV with the fruits of a frenzied six-week eBay and Amazon shopping spree” and drove to Pella, Iowa, where they recorded the third webinar with Lendall Smith and the Fikkerts. “I think we all found it rather exhilarating!” De Jong concluded.

In 2020, the CMC also hopes to launch something for ministers’ wives, who have what De Jong calls the loneliest

job in the world. He is eager to learn from ministers’ wives how the Ministerial Care Committee “can be more supportive of your husband, yourself, and your family.”

All webinar videos are available on the CMC’s website, [opccmc.org](http://opccmc.org). However, to make fullest use of the webinar and to participate in

the live Q&As, view at the scheduled time. The most recent one aired on January 22: “Key Retirement Insights for 2020.” Watch your email for an announcement of the April webinar.



*The CMC’s third webinar, on fatigue in ministry*



# FEBRUARY



The Nakhlas

**1** Pray for **RETIRED MISSIONARIES** Cal & Edie Cummings, Brian & Dorothy Wingard, Greet Rietkerk, and Young & Mary Lou Son. / **DAVID NAKHLA**, disaster response coordinator.

**2** **LOWELL & MAE IVEY**, Virginia Beach, VA. Praise God for the organization of Reformation Presbyterian Church in December 2019. / Pray for **GREGORY REYNOLDS**, editor of *Ordained Servant*.

**3** Pray for the labors of **CHARLES & CONNIE JACKSON**, and missionary associates **DR. JIM & JENNY KNOX**, Mbale, Uganda. / Pray for spring **MTIOPC** instructors and students as online assignments begin today.

**4** Pray for **DAVE (ELIZABETH) HOLMLUND**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of Philadelphia. / Pray for tentmaking missionary **TINA DEJONG**, Nakaale, Uganda, as she visits supporters to report on her work.

**5** **RYAN & ROCHELLE CAVANAUGH**, Merrillville, IN. Pray for redemptive, transparent relationships at Mission Church. / **MARK STUMPF**, manager of OPC Loan Fund, which helps churches with capital acquisition and expansion.

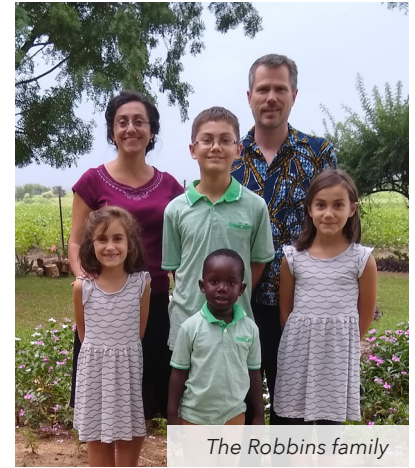
**6** Pray for **CHRISTOPHER & CHLOE VERDICK** and the AYPC clinic staff in Karamoja as they continue work without a full-time doctor. / **ANDREW & REBEKAH CANAVAN**, Corona, CA. Pray that Corona OPC would live wisely and joyfully before the world.

**7** Home Missions general secretary **JOHN SHAW**. / Yearlong interns **KEN (MANDY) KRUCKOW** at Oakland Hills Community Church in Farmington Hills, MI, and **PEDER (ANNA) KLING** at Prescott OPC in Prescott, AZ.

**8** Pray for associate missionaries **JAMES & ESTHER FOLKERTS**, and missionary associate **JOANNA GROVE**, as they learn the Karimojong language. / Pray for **MARK LOWREY**, associate executive director of Great Commission Publications.

**9** **BRADNEY & EILEEN LOPEZ**, Arroyo, PR. Ask God to add to their number at Iglesia Presbiteriana Sola Escritura. / **MARK AND CARLA VAN ESSENDELFT**, Nakaale, Uganda, give thanks for a visit from Carla's parents and ask for prayer for a childcare helper.

**10** Pray for missionary associate **ANGELA VOSKUIL**, Nakaale, Uganda, as she trains Karimojong teachers for pre-school education outreach. / Yearlong interns **BRYCE (KELCIE) SOUVE** at Reformation OPC in Morgantown, WV, and **JIMMY (KORINA) APODACA** at Providence OPC in Temecula, CA.



The Robbins family

**11** **DAVID & RASHEL ROBBINS**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray that the new audio recording of the Shorter Catechism in Karimojong may bear fruit. / Pray for active duty military chaplain **DANIEL (STACEY) HALLEY**, US Air Force.

**12** Church-planting interns **JUEON KIM** at Christ the King Presbyterian in Naples, FL, and **TYLER (NATALIE) DETRICK** at First Street Reformed Fellowship in Dayton, OH. / Pray for the **TRINITY PSALTER HYMNAL** joint venture board.

**13** Pray that associate missionary **LEAH HOPP** may be able to share the gospel with the women and children she meets through her work. / Yearlong intern **JEREMY (AMY) ALLEN** at Covenant of Grace in Oxnard, CA.

**14** **CARL & STACEY MILLER**, New Braunfels, TX. Pray that God would provide a new meeting place, increasing ministry flexibility. / **MR. AND MRS. F.**, Asia. Pray for intern Mr. P., as he is ordained this month.

**15** Missionary associates **JOSHUA MARCOUX** and **JONATHAN ROBBINS**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for their health and strength as they assist with mission maintenance. / **ANNELISA STUDLEY**, OP office manager.

FEBRUARY



**16** Pray for **MARK (PEGGY) SUMPTER**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of the Southwest. / Pray for **READINESS FOR MINISTRY IN THE OPC** training seminars taking place over the next few weeks.

**17** **CHRIS & GRACE ANN CASHEN**, Clarkston, GA. Pray for more to faithfully attend the Bible studies in Amharic and English. / Pray for **JUDY ALEXANDER** as she coordinates plans for the Timothy Conference in March.

**18** Pray for **MR. AND MRS. M. M.**, Asia, as decisions are made regarding the location of their service this year. / Yearlong intern **JOHN PAUL (CORINNE) HOLLOWAY** at San Antonio Reformed in San Antonio, TX.

**19** Associates **P. F.** and **M. S.**, Asia. Pray that good relationships are developed through their activities. / **BILL & MARGARET SHISHKO**, Deer Park, NY. Pray for a suitable meeting facility and increased visitors to The Haven, OPC.

**20** **JEREMY & GWEN BAKER**, Yuma, AZ. Pray for more visitors from Yuma OPC's outreach efforts. / Pray for young men who have been nominated for the **TIMOTHY CONFERENCE** to learn more about gospel ministry.

**21** Pray for Foreign Missions administrative assistant **TIN LING LEE** and secretary **SHENISE MEDINA** as they prepare for the Foreign Missions Committee Meeting next week. / **CHARLENE TIPTON**, database administrator.

**22** **ABBY HARTING**, office secretary for Christian Education. / Pray for Foreign Missions general secretary **MARK BUBE** and associate general secretary **DOUGLAS CLAWSON** as they report to the committee this week.

**23** Pray for **CHRIS (NANCY) WALMER**, area home missions coordinator for the Presbytery of Central Pennsylvania. / Pray that **OPC.ORG** will edify the church and help it communicate its message to others.

**24** **BEN & HEATHER HOPP** and associate missionaries **OCTAVIUS & MARIE DELFILS**, Haiti. Pray that the Lord would bless the Port-au-Prince church's youth conference held during Mardi Gras. / **HANK BELFIELD**, stated clerk.

**25** **MARK & JENI RICHLINE**, Montevideo, Uruguay. Pray for spiritual growth for the new believers attending the church. / **STEPHEN & FELICIA LAUER**, Wilmington, OH. Wilmington Reformed Church gives thanks for families joining and requests prayer for growth in unity.



**26** **JEREMIAH (NATALIA) DICKINSON**, church-planting intern at Harvest Church in East Haddam, CT. / Pray for Christian Education general secretary **DANNY OLINGER** as he edits *New Horizons* and oversees other publishing efforts.

**27** **HEERO & ANYA HACQUEBORD**, L'viv, Ukraine. Pray for two young men who have indicated their interest in pastoral ministry. / Home Missions associate general secretary **AL TRICARICO**.

**28** **ETHAN & CATHERINE BOLYARD**, Wilmington, NC. Ask for a finalized purchase of a church building. / **MELISA MCGINNIS**, controller, and **BOB JONES**, interim administrator for the Committee on Coordination.

**29** **BOB & GRACE HOLDA**, Oshkosh, WI. Pray for Resurrection Presbyterian's growth in deeper fellowship, corporate prayer, and Christian education for 2020. / **BEN & MELANIE WESTERVELD** and missionary associate **ALETHEA FLORES**, Quebec, Canada. Pray that evangelistic efforts may increase attendance at St-Marc church.

# NEWS, VIEWS, & REVIEWS

## LOPEZ INSTALLED AS EVANGELIST IN PUERTO RICO

*Todd Smith*

On November 2, 2019, Bradney Lopez was installed as an evangelist of the Presbytery of New Jersey laboring at Iglesia Presbiteriana Sola Escritura in Arroyo, Puerto Rico. John Keegan, pastor of Grace OPC in Fair Lawn, New Jersey, delivered the message. The charge was given to Lopez by Richard Ellis, pastor of Faith OPC in Pole Tavern, New Jersey. The charge to the congregation was given by Carlos Cruz, pastor of Iglesia Presbiteriana Reformada del Caribe.

## JACKSON INSTALLED AS EVANGELIST FOR CHAPLAINCY

*Michael Kearney*

On November 1, 2019, Joshua M. Jackson was installed by the Presbytery of the Midwest as an evangelist, called by Covenant OPC in Cedar Falls, Iowa. Kenneth Golden, organizing pastor of Sovereign Grace OPC in Davenport, Iowa, delivered the sermon. A charge to the minister was also given by Michael Kearney, pastor of the Cedar Falls congregation. Jackson previously served as an ordained minister with Converge, a Baptist body. Having completed a journey toward confessionally Reformed and Presbyterian convictions, he is now an active-duty chaplain in the US Army. He is currently stationed at Fort Bliss in El Paso, Texas,



At the installation of Bradney Lopez: (front) Efraín Girau Salas, Al Tricarico, Dick Ellis, Bradney Lopez, Roberto Quiñones, John Keegan, Todd Smith, Carlos Cruz, (back) Bob Reith, Jonathan Layana, David Nakhla, David Quiñones, Jaime Zapata, Jon Stevenson

where he resides with his wife, Stephanie, and their three daughters. Prayers are requested for Jackson and his family; for the ministry of Christ's gospel to the soldiers under his charge; and for the church's outreach as it is thus extended into a very needy setting.

## PHELPS INSTALLED AT ALLENTOWN

On November 22, 2019, Anthony Phelps was installed as pastor of Living Hope OPC in Allentown, Pennsylvania.

Moderator of the Presbytery of Philadelphia Larry Westerveld led the service, and Home Missions general secretary John Shaw read the Word. George Cotenden, chairman of the presbytery's committee on candidates and credentials, gave the charge to the minister, and Tim Young, who recently retired as pastor of Living Hope, gave the charge to the congregation.

Phelps previously served as pastor of Covenant United Reformed Church in Colorado Spring, Colorado.



Living Hope elder Skip Truscott, pastor Tony Phelps, and elder Bob Scott

## BELFIELD BECOMES STATED CLERK

On January 1, 2020, the Rev. Hank L. Belfield became the new stated clerk of the OPC's general assembly, having been elected to that position by the 2019 General Assembly. He follows in the footsteps of former stated clerk, Ross W. Graham, who is retiring after serving in that position for the past five and a half years.

Belfield has been the clerk of the



At the installation of Joshua Jackson (l. to r.): Ken Golden, Ed Olthoff, Joshua Jackson, John Wiers, Patrick Morgan, and Mike Kearney

Presbytery of the Southeast for the past sixteen years. He is the pastor of Providence Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Chilhowie, Virginia, and will continue to serve there while he also works for the whole church in the part-time labors of the GA stated clerk.

Among the duties of the GA stated clerk are corresponding with the clerks of each of the presbyteries, preparing for the general assembly, drafting its agenda, and compiling its minutes and yearbook. Please pray for Hank Belfield as he takes on these new responsibilities.

## KNOX REFORMED RECEIVED INTO OPC AND DOWNS INSTALLED

*Jeff Downs*

On December 14, 2019, a special meeting of the Home Missions Committee met in Mechanicsville, Virginia, to receive Knox Reformed Presbyterian Church into the OPC and to install pastor Jeff Downs and ruling elders Rodney Hurst, Bryan Larsen, Alex McNeill, and Jim Rudkin.

Lacy Andrews began by explaining the nature of the service and calling the congregation to worship. Lowell Ivey, pastor of Reformation OPC in Virginia Beach, Virginia, preached a sermon from 1 Timothy 3. Pete Hurst gave the charge to the congregation, and Mike Myers, pastor of Heritage Presbyterian in Royston, Georgia, gave the charge to both minister and ruling elders.

Downs, a graduate from Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, lives in Mechanicsville with his wife, Diane, and three children.



*At the receiving service of Knox Reformed: (back) Rodney Hurst, Bryan Larsen, Alex McNeill, Jim Rudkin, Mike Myers, (front) Peter Stazen, Lacy Andrews, Jeff Downs, Lowell Ivey, Pete Hurst*



*At the October 18 installation service of Carl Miller (center) to New Braunfels OPC*

## MILLER INSTALLED AT NEW BRAUNFELS

*John Terpstra*

On October 18, 2019, Carl W. Miller was installed as evangelist to the mission work at New Braunfels OPC in New Braunfels, Texas. The service was well-attended with great joy and thankfulness for the marvelous provisions the Lord has made in bringing his saints to gather at New Braunfels OPC. He has brought a continuous stream of visitors from an unimaginable diversity of backgrounds. We are thrilled to see this happen before our eyes. Attendance at New Braunfels OPC has grown from a small kernel to sometimes forty worshipers. We pray that Carl Miller's work may be abundantly rewarded with growth in grace, nurture, and numbers of the saints.

## UPDATE

### CHURCHES

- On December 8, Christ Presbyterian Church (PCA) in Marietta, GA, merged with Geneva OPC in Marietta, GA, to form **Christ Orthodox Presbyterian Church**.
- On December 13, **Reformation Presbyterian Church** of Virginia Beach, VA, was organized as a

particular congregation.

- On December 14, **Knox Reformed Presbyterian** in Mechanicsville, VA, previously a PCA congregation, was received into the OPC by the Presbytery of the Southeast.
- On December 31, the Presbytery of the Midwest dissolved the congregation of **Grace Presbyterian** in Springfield, IL.

### MINISTERS

- On October 18, the Presbytery of the Southwest installed **Carl W. Miller** as an evangelist to serve its mission work New Braunfels OPC in New Braunfels, TX.
- On November 22, **J. Brewer Ames III**, previously a PCA minister, was installed as pastor of Covenant Reformed in Fort Pierce, FL.
- On December 6, **Michael J. Seufert**, formerly a PCA minister, was installed as pastor of Mission OPC in St. Paul, MN.
- On December 6, **Kenny R. Honken** was installed as evangelist of Mission OPC in St. Paul, MN, laboring as a federal prison chaplain.
- On December 13, **Lowell Ivey**, previously the organizing pastor, was installed as the pastor of Reformation Presbyterian Church in Virginia Beach, VA.
- On December 14, **Jeffrey Downs**, previously a PCA minister, was installed as pastor of Knox Reformed Presbyterian Church in Mechanicsville, VA.
- On December 31, the Presbytery of New Jersey dissolved the pastoral relationship between **Thomas D. Church** and Immanuel OPC in Bellmawr, NJ,

upon his retirement, having labored there since 1987.

- **Terry E. Dowds**, pastor of Grace Presbyterian in Springfield, IL, since 2000, retired on December 31.
- **Jack L. Smith**, pastor of First Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Portland, OR, since 1995, retired on January 2, 2020.

## MILESTONES

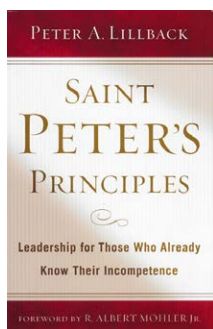
- **Francis D. Breisch Jr.**, 92, who ministered in the OPC and then later in the CRC, died on December 14.
- On January 2, **Billie Ruth (Atchison) DeVelde**, 80, died. She was the wife of retired OP minister Everett C. DeVelde Jr.

## REVIEWS

*Saint Peter's Principles: Leadership for Those Who Already Know Their Incompetence*, by Peter A. Lillback. P&R, 2019. Hardcover, 632 pages, \$30.00. Reviewed by OP member Garrett Miller.

It is refreshing to begin a leadership book with an important cornerstone like humility. In my twenty-plus years in management, I have read more leadership books than I can count, and I do not recall an author focusing on the importance of humility. Knowing our limitations and shortcomings is the first step to becoming a great leader.

The title of this book is, in part, a play on the name of a management concept known as the Peter Principle. According to this principle, employees tend to rise to their level of incompetence and then stay there. Author Peter Lillback, the president and professor of historical theology and church history at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, turns this concept upside down by stating, "We don't rise to our level of incompetence, but we begin there." We are flawed sinners, and if we keep this perspective, we will walk more circumspectly. Lillback examines the life and leadership of the Apostle Peter to show us what true leadership



looks like. Peter became a great leader. He understood his weaknesses, learned from his failures, and was able to lead the early church through its darkest days.

The self-aware, flawed leader is also bolstered by a great truth: we serve a God of providence. Despite our failures, God is working all things out for our good and his glory. What comfort! One of the first exercises Lillback recommends is to recount our failures. This reminds us of how God faithfully worked through them and helped us to learn some of life's most valuable lessons. Humility enables us to learn and to be taught by our failures.

We often poke fun at Saint Peter because he was brash, impulsive, and made some huge blunders, but you'll come to love our brother even more for his wisdom and leadership style. Peter's growth as a leader began with the understanding of who he is, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man" (Luke 5:8). Lillback does a terrific job of drawing out Peter's maturation as a leader and showing why Peter's life is a good example for us to follow.

Lillback's style of writing is very easy to read, and his real-life, transparent, and personal

examples help us to realize that growing as a leader is a challenge and call to all of us. The book divides into sixteen sections, each comprised of short two-to-three-page passages building on an introductory Scripture verse from Peter's life. Thought-provoking questions follow, along with practical tips on ways we can apply these teachings to our lives.

This is an excellent book for individuals or groups studying leadership. Acknowledging our shortcomings puts us in a place where we are ready to listen and grow. Understanding our true estate drives us to seek godly wisdom. The Apostle Peter knew his frame yet sought and found wisdom and resources outside himself, and he became the leader God called him to be. You can, too, using *Saint Peter's Principles*.



In November 2019, Peninsula Reformed Presbyterian Church in Yorktown, Virginia, celebrated its first anniversary. Peninsula Reformed is a mission work of Reformation Presbyterian in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

## WOMEN'S RETREAT

WITH VALERIE SHEPHARD

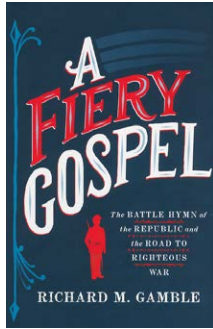
April 17-19, 2020

Registration is open for the annual Southern California OPC Women's retreat in the beautiful mountain town of Idyllwild, California. Join with sisters in Christ to be blessed by one another and edified by this year's speaker, Valerie Shephard. Shephard will be sharing her memories of Ecuador as daughter of Jim and Elizabeth Elliot, as well as her story from *Legalism to Grace* and *Parenting with Grace*.

To register, visit  
[www.opcwomensretreat.org](http://www.opcwomensretreat.org)  
 For more information, contact  
[opcwretreat@gmail.com](mailto:opcwretreat@gmail.com)

*A Fiery Gospel: The Battle Hymn of the Republic and the Road to Righteous War*, by Richard M. Gamble. Cornell University Press, 2019. Hardcover, 283 pages, list price \$18.67 (Amazon). Reviewed by OP pastor Clifford L. Blair.

At first blush one might wonder: how could someone write an entire book about a national hymn written during the American Civil War? Yet consider that song's success. It has been sung from campfires to cathedrals; revived for nearly every American conflict from the Spanish-American War to the War on Terror; sung at state funerals and at the conventions of both parties; included in hundreds of hymnbooks from essentially all denominations and sects; sung by congregations, Elvis Presley, the Russian Army Chorus, and was a chart-topping hit for the Mormon Tabernacle Choir in 1959; invoked by writers as disparate as William Jennings Bryan and Saul Alinsky; and woven into sermons by preachers as theologically distant as the Unitarian James Freeman Clarke, revival



evangelist Billy Sunday, and modernist Martin Luther King Jr., who quoted the hymn in closing his final sermon preached the night before his assassination.

Gamble's goal is larger than a record of the song's wide embrace. He uses this history to explore the topic of religious nationalism—the extolling of the nation by the use of the language of redemption. “The Battle Hymn of the Republic” is a near-perfect exemplar of this.

Much of the book centers on the poem's author, Julia Ward Howe. The wife of physician and social activist Samuel Gridley Howe, Julia was a prominent and accomplished woman: intelligent, well read, a published poet and essayist. By the time of the civil war she was identified with the animating currents of New England progressivism. Though raised an Episcopalian, by young adulthood she was a liberal unitarian, ardent abolitionist, and would later champion women's suffrage. In November 1861, she was forty-two

**Designed  
for His Glory**

April 3-4  
Hannah Anderson  
New Hope Presbyterian Church  
2401 Deckner Ave  
Green Bay WI  
[www.nhopc.org](http://www.nhopc.org)

years old when she penned the words at the Willard Hotel while visiting war-time Washington DC.

Her poem is often described as biblical or even Christological. The language and imagery certainly are. Howe evokes Genesis, the Psalms, Isaiah, and Revelation.

## Hospital Chaplaincy

[Continued from page 7]

my area. I'm a teacher, mentor, and recruiter, with about twenty chaplains and students at various hospitals and hospices under my care. Every chaplain, including me, is responsible to raise their own funds for ministry. I worked at LA County Medical Center for a number of years, which is the largest public hospital but pays nothing to its twenty-five chaplains.

### Hijacked by Interfaith Spirituality

Since 1925, modern non-ecclesiastical chaplaincy has professionalized and thus secularized the ministry of chaplaincy—and the Christian

notion of chaplaincy has taken a turn toward a generic religious philosophy. No longer is chaplaincy called “pastoral” care; now it's “spiritual” care, in the broadest terms possible. The training in chaplaincy has been hijacked by modern interfaith spirituality.

This, of course, poses many challenges for the Christian chaplain, who is directed to avoid any agenda—spiritual or pastoral—except what the patient expressly asks for. No distributing Bibles or tracts without the request of the patient. No prayers, no offering the Word of God, no leading the patient to Christ, unless initiated by the patient. The chaplain is never to “impose” his faith upon anyone—that is, never to evangelize. But this is not our calling in Christ. Rather, we have a modern-day

Acts 5 challenge to “obey God... If it is of God, [man] cannot overthrow it” (vs. 29, 39  $\text{NKJV}$ ).

Healthcare chaplains are thrown all the more desperately upon the work of the Spirit, who alone opens ears and hearts. Please pray for wisdom for biblically grounded chaplains as they seek to share Christ in such challenging circumstances. Please pray that more civilian chaplains would be raised up, with the support of churches, to continue this work. And join with us in our prayer that the sovereign triune Lord would intercede to rescue Christ-centered, church-oriented chaplaincy. □

*The author is an OP minister in La Mirada, California.*

Jesus is present explicitly and implicitly. Yet, for all this biblical language, the poem was written to advance a cause very much of *this* world. Yet here is this striking feature, and a key to the work's longevity: that cause is never explicitly named.

Howe's poem wraps biblical language around *the* issue of her times. Anyone hearing the song in the 1860s—set to the tune of the abolitionist song “John Brown's Body”—knew the “watch-fires of a hundred circling camps” were those of the Union Army and that, when exhorted to “die to make men free,” the freedom in view was from Southern slavery. Yet, the lack of lyrical specificity—no mention of the Union, the South, Lincoln, or even slavery—allowed the poem to find easy application in very different times and settings. In whatever campaign it is sung, that cause is equated with the gospel and its opponents are placed under the anathema of God. Set to a rousing, martial tune, this made the song not only wildly popular for its natal war but allowed it to be adopted by a dizzying array of later causes, including wars foreign and domestic and movements for temperance, women's suffrage, civil rights, and more.

This book's goal is not simple history but a word of caution. Undoubtedly, some things have been gained by the fusion of religion and nationalism (or social activism). Causes have been advanced, people rallied. Yet what is lost or endangered? What is damaged when the people of God allow, even endorse, the use of the language of heaven in the causes of the world? Surely both kingdoms are ill-served.

***Christ and the Kingdoms of Men: Foundations of Political Life*, by David C. Innes. P&R, 2019. Paperback, 264 pages, \$15.00. Reviewed by OP elder Thomas Sorkness.**

Does the Bible have anything to say about politics? Can Christians find anything in it about the constitutionality of Obamacare, the legitimacy of building “the wall,” or slapping tariffs on China? One would be hard pressed, I believe, to come up with hard and fast biblical arguments to promote or refute these policies.



## Evening with Simonetta Carr

Oakland Hills Community Church (OPC) in Farmington Hills, Michigan, invites you to an evening with Simonetta Carr, author of *Broken Pieces and the God Who Mends Them* on March 26 at 6:30 p.m. at 37150 Eight Mile Road, Farmington Hills, Michigan.

That doesn't mean, however, that the Bible has nothing to say about government and politics. There is much to be learned by studying Scripture in order to understand God's common grace provision of civil authority. I teach civics to twelfth graders. Each year, I begin with a unit titled “God, Man and Government.” In that unit, I present the Bible's fundamental teachings regarding God's general will for mankind through the creation ordinances, man's fall into sin, and the establishment of civil government. When I tell my students' parents about this unit, many wish that they could sit in the class. I have found over the years that many adult believers have little to no conception of what the Bible teaches about civil authority.

In his recent book, *Christ and the Kingdoms of Men: Foundations of Political Life*, David C. Innes provides the kind of introduction Christians need in order to understand this important topic. Paralleling some of Abraham Kuyper's ideas, Innes lays the foundation for civil authority and its role as put forward in Scripture, particularly Romans 13. He spends quite a bit of time developing the concept of authority and applying the two fundamental responsibilities of government—praising good and punishing evil. The focus on punishing evil is well developed with several chapters dedicated to various applications, such as life and property, piety and morality, and liberty. His development of praising good is less developed and could be expanded.

From the fundamental concepts presented above, Innes moves on to an ex-

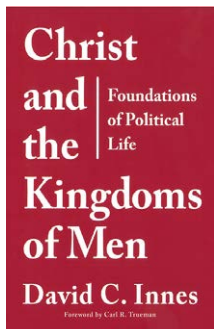
amination of the current view of man and the state. From the ancients to the moderns, Innes draws deeply from the well of Western political thought to demonstrate the process by which we have arrived at our present understanding. He does so with a critical eye, placing beliefs under the microscope of God's Word. Innes' work is not only analytical, it is also instructive. He addresses questions regarding the nature of human relationships, community, civic order, the role of government, and how Christians are to see political life in general.

I believe Innes has provided a valuable resource and starting point for Christians to understand what the Bible teaches and intends regarding civil authority. Although Innes tips his hand periodically to his own ideological bent, his objective scholarship far outweighs any distraction. The book is set up with study questions and glossaries. Many, including my students' parents, would benefit by reading and discussing the work.

***My Heart Cries Out: Gospel Meditations for Everyday Life*, by Paul David Tripp. Crossway, 2019. Paperback, 256 pages, \$17.59 (Amazon). Reviewed by OP minister Mark A. Green.**

The poet Wallace Stevens wrote, “One beats and beats for that which one believes,” which is an apt description for this collection of meditations by Dr. Paul David Tripp. An influential author of more than thirty books, Tripp is known for his passionate communication of the gospel to audiences around the world. In this beautifully bound book by Crossway, he offers intense reflections on how our Lord attends to us in our deepest trials.

The author assures us in the preface that he knows and understands the conflicts of



NEWS, VIEWS, & REVIEWS *Continued*

our journey. He writes for those battling the vicissitudes of this tellurian life with “celebratory hymns, disappointing cries, pleas for help, groans of confusion, shouts of joy, theological meditations, desperate requests, heartfelt confessions, hope for help in temptation, quiet contemplations, honest notes along the journey” (preface).

Entries in this collection average two pages each, convenient to accompany daily Bible reading. Tripp includes two other useful helps with each passage: a relevant Bible verse and questions for personal reflection.

Each reading includes descriptive titles. In “Beauty” we encounter an antidotal focus on our Lord’s attributes when, in the midst of our struggles, we desper-



ately need to have the eyes of our heart fixed not on ourselves but on our loving heavenly Father.

*By grace all that you are,  
you are for me.  
So to fight my divine beauty  
amnesia,  
tomorrow once again in the quiet of the  
early morning,  
I will stop and gaze upon your beauty,  
and I will  
rest*

Delightful, even mysterious, devotional titles beckon you into insightful passages for reflection. In “Spiritual Schizophrenia” there is a convicting clash of perspectives that reveals how differently we view our secret personal sins from the external failings of our neighbor we are called to love.

*I must confess  
that I so often look at others through the  
lens of*

*the law,  
while I want others to look at me through  
the lens of  
grace.*

The final offering in this collection is “Forevermore,” which hints at the famous lines in “The Raven” by Edgar Allen Poe. Poe’s poem is laden with doubt and dreariness, told by a craven narrator speaking only of a shadowed hopeless sorrow. By contrast, “Forevermore” is full of hope. It is the great hope of the gospel, that particular hope that Christ is forming in us, a hope that pleases and glorifies him even as our hearts cry out:

*your work in me and for me  
will come to  
completion,  
and I will finally be  
like you and  
near you and  
I will reign with you  
forevermore!*



On December 8, 2019, Geneva OPC and Christ PCA merged together and worshiped for the first time as Christ Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Join them in giving thanks to the Lord for his kind and good providence in bringing these two like-minded congregations together, and pray for Christ OPC’s gospel witness in Marietta, Georgia.