

Timothy Conference 2013

Danny E. Olinger

Sixteen young men from Orthodox Presbyterian congregations travelled to the Chicagoland area in torrential rain on April 17 to participate in the OPC Timothy Conference hosted by Covenant OPC in Orland Park and Mid-American Reformed Seminary. The young men heard talks about gospel ministry in the OPC from the Revs.



Bruce Hollister, Brian De Jong, John Hilbelink, David VanDrunen, Iain Wright, and Danny Olinger, and classroom lectures from the Revs. Alan Strange and Marcus Mininger. Here are testimonials from some of the participants:

**Jonathan Cruse, 20
(Westminster, Hollidaysburg, Pa.)**

After seven hours of delays getting into Chicago, I was already fed up with the conference. As I was picked up

at the airport in the pouring rain, I doubted that anything this conference could have to offer would make up for the torture I had just experienced with a hundred other grumpy (and smelly) Southwest Airlines passengers. I humbly admit that I was wrong.

The very first talk proved this to me. Rev. Hollister emphasized the importance of caring for others, namely the congregation, which really struck a chord with me. It was made clear to me that it's not all about knowing your Calvin and your Van Til and having a polished sermon with pithy one liners every week. No, when it comes down to it, it's all about caring for your people. The most important thing a minister can do for his congregation is to pray for them. It's about putting them above yourself. If you are not feeding the flock, you are feeding off them.

I can't say enough about how much I appreciated how approachable all these men were. They did not treat me like an infant or an inferior. They were pastoral. They were fun. I loved it.

Jonas Chupp, 17 (Harvest, Wyoming, Mich.)

I think one of the most crucial yet basic things that by God's grace was pounded into my head on this trip is that my biggest problem is not that "I need to do better" or "I need to try harder" or even "I need to apply myself more," but that I need to rely on Christ more! There I was, worrying that I wasn't doing well enough in my walk with Jesus to be a pastor or even a Christian. I needed a reminder that it's not about me; it's about what God has done.

Tyler Detrick, 19 (Redeemer, Beavercreek, Ohio)

I will take home with me the impression of seeing 2 Timothy 2:1–2 in action. The overseers who instructed us during the conference have a passion for God’s Word. This love for truth flowed into their instructing us on the gospel ministry. They want to see God’s truth perpetuated, and during the conference they showed us that they love us as brothers in Christ, but also as those who will potentially carry on the gospel ministry in the next generation.



Jonathan Henreckson, 17 (Grace Reformed, Reedsburg, Wis.)

I had never before realized just how daunting the task of being a minister is. I have gained a greater appreciation of my pastor, as well as other pastors I know. I entered the conference mostly for fun, but I left it with a feeling that God may be calling me to his service.

Ethan Hoffman, 18 (New Hope, Green Bay)

The diligent preparation for a life of glorifying Christ, the avoidance of conformity to the world, the progression of sanctification, and the development of Christian character are all vital in my walk with Christ. I have been convicted, reminded of the grace of the Lord, and encouraged to live for his glory.

Zach Siggins, 21 (Resurrection, State College, Pa.)

This gathering felt less like a conference than it did a family reunion (not surprising, considering we are all part of the family of God!). There was such a familial spirit among our group, and I believe it reflected the character of the OPC as a whole. Not having grown up in the Reformed faith, I appreciate more and more the Reformed teaching and practice found in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. The culmination of the whole event was the night of fellowship at Rev. Hollister’s home. The love that we had for one another was on full display and was a tremendous blessing from the Lord.

Joshua Vincent, 16 (Christ Presbyterian, Janesville, Wis.)

I learned how consistent the OPC is when it comes to doctrine and teaching. My roommate and I came from two totally different parts of the country, and yet we have been taught the same things in our separate churches. There is a brotherhood and fellowship that we all share because we come from the same denomination. I appreciate the OPC more now than I did before.

Pierre du Plessis, 17 (Grace, Vienna, Va.)

I had not known what to expect at the conference and was a little apprehensive about it, but the lectures were eye-opening, and it was wonderful to meet so many like-minded young men. Yesterday in church I looked at our minister in an entirely new light, realizing how much work and effort he had put into his sermon. During the pastoral prayer, he prayed for a young man who is “coming under care of the presbytery,” and thanks to the Timothy Conference it made sense to me.

Anthony Urban, 18 (Covenant, Reading, Pa.)

My immediate reaction to the conference is one of deep reverence for those who are leaders of the Reformed faith—not just because of their diligence in going to seminary and the amount of work necessary to preach God’s Word, but also because of the humble spirit that they have while doing so.

Jonathan Yee, 17 (Providence Presbyterian, Pflugerville, Tex.)

Perhaps one of the best things about the conference was getting to know and fellowship with other guys close to my age. I spent this past week with fifteen godly young men from all over the country, none of whom I had met before, but in the span of two days, I formed close friendships with them and I strongly consider them my brothers in Christ. I quickly developed a bond with all of them, and I’m thankful for the time we were able to spend together. This conference has been a huge eye-opener.

Rev. John Hilbelink (Providence, Rockford, Ill.)

I was impressed with the maturity that these young men demonstrated at the conference as well as in the free time, in both their speech and their behavior. I don’t know of too many situations in which I would be singing “The Church’s One Foundation” with six young men riding in my van, but that’s what happened when one of them asked me what my favorite hymn was. After answering, I asked him the same question and got the same answer. So we sang the hymn.