

NEW HORIZONS

in the ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

6 The Christian
and Leisure
// by Ronald E. Pearce

JULY 2022

10 Report from
Eastern Europe
// by David P. Nakhla



Moms,
To-Do Lists,
and Getting
Things Done

BY JUDITH M. DINSMORE // 3

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New Horizons

in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church

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On April 22, Bryce Souve was ordained and installed as pastor of Christ Presbyterian in Janesville, Wisconsin. At the service were: (front row) Bruce Mulder, Zach Keele, Bryce Souve, Bill Muether, Christian McShaffrey, and Brian De Jong; (back row) Greg Osinga, Jonathan Hutchison, Brian Van Laar, David King, and John Hilbelink.



MOMS, TO-DO LISTS, AND GETTING THINGS DONE



JUDITH M. DINSMORE // Target's home decor aisles are littered with lettered phrases meant to inspire: "Keep Smiling"; "Boss Mom"; "She Believed She Could So She Did." Imperatives beckon from the best seller rack: *Spark Joy*, *Read This for Inspiration*, *Create Your Own Calm*. Notepads and planners sprout helpfully on

endcaps. Easy, fillable shopping lists pop up by the groceries. All coo out to the cart-pushers: oh you frantic, floral-loving mom, you, even you, can Get Things Done.

For us believers, both moms and those who care for them, such messaging should be a big deal.

The fervor nowadays to get things done is religious, claimed writer Derek Thompson in a much-quoted article from the *Atlantic* three years ago. Work has become, he said, not so much an ethic as a religion—the "centerpiece of one's identity and life's purpose" ("Workism Is Making Americans Miserable," February 2019). If someone says they are pursuing their passion, it's probably shorthand for justifying their existence through work. Thompson aptly concludes, "Our jobs were never meant to shoulder the burdens of a faith, and they are buckling under the weight."

But his solution is thin: spend more time at home with your family.

Time at home? Target knows oth-

erwise. The language and patterns of workplace hustle, which often idolize busyness and find a sense of meaning in task accomplishment, are thriving within the four walls of our houses. Getting things done is as much a false religion in my kitchen as it is in any corporate office. And I don't think I'm alone.

Recipe for Discouragement

"I am only in the first beginnings of shedding off a slavishness to productivity," reflected Elizabeth Downs. Mother of two and member of Redemption OPC in Gainesville, Florida, where her husband serves as an elder, Elizabeth was converted in college. "Like many millennials, I was trained to be a productive student, to be a productive citizen," she explained. Such an upbringing tunes us to measure ourselves by that productivity, she thinks. Thus, as household managers—I mean, as moms—we pull out our calendars with a sort of moral urgency. "The way we have gone about adulting has been planners and

productivity reports, project timelines, GANTT charts; we've allowed these paradigms to soak into child-rearing," Elizabeth said, laughing. "Where is the GANTT chart for my kids!?"

Then she said quietly: "These paradigms haven't served me well."

They don't serve us well because they measure the achievable, and being a mom involves much that feels like it is "destined to perish," Maggie Harr quipped. Mother of four, member of Immanuel OPC in Medford, New Jersey, and pastor's wife to boot, Maggie described the early parenting season as a recipe for discouragement: "You're making a bed that won't stay made; you're doing laundry that won't stay clean; everything you do is destroyed before your eyes; but you spend so much time doing it," she said.

That discouragement is, in many ways, probably no different from that of any generation laboring in a fallen world. But two things might be making it particularly acute and widespread

for women of around my age. One is the assumption that our relative awesomeness at getting things done is a measure of our worth. The second, of course, is the omnipresent book of the law of What Things Ought To Get Done and How—in other words, the internet.

Raising Expectations

Maggie is fifty-five. She was on Facebook when she had young kids, and the community felt nourishing. Now a counselor, she advises clients to be “sober-minded” about their relationship with social media. Absent of the internet, she thinks, we may well feel discontent about what we accomplish in a given day. But after absorbing the lives and photos and vids and feeds of more neighbors than we can attempt to number, the feeling is intensified. “Now it’s like, I woke up a failure and I’m going to bed a failure,” she explained.

Some of that social media content is from moms who are also professional product-placers. They make a living from providing information on what products or experiences you might be missing out on. Interestingly, many of the most-followed “momfluencers,” as they’re called, are Mormon. Displaying their beautiful, color-coordinated passel of kids—and believe me, these kids are so sweet—is both lucrative and evangelistic. Their lovely accounts are meant to make one feel a lack, even an explicitly spiritual lack.

But even nonprofessional accounts do a great job of showing us how much we fall short. Some Insta standards are stereotypical: fitness, food, apparel, beauty, home design, travel, safety, diligent spouses, children mid-giggle. *Keep working, and you too can achieve this*, the captions often imply. Other standards hit closer to home: Bible memorization, Bible study, Christian books, Christian podcasts, hospitality, raising kids, outreach and evangelism. *Keep working, and you too can be more holy*, the well-meaning captions from parachurch organizations and friends seem to echo.

Our minds have been hijacked by these disembodied ideals, Maggie ar-

gues. Even while outwardly engaged in the mundane of mothering, inwardly we may be obeying impulses we don’t examine or understand in an attempt to live up to these ideals.

“I’m standing doing dishes, and my mind is on so-and-so’s gofundme, and how someone else manages to make their home lovely and beautiful and orderly. [I’m thinking] *How are her kids so well-dressed all the time? And how is she producing meals like that? How does she manage self-care—my goodness, she runs six miles four times a week! Oh, and she also listens to all these enriching podcasts . . .*”

Ironically, the more we scroll, the more we’re “increasing the strength of that sense of ideals, but decreasing the amount of time to really do the stuff,” Maggie said.

Transcendence Through Work?

The impulses that control us could be articulated as a sort of guilt—a relentless, internalized voice, which loves the phrase, “I just need to . . .” *I just need to donate to that gofundme. I just need to wash my vegetables and fruits the same day I shop. I just need to listen to sermons while I make supper. I just need to organize more crafts to keep my kids busy.*

My conversation with Maggie Harr was in early spring. I asked her about a particular impulse of mine: I feel bad about this one flower bed. It’s weedy, bedraggled, and contains toy cars crusted in dirt. The only sin on my radar is laziness: *I just need to Proverbs up and pull those weeds*, I think. I put it on a to-do list. And the next day, another one. But somehow there is never enough time. The pressure builds. Other people’s flowerbeds look like Eden. I avoid eye contact with the dandelions. I am obeying an impulse I haven’t examined.

Exactly, Maggie replied: “What does it mean to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness? Does it look like having a nicely made flower bed? Or does it look like a surrendered flower bed?”

The internet-enhanced ideals for flower beds and everything else seem

morally good: the guilt from falling short is so real. Our age heaps it on mothers left and right—“She Believed She Could So She Did,” and if you don’t, you’ve failed. Thanks to our phones, these laws are written on our eyeballs. So we obey the impulses. We keep trying.

This, Maggie believes, can be “thinking of ourselves more highly than we ought” (Rom. 12:3). She explained, “We think [that verse] means, don’t be grandiose, don’t be conceited. [But] the way I apply that now is, don’t spend your time in some idealized . . . reality, because it’s not in fact who you are. You are an embodied human with limited resources. And that’s OK.”

Our limitations aren’t necessarily the problem. Our desire to exceed them, can be.

Our Rest, Our Refuge, Our Fortress

Annie Nelson agrees. “Every day, you wake up, and you want to put on works righteousness,” she reflected. “So you say, no. No. Today, I am going to walk in the gospel.”

Mother of ten and grandmother of nine, Annie is a member of Bethel Presbyterian in Broomfield, Colorado, where her husband serves as an elder. When she was pregnant with her first, her sister gave her some advice. “She told me that being a mom is the most guilt-inducing profession you will ever know,” Annie remembered. “After I had a few of my own, I thought, *oh, I get it.*”

In a difficult season of her own parenting, Annie almost wore out the fabric on her favorite grey chair, so many times a day did she bury her head into it to pray for help. She had recently lost an infant to SIDS, she was a stay-at-home mom, and she was beginning to homeschool her oldest, an opinionated four-year-old.

“My own sin was always the hardest part of mothering . . . I would cry out to the Lord, ‘Here I am again! Teach me how to learn the fruit of the Spirit. Teach me how! I don’t know how to do this, and all I’m doing is failing,’” she

told me. “I was pushed to come to learn to depend on the Lord, to make *him* my rest, my refuge, my fortress.”

Now, Annie is not in the business of measuring up. I first met her at a presbytery meeting in North Dakota. She warmly held my four-month-old with capable hands so that I could eat lunch, but she never once congratulated me on his cuteness. She didn’t tell me about any products to make my life with him easier; she didn’t reassure me that, although I wasn’t doing xyz, I was still a good mom. She didn’t signal whether I, or my baby, was up to snuff. Instead, she was joyful and at rest.

“Where Are My Pumpkins?”

Many of us may want to hurry up and find such rest. But being pushed to depend on the Lord, as Annie experienced, often means submitting to an unhurried rhythm of growth.

A few years ago, Elizabeth Downs was at a retreat listening to OP missionary Heather Hopp “just bubbling” because she was about to be reunited in the United States with two of her older children. Elizabeth listened, happy for Heather, but also not. She felt like she spent her whole day just taking care of basic bodily needs for her baby and three-year-old. “I wanted to be a mother like Heather, and just like, make popcorn and do play dough and pour blessing on my children in that lavish way,” Elizabeth remembered.

So she said as much to Heather. In response, Heather chuckled and replied gently.

“She said, ‘I feel like you are a farmer, who has just sowed a field, and you are standing at the edge of the field crying, *Where are my pumpkins!?*’”

“You’ll have years of picking up rocks and pulling weeds and watering and pouring the Word, and then picking out more rocks and more weeds,” Heather continued. “You pray that the Lord would bless your work.” Then Heather looked at Elizabeth and finished: “But it’s not your season, sister.”

“That was one of the most important conversations that I’ve ever had



Everyday life on a momfluencer’s feed (@senaenelson)

around parenting,” Elizabeth said. “It has lightened my burden repeatedly.”

As nurturers of small life, who do we hurt with our hurrying? Are we going to hold our children to same kind of idealized standards that have so wrecked our own peace of mind? Of course there’s another meltdown. Of course there’s another sibling dispute. That’s just our season.

Working and Resting with Joy

“God doesn’t do quick fixes. That’s not his style. Us wanting them, us selling our soul to them, that needs to be addressed,” Annie reflected. Mothering is not about the hack, the to-do, the schedule, the exciting new product. It’s also not about “giving yourself grace” and letting the house run wild, Elizabeth pointed out. We tend to “zigzag between [the two]”—but if we feel such a need to give ourselves grace and top off, as it were, the Lord’s grace, could it be because we are trying to keep a law that is extraneous to the Lord’s?”

As Elizabeth gardens in her front yard—literally, not metaphorically—the rhythm of preparing the ground, pulling weeds, and watering faithfully has rewritten her framework for productivity. These days, she puts her to-do list on sticky notes in her planner, “to remind myself that everything is move-

able,” she said. “It’s true, less is getting done. But also more. More washing with the Word, more discipleship, more heart talks.” All of it, she said, is part of the Lord’s ordinary means of building his church through families.

“Motherhood *is* so much work, but if we could just work on the right footing,” Annie said. It is all for the Lord; in his provision we rest—and resting, for Annie, is inseparable from joy. “There isn’t really heart rest if you can’t bubble over inside with the joy of the Lord,” she insisted.

Christ lived for us the perfect life, Maggie Harr explained. Maggie doesn’t write lengthy to-do lists anymore, “and it’s not because I got great at all the things.” What has changed is a more self-examined, lived-out recognition of what it means to be *in Christ*: “Your hope and safety are not found in your own perfection but in the perfection of Christ. Ultimately, that end-of-day checklist of accomplishments can only be burned away in the light of his glorious grace.”

When Christ was on the cross, he cried out that it was finished; the real work is done. “We live out of that,” Elizabeth concluded. □

The author is managing editor of New Horizons.

THE CHRISTIAN AND LEISURE



RONALD E. PEARCE // Leland Ryken has aptly observed that “we feel guilty about our work, and we feel guilty about our leisure. We do not understand either of them very well” (*Work and Leisure in Christian Perspective*, 11). Christians need to have a biblical understanding of leisure and work so that we do not feel guilty about

either. We need to consider the rightful place of leisure in the Christian life.

Certainly, leisure can be pursued as an idol: we can idolize entertainment, desire to be lazy, or even just use our leisure time for selfish purposes. Many in our day violate the Lord’s Day by putting recreation before the duty of public worship of God. Sports or hobbies ought not to keep someone from Sabbath worship with the gathered people of God. But the excesses of sinful indulgence of leisure do not cancel leisure as legitimate for the Christian.

What is leisure? A definition of leisure is usually negative: it is “time off” or “free time,” “spare time,” or “vacation.” We should have a more positive concept. Such definitions leave open the important question: leisure is freedom *for what?*

Biblical Rest

The Bible does not speak of “leisure” per se but it does speak of rest. God intends us to rest. It was built into creation, before sin, in the institution

of the Sabbath Day: “By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day *he rested from all his work*” (Gen. 2:2 NIV, emphasis added). As God rested from his labor, so he calls us to a weekly rest from all labor and regular routine. The weekly Sabbath is to be a day for all to rest, the believer and the unbeliever (Exod. 20:8–11; Deut. 5:15). “In six days the Lord made heaven and the earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed” (Exod. 31:17). Rest must have its place in our lives as we model the Creator in whose image we are made.

And rest must be in other times than the weekly Sabbath rest. One biblical example is more than sufficient: the Sabbath year.

For six years you are to sow your fields and harvest the crops, but during the seventh year let the land lie unplowed and unused. Then the poor among your people may get food from it, and the wild animals may eat what is

left. Do the same with your vineyard and your olive grove. (Exod. 23:10–11 NIV)

As land lies dormant, minerals are replaced; compost is added. The soil becomes richer for resting. Israel was to take every seventh year as a complete rest from all work. Fields were to lay fallow so that the land and all society would be renewed. The year of Jubilee, every fiftieth year, was to be a double Sabbath year—two years of back-to-back *rest*. Sadly, we have no records that Israel ever kept the Year of Jubilee. They did not take the gift of God’s rest and renewal. How foolish we sinners are!

In his earthly ministry, Christ rested as well. In Mark 6:30–31, we read that Christ had returned from extensive preaching. The crowds were pressing him so that he did not have time to care for his body, not even to eat. So the God-Man retreats for *rest*—not for his safety, not to make strategies for more campaigning, but for physical rest. He did so even though there was much

work yet to be done. Christ clearly teaches that our bodies must be cared for in rest and renewal.

To rest in Scripture was more than time away *from work*; it was *for* celebration and festivals, feasts of the Sabbaths. A biblical concept of rest is for re-creation, for renewal. We should view leisure times not just as “time off” from work without any other guidelines. Rather we should evaluate how we spend our “leisure time” as how to best be re-created and rejuvenated. “Six days do your work, but on the seventh day do not work, so that your ox and your donkey may rest, and so that the slave born in your household and the foreigner living among you *may be refreshed*” (Exod. 23:12, emphasis added).

God is pleased when we take time to be renewed and refreshed in body and soul. As one quotation from 1880 sums it up: “We never knew a man to work seven days a week who did not kill himself or his mind” (A. E. Kittredge, *The Christian Sabbath*).

Insights from the Past

The Puritans understood the biblical place for leisure and renewal. A Parliamentary Act of 1647, when the Puritans governed England, decreed that “every second Tuesday of the month was to be a holiday when all shops, warehouses, and so forth were to be closed from 8:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m. for the recreation of workers” (Ryken, *Worldly Saints*, 189). Seeing the legitimate place for rest, renewal, and leisure, is to be faithful to our Lord.

The Puritan minister Richard Baxter reflected at length on a body’s need for rest in his *A Christian Directory*.

The body must be kept in that condition that is fittest for the service of the soul . . . The health and the cheerfulness of the body makes it fit for duty . . . A heavy body is but a dull and heavy servant to the mind; yes a great impediment to the soul in duty and a great temptation to many sins; as melancholy people know by sad experience. A mower that has a sharp blade will do more in a day, than an-



“Noon: Rest from Work,” Vincent van Gogh, public domain

other with a dull one can do in two. Every workman knows the benefit of having his tools in order; and every traveler knows the difference between a cheerful and a tired horse. They that have tried health and sickness know what a help it is in every work of God, to have a healthful body, and cheerful spirits. (225)

Baxter even suggests that rest outdoors may be a duty, in preparation for future tasks:

When the sights of (beauty) or the use of walks, or gardens tend to raise the soul to holy contemplation to admire the Creator . . . this delight is lawful if not a *duty*. Our bodies must be kept in that state of health and readiness. In eating and drinking and recreation it is not only the next or present day, which we prepare for, but the duty which may be very distant. (225)

So too, the American Puritans: Thomas Shepard advised his son at college, “Weary not your body, mind, or eyes with long pouring on your book . . . recreate yourself a little, and so to your work afresh.”

“It is possible to throw our lives away foolishly by burning the candle at both ends,” writes J. Oswald Sanders.

He then gives this story:

When Robert Murray M’Cheyne, only thirty years old, lay dying, he said to a friend, at his bedside, “God gave me a message to deliver and a horse to ride. Alas, I killed the horse, and now I cannot deliver the message.” The horse was, of course, his body. Christian workers should accept it that their service will be costly if it is to be effective, but they should be careful not to kill the horse. (*Leadership*, vol. 7, no. 3)

It is not a biblical concept to drive the body and soul in work, avoiding necessary rest and renewal. Being lazy and being a workaholic are equally sinful. To “burn out for God” may be a stirring phrase, but it is more gnostic than biblical, as M’Cheyne realized too late.

Biblical leisure is a gift from God. Are you one of those whom Ryken described as feeling “guilty about our work, and . . . guilty about our leisure”? Or have you a balanced and biblical understanding of leisure, God’s gift of rest and renewal? □

The author, an OP minister, recently retired after forty-one years of ministry.

RESTING OUTDOORS



MARY YORK // Morning comes early in the mountains. Breezeless trees guard slumbering peaks, glassy lakes reflect the world without a single ripple, and silence fills the spaces between the wildflowers and the granite rocks that have held their posts for a thousand mornings just like this. It's a morning view far removed

from rushed school days and tech-filled vacations.

OP elder David Winslow has brought generations of OP young adults to the Sierra Mountains in California for just such a view. He explained, "The motivating idea was to get young people out of their normal urban, entertainment-culture comfort zone into an environment where God's two 'books' could speak without so much distraction: the special revelation of God's word in morning and evening devotions and the general revelation of God's creation all day and night."

Fellowship on Foot

David and Susan Winslow started leading backpacking trips in 1980. The trips still continue, each made up of roughly fifteen young people from across the OPC, with the Winslows now acting as base camp from their home in Fountain Valley, California, while backpacking alumni Thomas Jennings and Eli Hirtzel lead the teams through the Sierras.

"Sometimes I do feel a connection to the Israelites when I'm in the wilder-

ness," said Jennings, who has been helping to lead the backpacking trips since 2015. "You pack everything up, the whole community. You're a team, you're really dependent on each other to play different roles." Carrying one another's burdens becomes literal: stronger team members help carry packs for weary hikers, food preparation and water collection often require multiple sets of hands, and it takes all eyes for the team to stay safe on the trail.

Cut off from cell service and social media, fellowship blossoms in these remote places. Jennings said that the feeling of kicking shoes off after a long hike and crawling into the shade of the campsite to chat with fellow hikers "goes back to the human element of getting to refresh together in the wilderness."

Dana Schnitzel, a middle school teacher and softball coach, echoed these sentiments in context of a long-running outdoor tradition on the other side of the country. Schnitzel, who attends Calvary OPC in Glenside, Pennsylvania, spends her summers at the French Creek Bible Conference for the

duration of the kid's camp each year. A favorite feature of the camp for her is how much walking to and from activities is involved, she said.

"When you walk, you're with people, and you have to be talking," said Schnitzel. "So you're forced to spend time and talk to people, and I think that's why their friendships end up being so strong and frequently lifelong. You're just doing nothing together."

According to Winslow, being away from the world we are used to facilitates a sweet fellowship: the joy of company on a trail, in joint challenges or sufferings endured together, in shared stillness and quiet moments. Here we see "the power and majesty of God displayed in all that he has made, including his people, the crown of his creation."

Jennings reflected on a question Winslow asked in one of the devotions during the 2014 hike: "We were talking about how beautiful it is out here and he said, 'What is the most beautiful thing we'll see out here?' and someone gave the correct answer, which is 'Us.' *We* are created in the image of God."

Grounded in the “Real”

It’s not, however, just the human connection that flourishes. Schnitzel said time outside also helps ground young adults in reality in an age where the cyberworld has a strong pull.

“Especially with kids getting into social media earlier and earlier, I think it’s important that kids have things that tether them to this world,” she said. “[Being outside] grounds us in this world that God created instead of the almost ethereal realities that we’ve created ourselves.”

Surveys from 2018 indicate that 90 percent of children use some form of social media (“Social Media and Teens,” The American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, March 2018) and that children ages ten to sixteen spend less than thirteen minutes a day in a rigorous outdoor activity (Child in the City website, January 2018).

Not everyone can go on a ten-day backpacking trip, or even a weeklong summer camp. Time constraints, family or work responsibilities, and physical limitations can prevent those seeking time outside from fully immersing in nature. But Schnitzel suggests that time outside can be customized to the season of life you are in—if a run is too aggressive, maybe take a walk. Those who are uncomfortable water rafting can canoe or fish. If you can’t hike through the forest, you can pull some weeds in the sunshine.

“A lot of times, the things that we do outside require energy output, but there’s something so refreshing about a good night’s sleep after a day outside, or a day of manual work that is so good for us,” said Schnitzel. “I think physical exertion is often a rest for our minds. There’s a certain soul-rest that you get from being outside and doing something.”

Working at an alternative school with trauma-informed practices, Schnitzel has seen firsthand how the outdoors and active play affect brain development and mental health.

“I take my kids out there every day for about five minutes during my so-

cial studies class because we will get more done in the remaining forty minutes of instructional time if we spend the first few minutes outside,” she said. “Active play is just so good for you—it’s how kids learn but it’s also intentionally restful for adults.

A lot of times the things that are good for kids are good for adults, but we’ve just stopped doing them, like playing a game or running around.”

Schnitzel has a curated list of things found outdoors that are scientifically proven to improve mental health, like natural light, natural colors, and touching the ground with bare feet, but she also said sounds and smells can nurture peace in our agitated lives.

“I do think that spending time outside in those things that God created is rejuvenating for our souls in ways that other things just don’t hit. It’s almost like, when God created this world, it was very good,” she quipped.

What the Heavens Declare

Of course, after God declared his world “very good,” he rested. The Christian shouldn’t forego sabbath rest, even and perhaps especially in nature, Winslow said.

“A better word than ‘nature’ might be ‘creation’ because it always reminds us of the source of the creation we see around us,” said Winslow. “The creation we see around us is full of death and decay, the imprint of God’s curse after the fall. What we see and experience today in creation could be a foretaste of the new heavens and the new earth, but we need to be careful not to assume too much—or too little—continuity.” And someone is missing, Winslow continued: “the Lord of creation who came to earth in the incarnation, who died for us, who rose and ascended to heaven is



Outdoors, one can learn from God’s “two books” without as much distraction, Winslow (in red) explained.

not physically with us. But he will return. And he will gather his people to himself to be with them forever.”

With this great hope, refreshed with weekly Sabbath reminders of the coming King, Christians can take to the outdoors to drink in rest. In 1934, in a piece for *Christianity Today*, J. Gresham Machen wrote that his trophies from hiking the Alps were the memories of God’s power and beauty on grandiose display—memories which returned to him in moments of sorrow or despair.

What have I from my visits to the mountains, not only from those in the Alps, but also, for example, from that delightful twenty-four-mile walk which I took one day last summer in the White Mountains over the whole Twin Mountain range? The answer is that I have memories . . . in hours of darkness and discouragement I love to think of that sharp summit ridge of the Matterhorn piercing the blue or the majesty and the beauty of that world spread out at my feet when I stood on the summit of the Dent Blanche.

What a testament to the abounding grace of God that, while we await his coming, he sustains us in a world brimming with reminders of his power and goodness—with skies that pour forth speech and heavens that declare his glory. What a place to rest. □

The author is a member of Bonita Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Bonita, California.

REPORT FROM EASTERN EUROPE



DAVID P. NAKHLA // *[Editor's note: On May 10–18, David Nakhla, OPC Disaster Response Coordinator, and Rich Bout, URCNA Missions Coordinator, traveled to Eastern Europe to gain firsthand knowledge on how to help Reformed churches in Ukraine and refugees from Ukraine. This is Mr. Nakhla's report for New Horizons.]*

Five countries (Hungary, Poland, Lithuania, Italy, and Slovakia) visited in nine days working with ten organizations—Rich Bout and I certainly had a whirlwind trip to Eastern Europe seeking to minister to those suffering during this time of war in Ukraine. Our purpose for the trip was to identify and join with ongoing relief ministries of like-minded Christians in order to consider—both prayerfully and knowledgeably—how to utilize the Ukraine Crisis Fund. But what a blessing the trip was also as we were continually made aware of the people of Ukraine's thankfulness for the love, prayers, and support of Christians from afar.

Stories of Survival

In Krakow, Poland, we met with several members of the Mission to the World team sent out by the Presbyterian Church in America. These team members had been displaced by the war, having served in church-planting in Lviv, Ukraine, alongside OPC missionaries Heero and Anya Hacquebord. At the outset of the war, many of the missionary families left their homes in

Lviv and were now living two hundred miles west, in Krakow.

In Lithuania, we met two sisters who, with their children, escaped Ukraine and now live under the roof of saints in the Lithuanian Reformed Church in Kaunas, Lithuania. The older of the sisters escaped from Mariupol. She and her two boys had remained in their besieged city until late March when supplies were running low and the dangers of the encroaching Russian army were increasing. Having run out of water to drink, they resorted to boiling dirty snow over an open fire

on the sidewalk, risking injury or even death from incoming missiles made all the more dangerous by the absence of warning sirens. To leave Mariupol, they spent days patching up their ruined car. They were forced to make the difficult and potentially life-and-death decision to drive east toward the Russian front with the hopes that they might be granted passage into Russia. At the border, Russian soldiers permitted them to pass only after removing their clothing to inspect for any sign of being part of the Ukrainian resistance. Once in Russia, they were able to drive south to neighboring Georgia and board a flight to the Baltics, where they now reside under the loving care of the church. They are thankful for God's sovereign care of them, but they will carry the scars of the traumatic experience for a lifetime.

In Hungary, we visited a hotel building designated to house Ukrainian refugees. We witnessed young Ukrainian mothers huddled with their young children. Their husbands and fathers have been forced to remain in Ukraine to fight for their country. The women



A Ukrainian refugee sheltering with saints in the RPCCEE

and children are left vulnerable to exploitation.

Some have opted to venture further into Europe and beyond in search of a permanent settlement outside of Ukraine. In Rome, we met with two URCNA missionaries, Mike Brown and Andrea Ferrari, church-planters in Milan and Perugia respectively. Mike shared the story of the refugee family his church in Milan received from Kharkiv, members of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ukraine (EPCU). This family drove more than 1,600 miles, with all that they could bring packed into the car, kids sitting on laps and suffering carsickness. They didn't purchase any food along the way for fear that they might not have enough money for fuel.

The Response of the Church

The indigenous church in each of these countries has organized various efforts to carry out an effective ministry of mercy to those suffering—even when they don't share the same language, culture, or history. They are the body of Christ serving as Christ's hands and feet to demonstrate compassion toward the stranger and the oppressed. The Reformed Presbyterian Church of Central and Eastern Europe (RPCCEE), a small denomination of sixteen or so churches in the Great Hungarian Basin (Hungary, northern Romania, and a small section of western Ukraine) raised tens of thousands of dollars "out of their poverty" (2 Cor. 8:2). They opened wide their church doors to welcome in refugees, housing as many as twenty-five at one time. (The flow of refugees in that

region has now subsided, but the care of refugees there continues.) The Lithuanian Reformed Church generously made room in their building for housing and feeding refugees. The Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Krakow, Poland, has been nearly displaced by the influx of the MTW team members and the hordes of refugees flowing into Krakow, yet it has embraced this as its privilege to suffer for the sake of Christ. This congregation ambitiously desires to host an all-summer VBS for Ukrainian children to alleviate boredom when online school studies come to an end. These are faithful, willing sacrifices for small, young churches to undertake.

What became clear to us is that the volume of funds collected by various organizations has far exceeded the current ability of most organizations to use the funds. Giving toward the refugee crisis in Ukraine has been tremendous, to say the least; and the OPC Ukraine Crisis Fund is no exception. Never in its history has OPC Disaster Response had such an amazingly generous answer to a call, with more than \$600,000 received in under three months. The work on the ground in this region, while fast, furious, and diligent, has not been able to keep up. This requires patience in the use of funds given. Not all the funds are required today. The needs are great and will be responded to over time. All look forward to the day when the death and destruction abates and lives and homes can be rebuilt, which will require substantial energy and resources.

Tremendous concern continues to exist for those remaining in Ukraine, particularly Eastern Ukraine. The dangers and risks to those left behind, many of them elderly and infirm, are immense—energy shortages, a lack of food, water, and medicine. In addition,



Nakhla and Bout (third from left) with RPCCEE pastor Imre Szöke and his family in Miskolc, Hungary

churches and pastors in Ukraine are facing the challenges involved in ministering to a flock that has vanished. The RPCCEE had three congregations in western Ukraine. Most of the congregants have fled over the border into Hungary. Should the churches consolidate, what would that look like, and when should a decision be made? These are heavy questions and great opportunities for prayer.

We are thankful to report a few developing short-term missions opportunities: the MTW team welcomes drivers (who can drive a stick-shift) to come for a week or more to drive vans of supplies from Krakow to Lviv, and the EPCP pastor in Krakow has invited groups of five to six people to come this summer to assist in running a series of weeklong VBS programs for Ukrainian youth there.

There is also a developing MTW initiative, "Crates for Ukraine," which is an opportunity for churches in North America to gather specific, needed medical and health supplies into crates to be flown to Krakow, and from there to be transported deep into Ukraine.

Please know that those on the ground in and near Ukraine rely on the prayers lifted daily on their behalf. Please don't stop praying, and don't forget Ukraine. □

The author is disaster response coordinator for the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Visit OPCDisasterResponse.org for more information.



Bout and Nakhla with pastor Péter Szabó (center) and son in Budapest

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

REDESIGNED WEBSITE FOR THE TRINITY PSALTER HYMNAL

// JOEL PEARCE

The official website for the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal*, www.trinitypsalterhymnal.org, has recently undergone a complete redesign and overhaul, with updates to the design, navigation, and the ability to search the hymnal. The site includes resources about the psalter hymnal, helpful information about copyright permissions, links to purchase different editions, and a robust song database.

The site redesign was developed from the ground up, with the focus of the development being a searchable song database of all the songs in the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal*. This song collection, accessible via a link in the upper right corner of the home page, can be browsed by psalm or hymn title; by tune; by composer; or by author. The hymnal can also be searched utilizing a single search box; searching encompasses titles, authors, composers, tunes, Scripture references, and the full text of each tune.

Individual song pages include the full text of the psalm or hymn when copyright law allows, and song metadata including tune name and meter, composer, author, dates, Scripture references, and copyright information. Professional piano recordings of song tunes, when copyright permissions allow, can be streamed from individual song pages.

The publishers of the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal*, a joint venture between the OPC and United Reformed Churches in North America (URCNA), contracted with the web design firm FatRabbit Creative of Chester, New Jersey, which served as the lead designer and developer for the project. Kevin Laubach, an OP deacon, served as art director for the project at FatRabbit.

“We had multiple team members work on the design and development throughout the project,” said Laubach. “Our priority was to create a website that is both functional and aesthetically pleasing, with the ability to easily navigate among the different features of the site. We hope visitors to



the site find it useful and enjoyable.”

Pastors and elders especially should find the new website helpful for worship planning and preparation. The site complements the paid digital editions of the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal* available via Great Commission Publications (<https://www.gcp.org/trinitypsalter.aspx>) and the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal* mobile apps available on the Apple App Store and Google Play Store. The *Trinity Psalter Hymnal* has also been indexed at Hymnary.org, a comprehensive index of hymns and hymnals online.

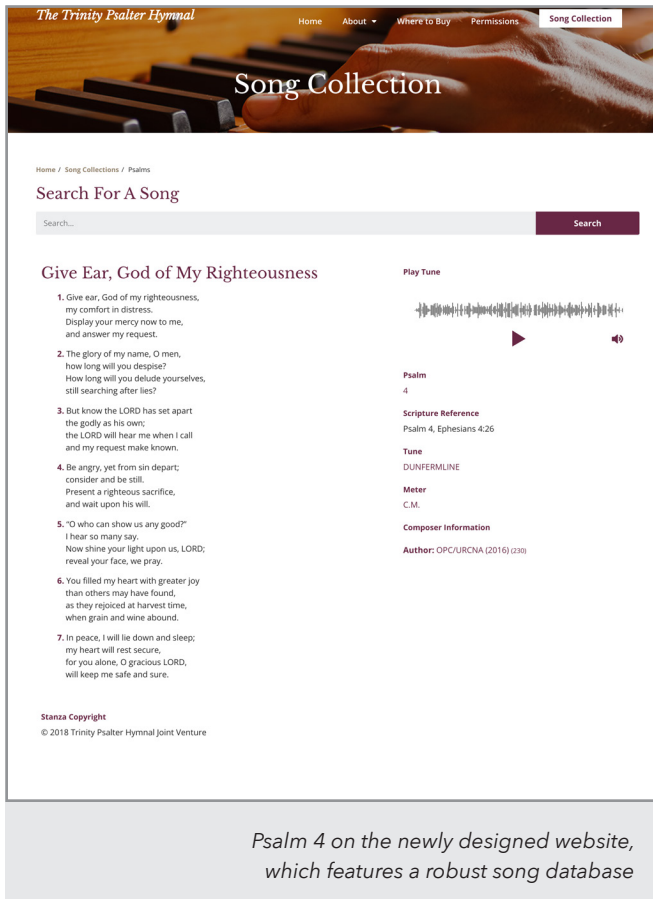
The sixth printing of the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal* is underway and has an estimated delivery date of mid September 2022, depending on supply chain availability. To date, more than 70,000 copies of the pew edition in five printings have been sold.

Future developments and updates to the *Trinity Psalter*

Hymnal suite of publications are also being investigated, including potential choral recordings; including the creeds, confessions, and catechisms in the mobile apps; and higher quality audio tunes in the Android app to match those in the Apple app.

For more information, visit www.trinitypsalterhymnal.org or email tph@opc.org.

The author is an OP elder and executive director for the digital Trinity Psalter Hymnal.



Psalm 4 on the newly designed website, which features a robust song database

● Out of the Mouth . . .

Years ago, I was gazing at a Sunday school craft on the wall made by my son, then four years old, based on the account of Joshua fighting the Amalekites in Exodus 17:12 when Aaron and Hur supported Moses. "Who held up Moses's hands when he was tired?" I quizzed. My son answered matter-of-factly, "Aaron and She!"

—Beth Hoppes
Roaring Branch, PA

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

Favorite Psalms and Hymns Trinity Psalter Hymnal no. 272 "I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say"

Stephen J. Tracey

I love the hymns of Horatius Bonar. Once a year, I choose all Bonar hymns for the morning and the evening services. The congregation calls it a *Bonar-fest*. One of my favorites is "I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say."

Bonar's poetry, like his preaching, "exhibited with faithful simplicity and decision the great things of the Gospel" (W. Robertson Nicoll). This beautiful hymn is poetic, powerful, and pure. Its rhyme and rhythm are pure gospel. Sinclair Ferguson comments that in it we feel "the tug of gospel truth."

For me, it is more than a tug. While I sing it, I feel the power of the free offer of the gospel; I hear Jesus Christ gently invite me to come to him. He offers me rest, living water, light. He offers me himself. Bonar brings me back to Jesus.

He also gives me words to respond. I heard the voice of Jesus, and I came to Jesus. I came as I was, I drank. I looked to Jesus, and I found in him, my Star, my Sun. The style of this hymn is subjective, a "hymn of inward experience" (Louis Benson).

Dykes's tune, VOX DILECTI (the beloved voice), is a beautiful match of gospel pleading, in F-minor, to gospel receiving, in F-major. Ralph Vaughan Williams's arrangement, KINGSFOLD, is just as beautiful.

When I sing this hymn, I rejoice afresh that he persuaded and enabled me to embrace him. I feel afresh the joy of that first love. He has made me glad. I have found a resting place. My soul is revived. I do live in him. One might call this typical "Victorian sensibility" (J. R. Watson), but I call it joyful saving faith:

I came to Jesus as I was,
weary and worn and sad;
I found in him a resting place,
and he has made me glad. (stanza 1)

☆ Congratulations

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

- Marguerite Korkie, Tyler Presbyterian, Tyler, TX
- Leon Korkie, Tyler Presbyterian, Tyler, TX

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

- Amelia Heaton, Tyler Presbyterian, Tyler, TX

SOWING AND REAPING AS SPIRITUAL FARMERS

// CHARLES R. BIGGS



Biggs Team RHM

As regional home missionary in the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic (PMA) I have been called to be a sower-farmer.

In 2 Timothy 2:1–7, the Apostle Paul captures our imaginations with three important images. The first is of the soldier who seeks to be faithful to his commanding officer. This image reminds us of Christ’s delightful obedience to his Father on our behalf and calls us to faithful obedience in reliance upon his Spirit. The second image is of an athlete who, with determination, effort, and self-control, runs the race, competing according to the rules. This reminds us of the Lord Jesus as the Author-Perfector of our faith who has completed his race to the end, going before us. As believers, we are called to run the race with perseverance, keeping our eyes on him.

The third and final image is of a hardworking farmer, who sows with faithfulness, diligence, and patience, awaiting the harvest. (James 5:7–9). Jesus is the hardworking farmer who not only sowed the seed but was the seed in himself, who died and was buried to bring about the great harvest that we are now a part of (John 4:35–38; 12:24). We, as his farmers, desire in Christ to be faithful to our kind king and heavenly Father



John Paul Holloway (center) at a church event; he is organizing pastor of Acacia Reformed, a new work in Manassas, VA.

and diligent in sowing the seed of His word (Mark 4:27–28), praying for God’s watering, and for His wondrous increase with humility, remembering: “Neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth” (1 Cor. 3:6–9). Amen, and amen.

Regional Home Missionary Vision

What a privilege it is to join in the last days of the harvest, to seek to be a faithful, diligent, and patient farmer in Christ, sowing and reaping in joy. I am grateful to have been asked last year to serve the PMA and the larger denomination in this way. After I prayerfully thought through this with family, friends, and mentors and accepted the call, I sought to think of a vision statement appropriate for my new calling that would guide my labors each day. I sought a vision that could catechistically answer the question: “Why do I exist as a regional home missionary in the PMA?” The answer: *Prayerfully and passionately joining the harvest through a Christ-saturated, Spirit-filled ministry of serving, declaring, orienting, and encouraging God’s people to do as well as to support home missions in the PMA of the OPC for the glory of God and the extension of Christ’s kingdom.* Please continue to pray for me as I seek to faithfully live this out as a spiritual farmer in Christ’s kingdom.

God’s Present and Powerful Work in PMA

I was installed as regional home missionary on January 15 after serving as pastor at Ketocin Covenant OPC (KCPC) in Purcellville, Virginia, for over eighteen years. I am grateful that the saints at KCPC are in very godly and wise hands with their new pastor and their faithful officers, although I miss seeing them as often as I would like, due to my travels. Since my installation, I have had the privilege of working with the home missions committee in the PMA, shepherding and developing four works in four distinct stages of spiritual growth and development:

- Acacia Reformed is a daughter church plant of Sterling

OPC, with a faithful church planter, Pastor John Paul Holloway.

- Word of Life is a mission work of the OPC that has a faithful stated supply in Dr. Peter Lee, professor of Old Testament at Reformed Theological Seminary in Washington, DC.
- Short Pump Bible Study (West Richmond) is a Reformed Bible study focusing on Ephesians, with hopes of eventually become a mission work. This work is a gospel partnership with the Presbytery of the Southeast.
- A group (approximately thirty or so people) are seeking guidance and counsel presently in becoming part of the OPC. (There are at least three other locations in our presbytery that we are exploring for church plants in the near future.)

Please pray for each of these congregations and groups; please pray that our God would continue to bless our labors together. Pray that God would open up new opportunities for the extension of his kingdom.

What I Am Learning as RHM

In my present labors, I am regularly visiting congregations in the PMA throughout this year and formally introducing myself as RHM, introducing my family, and reminding the church of the importance of prayer for God's blessing and for home missions members in our labors for the Lord. When I visit a congregation, I normally do a home missions presentation for Sunday school, preach the gospel, lead worship, and fellowship with the saints there. One of my goals as regional home missionary for 2022 has been to visit all the congregations in the PMA at least once.

I am learning that while God gifts and calls me to the work of RHM, there is still much to learn. Often, I have a sense of my own weakness and inadequacy that helps me to depend upon his great power and strength. So, while I am confident in our God to do the work, I am humbled and dependent before him as he uses me and our committee. I am learning experientially that ministry in union with Christ is a joyful and tremendous blessing, but it often comes in the midst of suffering. As our Lord Jesus says, "In this world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the



Dr. Peter Lee, stated supply at mission work Word of Life

world" and he has given us the promise, "I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail" (John 16:33; Matt. 16:18).

Gratitude and Prayers

As regional home missionary, I am grateful for the fine examples of faithful ministers and evangelists in the OPC. I am grateful for the specific mentoring, fellowship, and partnership with Lacy Andrews (regional home missionary of the Presbytery of the Southeast), Andrew Miller (chairman of the presbytery home missions committee), Steve Doe (our presbytery's former and very faithful RHM), and the other faithful brothers on our Home Missions Committee. I am grateful our family can travel together, most of the time, to visit congregations. We are affectionately called "Biggs Team RHM." We seek to minister together to God's people as a family. I think this can remind us that although I am formally called, gifted, and ordained to be the regional home missionary, all of us—starting with my family—are called to do the work of home missions. In this sense, we are all regional home missionaries wherever God has placed us. We are those who have been created in Christ Jesus to do good works that he prepared beforehand for us to walk in, and to witness to his power and grace (Eph. 2:10; Acts 2:8, 9:31). Therefore, in my vision statement, I say: "To encourage God's people *to do as well as to support home missions.*" This work is not just for the "ordained professionals;" it is a labor of love for all of us who are followers of Jesus. We are privileged to be his disciples—to witness, to welcome, to invite, to serve, to encourage, to call, to bless. May we pray to be more compassionately sensitive to those who live and work around us.

Let us remember that God is for us, that Christ loved us and gave himself for us, and that in gratitude and the power of his Spirit we respond with grateful obedience to him in service to his church (Gal. 2:20; Rom. 8:32). Please pray that, in Christ, we would all be faithful soldiers, relying upon Jesus for grateful obedience to the Father. Pray that, in Christ, we would be self-controlled athletes determined to run the race with perseverance in reliance upon Christ's Spirit. Pray that, in Christ, we would all be faithful farmers—praying, sowing, giving, planting, cultivating, and then waiting patiently upon the LORD for his blessing. Join me in being a grateful regional home missionary by testifying to the grace of God in Christ

wherever he has placed you! Let us sow and reap as spiritual farmers with joy in the Holy Spirit, and may our God establish us in every good work and word (2 Thess. 2:16–17).

The author is regional home missionary for the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic.

Home Missions Today

For up-to-date news and prayer requests, receive our newsletter by subscribing at CHMCE.org or scanning this QR code.



NEWS, VIEWS & REVIEWS

IMMANUEL PARTICULARIZED IN ANOKA, MINNESOTA

Sarah Wieberdink

There are many special moments in the life of a new church. One is when a congregation transitions from being a church plant to being its own separate church with its own leadership, a step known in the OPC as particularization. On May 13, Immanuel Church in Anoka, Minnesota, took this step, amid much thanks and praise to our Lord and together with many dear friends and neighboring pastors.

Rev. Jim Hoekstra, who planted Immanuel and has faithfully pastored the congregation since its beginning, was installed as the pastor of Immanuel. Three ruling elders and three deacons were also ordained and installed. Rev. Brian De Jong led the service, and Rev. Nathan Strom, former ruling elder of Immanuel and now pastor of Bethel OPC in Oostburg, Wisconsin, delivered the sermon. Immanuel was so glad to welcome back Rev. Strom, who was very involved in the development of the church in its early years. Rev. Kim Kuhfuss led us in prayer and the laying on of hands for the ordination of officers. Rev. Bruce Hollister delivered the charge to the new officers, and Rev. Shane Lems delivered the charge to the congregation. Finally, Rev. Jim Hoekstra dismissed the congregation with God's blessing and then presented gifts to various people whose work has been especially important at Immanuel. After the service, we fellowshiped.

As a congregation, we have felt God's care through many different people and churches over the years; this milestone could not have been reached without the efforts of so many of God's servants near and far. And we are ultimately thankful to our great Lord, whose plan is perfect and in whose care we rest. We are incredibly excited to see his plan for us unfold, and we are eager to serve him in our community and to be a light that directs many to our Lord and Savior.



At the May 13 particularization of Immanuel OPC in Anoka, MN: (top) officers of Immanuel and of the presbytery; (bottom) the officers being charged by Bruce Hollister

UPDATE

CHURCHES

- On May 13, **Immanuel OPC** in Anoka, MN, became a particular congregation of the OPC.
- On May 20, **Heritage Presbyterian** in New Braunfels, TX, became a particular congregation of the OPC.

MINISTERS

- On January 21, the Presbytery of Michigan and Ontario dissolved the pastoral relationship between **Bruce G. Buchanan** and Chain-O-Lakes Church in Central Lake, MI.
- On April 17, **Ronald E. Pearce** retired as pastor of Church of the Covenant in Hackettstown, NJ.
- On April 22, the Presbytery of the Midwest dissolved the pastoral relationship between **Andrew W. Fortenberry** and

Grace OPC in Hanover Park, IL, at his request and with the concurrence of the congregation.

- On April 30, the Presbytery of Michigan and Ontario dissolved the relationship between evangelist **Shane M. Bennett** and Reformation mission work in Grand Rapids, MI.
- On May 13, **James T. Hoekstra**, previously the organizing pastor, was installed as pastor of Immanuel OPC in Anoka, MN.
- On May 13, **Isaac C. M. Baugh** was ordained and installed as the associate pastor of Reformation Presbyterian in Olympia, WA.
- On May 20, **Brian H. Nicholson** retired as pastor of Trinity Presbyterian in Medford, OR.
- On May 20, **Dustin R. Thompson** was ordained and installed as pastor of Trinity

[Continued on page 19]

JULY



The Jacksons (day 10)



The Diercks (day 4)

1 Home Missions associate general secretary **AL TRICARICO**. / Summer interns **FILIFE (MARIANNA) SCHULZ DOS SANTOS** at Trinity OPC in Hatboro, PA, and **CALEB MALTBY** at Covenant Presbyterian in Abilene, TX.

2 **MARK & CELESTE JENKINS**, Anaheim Hills, CA. Pray for God's blessing on Resurrection, previously Anaheim Hills Presbyterian, as it resumes denominational support. / Loan Fund manager **MARK STUMPF**.

3 Pray for **STEPHEN & CATALINA PAYSON**, Montevideo, Uruguay, as they prepare to serve with the Richlines in Uruguay. / Summer intern **ALEX (JENNIFER) SUTHERLAND** at Emmanuel OPC in Wilmington, DE.

4 Pray for **MIKE (ELIZABETH) DIERCKS**, area home missions coordinator for the Presbytery of Ohio. / **MARK & JENI RICHLINE**, Montevideo, Uruguay. Pray for their youngest son, Isaiah, as he begins college in the US.

5 Affiliated missionaries **DR. MARK & LAURA AMBROSE**, Cambodia. Pray for local pastors and officers for the church. / Stated clerk **HANK BELFIELD** as he works on the minutes and yearbook of the 88th (2022) GA.

6 Affiliated missionaries **JERRY AND MARILYN FARNIK**, Czech Republic, and their July evangelistic English camp. / **A. J. (CHELSEA) MILLSAPS**, Maryville, TN, evangelist. Pray for existing OP congregations to be strengthened and new ones planted.

7 **MR. AND MRS. M.**, Asia. Pray that the translation and publication of Reformed works will be disseminated and bear fruit. / **JAY & ANDREA BENNETT**, Neon, KY. Pray for the assimilation of prospective members and for continued growth.

8 **BILL & MARGARET SHISHKO**, Deer Park, NY. Pray the Lord would send four new families to worship with The Haven, OPC. / Pray for **DANNY OLINGER**, general secretary of Christian Education and editor of *New Horizons*.

9 **MR. AND MRS. F.**, Asia. Pray that the Lord would open doors for a return to the field, and for the practical needs of those they are currently serving. / **DAVID STEWART** (PCA), president of the board of trustees of Great Commission Publications.

10 **DAN & STACY HALLEY**, Tampa, FL. Praise God for Bay Haven Presbyterian, which started denominational support in June. / **CHARLES & CONNIE JACKSON**, Mbale, Uganda. Pray for more missionary evangelists for Mbale and Karamoja. / Summer interns **DAVID (HOPE) GARRETT** at Calvary OPC in Glenside, PA, and **ANDREW (NOEL) DAVIS** at Trinity in Newberg, OR.

11 Pray for **DAVE (ELIZABETH) HOLM-LUND**, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of Philadelphia. / **ETHAN & CATHERINE BOLDYARD**, Wilmington, NC. Pray for God's blessing on the covenant youth.

12 **MARK & CARLA VAN ESSENDELFT**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for a time of rest and renewal in the US. / **STEPHEN PRIBBLE**, senior technical associate for OPC.org. / **CHARLENE TIPTON**, database administrator.

13 Home Missions general secretary **JOHN SHAW**. / Summer interns **BRENNEN (TIFFANY) WINTER** at Harvest OPC in Wyoming, MI, and **NATE (ELISABETH) BLOECHL** at Bethel OPC in Oostburg, WI.

14 Missionary associates **DR. JIM & JENNY KNOX**, Nakaale, Uganda, as Jim works on administrative duties for the clinic. / **DAVID NAKHLA**, Diaconal Ministry administrator. Pray for those planning *The Reformed Deacon* podcast.

15 **CALVIN & CONNIE KELLER**, Winston-Salem, NC. Pray that God would raise up elders for Harvest OPC. / Tentmaking missionary **TINA DEJONG**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for a good crop and wise diaconal help from the church.

JULY



The Manfredas (day 16)

21 DAVID & ASHLEIGH SCHEXNAYDER, Scottsdale, CA. Praise God for Providence, which began support this summer. / Summer intern **JOHN (RACHEL) CLIFFORD** at New Hope OPC in Frederick, MD.

22 MIKE & NAOMI SCHOUT, Zeeland, MI. Pray Grace Fellowship would have a gospel culture for people of all backgrounds and ages. / Pray for affiliated missionaries **CRAIG AND REE COULBOURNE** and **LINDA KARNER**, Japan.

23 BEN & HEATHER HOPP, Haiti. Pray for the Committee on Foreign Missions and the Hopps as they consider the timing of a return to the field. / Pray for summer staff at the **BOARDWALK CHAPEL**, Wildwood, NJ.

24 Associate missionaries **OCTAVIUS & MARIE DELFILS**, Haiti. Pray for their children, Carlens and Farah, studying in North America. / **CALEB & ERIKA SMITH**, Thousand Oaks, CA. Pray that the church would aim for God's glory.

25 Pray for **BRUCE (SUE) HOLLISTER**, regional home missionary for the Presbyteries of the Midwest and Wisconsin & Minnesota. / Summer intern **MITCHELL GASKINS** at Covenant Presbyterian in Vandalia, OH.

26 HEERO & ANYA HACQUEBORD, L'viv, Ukraine. Pray for the well-being and witness of the men associated with their church who are serving in the army. / Year-long interns **ZACHARY JOHNSON** at Immanuel OPC in Bellmawr, NJ, and **COREY (ANDREA) PAIGE** at South Austin OPC in Austin, TX.



The Herbsters (day 31)

27 CARL & STACEY MILLER, New Braunfels, TX. Pray that God would save local families. / **RETIRED MISSIONARIES** Cal & Edie Cummings, Brian & Dorothy Wingard, Greet Rietkerk, and Young & Mary Lou Son.

28 BRADNEY & EILEEN LOPEZ, Guayama, PR. Pray Iglesia Presbiteriana Sola Escritura would have new opportunities for witness in Guayama. / **GREGORY REYNOLDS**, editor of *Ordained Servant*, a journal for church officers.

29 BEN & MELANIE WESTERVELD, Quebec, Canada. Pray for the development of online classes to teach the Reformed faith. / Summer intern **JOE (MYRANDA) SCHERSCHLIGT** at Christ OPC in Marietta, GA.

30 Pray for Foreign Missions general secretary **DOUGLAS CLAWSON** and administrative assistant **TIN LING LEE**. / **MATTHEW & LOIS COTTA**, Pasadena, CA. Pray that Pasadena would intentionally welcome neighbors to church.

31 Associate missionary **ANGELA VOSKUIL** and tentmaking missionary **JOANNA GROVE**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for perseverance. / Summer intern **ZACHARY (JULIA) HERBSTER** at Cornerstone Presbyterian in Ambler, PA.

16 GREGORY & GINGER O'BRIEN, Downingtown, PA. Give thanks with Christ Church for its new worship location. / Yearlong intern **CHRIS (AMANDA) MANFREDA** at Covenant Presbyterian in Fort Worth, TX.

17 Associate missionaries **JAMES & ESTHER FOLKERTS**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for perseverance for the Timothy discipleship men who are in school. / **MELISA MCGINIS**, financial controller.

18 Pray for assoc. missionary **LEAH HOPP**, Nakaale, Uganda, as she presents her work to supporters in Canada. / **MELAKU & MERON TAMIRAT**, Clarkston, GA. Pray for Melaku as he leads weekly Bible studies for refugees.

19 MARK (PEGGY) SUMPTER, regional home missionary for the Presbytery of the Southwest. / Summer interns **PAUL YU** at Grace OPC in Middletown, DE, and **ARIE VAN WEELDEN** at Bonita OPC in Bonita, CA.

20 Associate missionaries **CHRISTOPHER AND CHLOE VERDICK**, Nakaale, Uganda. Pray for safety in their travels back to Karamoja. / Summer intern **JOHNATHAN (MONICA) ALLEN** at Westminster OPC in Indian Head Park, IL.

[Continued from page 16]

Presbyterian in Medford, OR.

- On May 20, **Carl W. Miller**, previously the organizing pastor, was installed as pastor of Heritage Presbyterian in New Braunfels, TX.
- On May 27, **Andrew R. Wann** was installed as an evangelist of Covenant Presbyterian in Bluffton, SC. Wann previously served as a pastor in the Bible Presbyterian Church.

LETTERS

FORGIVENESS WELL WRITTEN

Editor:

Kudos on the May 2022 issue of *New Horizons*! Every article was absolutely spot-on—biblical, relevant, practical, well written. I enjoyed Mr. Clifford's emphasis that forgiveness "makes the bottom fall out of Satan's plans;" Mr. Briones's sermon-like piece on Philemon, necessary and useful in a period that has seen much grievous division in the church; and best of all, Mr. Cruse's incisive dissection of cancel culture. I particularly relished how he tied cancel culture to the modern emphasis on self, and also his concluding use of two stories showing how this trend might be—and has been—countered by a gracious, gospel-centered approach.

Joseph W. Smith III
Montoursville, PA

"SELF-CARE" PROBLEMATIC

Editor:

I caution *New Horizons* on its use of the word "self-care" ("Self-Care in the Ministry," March). As a professor at a public university, I hear this word used frequently, and its application mostly gives way to self-focus. Supporting church planters in avoiding burnout is vital. But the focus should be on entering God's care and provision for rest—not self-care. Consider Elijah, who was ministered to by an angel sent by the Lord (God's care) and entered biblical rest.

Karol Tiemersma
Grand Rapids, MI

SHEPHERDING CHILDREN

Editor:

"Grace for Parents of Prodigals" (May) speaks encouragement to our hearts! When facing the sorrow of having an adult child who has rejected the faith, it is easy to stay on the treadmill of blaming ourselves and finding fault in our parenting. On the other hand, only focusing on the truth that salvation is by God's grace and not a covenant of works brings the danger of saying we have nothing to do with the salvation of our children. The true gospel frees us from the extremes of debilitating guilt or a personal declaration of guiltlessness. Yes, it is vain and foolish to believe we can make our children "apostasy-proof." It is also dangerous to not evaluate ourselves. The local church should be showing parents how to be spiritual shepherds from the heart.

Robert Bernhardt
Green Bay, WI

REVIEWS

***Karl Barth: A Life in Conflict*, by Christiane Tietz. Oxford University Press, 2021. Hardcover, 480 pages, \$32.95. Reviewed by OP pastor James J. Cassidy.**

Reformed Christians committed to the great standards of the church, in general, have an outmoded impression of the twentieth-century theologian Karl Barth. The deficiency in our understanding of his theology is exceeded only by the deficiency in our awareness of his life. It is time for us to get up to date. And Professor Christiane Tietz's new book will aid us in that task.

Tietz offers us the first full-length biography in English (though originally published in German) since Eberhard Busch's standard work, *Karl Barth: His Life and Letters and Autobiographical Texts*. Furthermore, the subtitle of the work is apropos. Barth's life is one of conflict and much drama. From his days of advocating for factory workers in Safenwil, where he earned the nickname "The Red Pastor"

(64, 66), to his three-way relationship with his wife and illicit lover, Charlotte von Kirschbaum (see, e.g., 154), to his refusal to take the oath of loyalty to Hitler (237–248), Barth's life saw many upheavals.

Professor Tietz is a Bonhoeffer scholar who became interested in Barth because of his influence upon the anti-Nazi activist. Stateside, however, she is best known for an article that she wrote bringing to light the detailed account of Barth's love affair with von Kirschbaum. While the love-relationship between Barth and von Kirschbaum was well-known, there had been ambiguity in the details until private letters were made public (177). Tietz's article, and now this book, puts that question to rest. Barth loved her and brought her into his home as his "assistant," and lived with her along with his wife, Nelly.

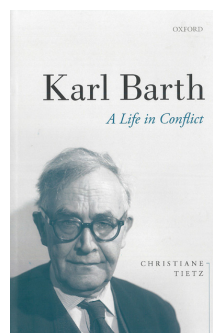
What is not in conflict, however, is Barth's life and theology. In fact, his life flowed from his theology quite harmoniously. Barth's theology, informed as it is by universal grace, has a high view of God's unconditional love. God loves *all* men in the man Jesus Christ, reconciling humanity to himself. While Barth does affirm that faith and repentance are divine imperatives, man's reconciliation to God in no way depends on it. Barth makes up his own theology, as he must, given his rejection of the Bible as the directly inspired and infallible revelation of God. Tietz makes clear what is the real tragedy of Barth's life: he

never repented of this *ménage à trois* (Tietz's language). In fact, as if to seal his unrepentant life, the three were buried together in the same burial plot.

It is chilling to read of Barth's justification for the illicit relationship and the excruciating pain it caused his wife, Nelly (214–223). Barth knew what he was doing was wrong, yet he persisted in it and even justified it as necessary. Unfortunately,

his life was as unrepentantly sinful as his theology was erroneous.

Tietz's book presents us with a golden opportunity to get up to speed on the current understanding of Barth, both the man and his theology. I would heartily recommend picking this one up.



God, Grades, and Graduation, by Ilana M. Horwitz. Oxford University Press, 2022. Hardcover, 260 pages, \$26.18. Reviewed by OP member Diane Olinger.

In this book, Dr. Horwitz presents the results of her extensive research into the role of religion in academic success. Her research, recently highlighted in the *Wall Street Journal* (Jan. 25), is important because it challenges the sociological consensus in the academy “that religion does not have any explanatory power once social class is accounted for” (15). She challenges this consensus by looking at religion as a variable within each socioeconomic category.

An agnostic Jew, she came to her research topic after discovering “that many of my neighbors organized much of their lives around their Christian commitments” (xii). Within the academy, her research garnered two very different reactions, one from academics who had grown up in very liberal and secular environments who were “unaware of how religious Americans really are” and the other from Christians within the academy who affirmed her findings but only quietly, lest they be seen as too religious (xii). Horwitz writes with both groups in mind, as well as Christian parents and leaders of Christian schools and other institutions.

Horwitz’s research focuses on high-school-age “abiders.” These Christian students “emphasize the role of faith in their daily lives, feel close to God, attend religious services at least weekly, pray by themselves on a regular basis, and look to God and scripture for guidance” (10). They live to please God, “which affects how they perceive themselves, how they carry themselves, and how they imagine their future” (21). Importantly, “abiders” don’t simply do these things because their parents make them; rather, they have internalized their commitment to the faith.

Her main conclusions are (75):

- Working class abiders have better grades than working class non-abiders.

- Middle-class abiders have better grades than middle-class non-abiders.
- Professional class abiders have better grades than professional class nonabiders.
- Abiders across all racial group fare better than nonabiders.
- But abiders attend less selective colleges.

When it comes to college, abiders complete more years of education, but at less selective schools than one would expect based on their grades. This is mainly because professional class abiders “undermatch” for college compared with professional class nonabiders. In other words, professional class abiders are less likely to even consider, let alone pursue, Ivy League or similarly selective college options because their God-centered self-concept leads them to prioritize things other than having a prestigious career—like being near home and church, finding a Christian spouse and friends, avoiding temptation, and seeking opportunities for Christian service.

In her concluding remarks, Horwitz encourages selective colleges “to consider what they can do to attract these highly religious applicants, many of whom are excellent students” (176) and “to view religious and ideological diversity as valuable when admitting applicants” (176). This diversity goal, argues Horwitz, should target “not merely students from different religions but abiders who are religious” (177).

Horwitz sees the fact that religious Americans eschew selective colleges as a problem, not only for those colleges, and for those students, but for America. Horwitz recognizes that her secular colleagues think that the views of abiders are contrary to social progress, since they place limits on people’s autonomy and endorse traditional gender roles. But Horwitz argues that this is all the more reason that colleges should be “gathering points where civil comity is learned” (177), thus encouraging peaceful demo-

cratic process.

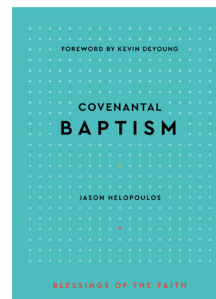
As a Christian school board trustee, I’m also interested in what Horwitz’s conclusions mean for Christian schooling. Her research suggests that the “religious restraint” (27), “godly guardrails” (88), and “network closure” (91) that students experience at Christian school lead to academic success across racial categories, particularly for working class and middle-class students. This is encouraging news for Christian schools and for our communities.

Covenantal Baptism by Jason Helopoulos. P&R, 2021. Hardcover, 160 pages, \$11.50. Reviewed by OP minister Larry Wilson.

Covenantal Baptism, by PCA pastor Jason Helopoulos and from P&R’s Blessings of the Faith series, seeks to show that baptism—specifically, the baptism of the children of believers—is a great blessing from God. The author draws from his own pilgrimage as one who was converted as a young adult and embraced baptistic convictions, but who later became persuaded of the Reformed faith, with its understanding of baptism.

After a helpful introduction, this book

has five chapters: (1) “The Kindness of God” (in giving sacraments to seal his Word); (2) “The Fourfold Stream of Testimony” (the covenant of grace, the New Testament, the Bible’s overall theology,



and the church’s historic practice); (3) “Blessings to the Children” (who receive baptism); (4) “Blessings to the Parents” (who present their children for baptism); and (5) “Blessings to the Congregation” (that welcomes and serves baptized children). These last three chapters are full of good pastoral advice. Chapter 4 explains and applies the vows parents take when their covenant children are baptized. Chapter 5 explains and applies the vow members take when a child of the church is baptized. Helopoulos uses the PCA

wording of these vows, but the gist of our OPC wording is similar. These chapters are followed by a truly excellent thirty-five-page section of “Questions and Answers on Baptism,” a good annotated list of “Recommended Resources,” and a suggested “Prayer for Our Covenant Children.” The book concludes with some very helpful endnotes.

I recommend this book as a *pithy and clear case for the baptism of covenant children*. Don't let its brevity or apparent simplicity deceive you. Helopoulos gives evidence of widely reading and digesting good material. He carefully defines the words he uses, clarifies what he does *not* mean, and elucidates what he *does* mean. To give you a taste, how does God grant grace through baptism? Helopoulos writes:

When we think of grace, we tend to think of it as a substance or thing in and of itself. But grace is not a thing. Rather, it is the person of Christ Jesus and all the benefits that are attached to him, which the Spirit applies. (60)

He then helpfully spells out what this does and does not mean, showing how the Reformed view contrasts with both the baptistic and the Roman Catholic views. Along similar lines, he addresses an assumption which, when left unspoken, often leaves those who hold the baptistic view and those who hold the covenantal view talking past each other. More than once, he shows that, according to the Bible, baptism is not our testimony of our faith; rather, it's God's testimony of his promises.

Moreover, I recommend this book as a *pastoral exhortation to practice implications of the baptism of covenant children*. On a cover blurb, Joel Beeke calls this book “biblically enlightening, doctrinally sound, experientially balanced, and practically helpful.” I wholeheartedly agree. It has a healthy emphasis on the corporate character of Christian faith—the importance of the church and its members—with many suggestions for practically fleshing out what we affirm to be true. It helps toward imparting a vision of congregations acting as they should—as covenant communities—with every member

playing a significant role in encouraging the rising generation to follow Jesus in faith. Many of our discussions of this topic helpfully show the *truth* of the baptism of covenant children. This book does that as well. But by emphasizing covenantal baptism as a blessing from God with many practical implications, it also shows its *beauty*.

***Beginning: Family Worship in Genesis*, by Joel R. Beeke and Nick Thompson. Reformation Heritage, 2021. Paperback, 208 pages, \$8.00. Reviewed by OP pastor Ben Ward.**

Family worship is an essential feature of the Christian household, and yet how many Christians participate in the practice regularly? There may be many reasons, but one of the most common seems to be a variation of “I don't know where to start” or “What do I do?” For many, especially heads of household, it can be daunting to just pick up the Bible and begin to teach one's family as though an expert. Thankfully, Reformation Heritage Books has been printing helps for family worship like this one, the first in what will be a series of books going through the Scriptures. The series begins by asking, “What is the chief end of parenting? If you are a parent, your primary goal should not be to raise intelligent, successful, competent, and upright citizens . . . your primary concern ought to be God-ward for the good of your children's souls and preeminently for God's glory” (ix).

This first volume certainly fits that bill: its content is focused upon the primary meaning of the Scriptures and

does not concern itself with political or cultural topics. Aside from the content, the structure is tremendously helpful for family worship. Every spread (the two pages that face you when reading a book) is one self-contained lesson on a portion of Scripture, and there are ninety-two lessons in the book. The structure of every lesson is the same, with a “Review” of previous lessons, a “Read(ing)” from the Scripture on which the lesson will be based with some basic questions about the text itself, a “Reflect(ion)” with the lesson itself and some deeper questions about the meaning of the text, and finally a “Request,” or a note for prayer based on the text. There is an appendix to the book reminding the family of the importance

Positions Available

President: Mid-America Reformed Seminary has announced the search for its next president. For more information, visit www.midamerica.edu.

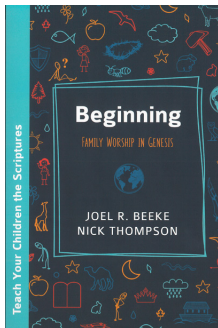
Professor of Systematic Theology: Westminster Seminary California announces a new faculty opening in Systematic Theology. This is a full-time, tenure-track position that begins July 1, 2023. For further information, visit wscal.edu or contact Ryan Glomsrud, Academic Dean, at academicdean@wscal.edu. For full consideration, applications should be received by August 5, 2022.

Pastor: Faith Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Pole Tavern, New Jersey, is seeking a senior pastor. We are a committed body blessed with substantial facilities and located in a rural community. We are seeking an experienced, energetic pastor who is distinctly Reformed and desires to lead our congregation in reverent and God-glorifying Lord's Day worship and throughout the week. He must draw from the Scriptures and Reformed doctrines to preach the whole counsel of God's Word for the growth and equipping of the saints to proclaim the gospel. Please send your resume and contact information to Rich Duggan at richduggan98@gmail.com.

NEWS, VIEWS & REVIEWS *Continued*

of Bible memorization for family worship and providing a schedule to help that take place.

This book will be most helpful for parents with young children who are old enough to digest and reflect upon the material. Our one-year-old would not get much out of this! The book helpfully refrains from polemics, not touching on particularly controversial questions such as the age of the earth or baptism. About the latter, Beeke and Thompson write,



Though both authors are of a paedobaptist conviction, we have sought to address the issues of covenant membership and baptism minimally in this series. If you are of a credobaptist persuasion, you may choose to skip the portions of this devotion marked with an asterisk. (110)

That isn't to say the book shies away from clarifying time-worn traditions. In the lesson on Genesis 28:10–17, the authors write,

This dream is often called “Jacob’s Ladder.” But that is not a very helpful way to think about it. This was God’s Ladder. Only God could make a way for Jacob to know salvation and blessing. (145)

Amen, and may God make this help in understanding the Scripture fruitful for families for many years to come.

***Prayers of a Parent*, four-book series, by Kathleen Nielson. P&R, 2021. Paperbacks, 88 pages each, \$7.50 per book. Reviewed by OP member Lisa Moelker.**

Have you ever struggled to know how to pray for your children? Do you find that your prayers for your children are becoming stale? If so, I would like to wholeheartedly recommend to you a new collection of books by Kathleen Nielson, entitled *Prayers of a Parent*. The collection is divided into four age groups: young children, teens, young adults, and adult children. Each of the books is divided into thirty-one sections, with each section beginning with a Scripture passage and short meditation. This is then followed by a beautifully written prayer for your children. Some examples of the prayers in the *Prayers of a Parent for Young Children* are “For a Heart of Mercy” and “For My Child to Think on Jesus.” A few examples of the prayers in the *Prayers of a Parent for Adult Children* are “For Love of the Church” and “For Grace in Parenting.”

When we baptize our covenant children, one of the promises we make is to pray regularly with and for our children. The challenge I have faced in my twenty-five years of being a parent is that I don’t always know *how* to pray for my children (see Rom. 8:26). Through the years I have enjoyed using the prayers in Scripture for my children, which has definitely added depth to my prayers for them. As I have been using these books the last few

months, I find that my prayers for my children have expanded greatly. Nielson has directed my thoughts and prayers for my children in new ways and new areas that I had not thought of before. For instance, in the book for young adults there is a prayer entitled “For a Heart to Pray.” The first line says, “May the first-person pronouns of the psalms come from her mouth and from her heart, O Lord. May she pour out these words herself” (31). What a beautiful way to pray that our children will pray!

These books are really a wonderful gift to parents as they serve as a very helpful guide while we “pray without ceasing” (1 Thess. 5:17) for our children. The prayers flow from the Scriptures and point us to Christ. The prayers help us to grow in our reliance and dependency on God as we become increasingly aware of areas of need for our children. Personally, as I read the prayers for adult children I also applied the prayers to myself, and it was very encouraging.

At a covenant baptism, the congregation is also challenged to pray for the church’s covenant children. These guides do not just have to be used by parents (and grandparents!) but by any members in the congregation who would like to grow in their ability to pray for children in their church family.

Nielson writes that her hope is that her prayers “might mingle profitably with yours, as we all lift up the next generations to the Lord who knows and loves them perfectly” (9, introduction of each book). These books will help us to do that.

