



Forward in Faith in God's Provision

Rev. Andy Webb, ONA Board Chairman

If you have walked with Christ for any length of time, you've probably had the experience of making a prayerful, biblically sound decision—only to have others tell you it was unwise.

You're not alone. Many "promising" young men in church history met strong resistance when they sought to serve Christ. John Calvin and Martin Luther both faced fathers who pushed them toward law, not ministry. Missionaries, too, have been told by well-meaning friends to avoid "dangerous" fields.

The famous Scottish Reformed Presbyterian missionary John G. Paton met such resistance when he announced plans to take the gospel to the cannibal-inhabited New Hebrides. In his autobiography, he recalled an older believer warning, "The cannibals! You will be eaten by cannibals!" Paton replied:

"You are advanced in years now, and your own prospect is soon to be laid in the grave, there to be eaten by worms... if I can but live and die serving and honoring the Lord Jesus, it will make no difference to me whether I am eaten by cannibals or by worms; and in the Great Day my resurrection body will arise as fair as yours in the likeness of our risen Redeemer."

Despite such opposition, Paton—and many like him—pressed on. The Lord used their work to bless generations.

Today, I see similar hesitation toward church planting.

Men are discouraged from pursuing it, and churches are told it is "unwise." When I became a church planter—and later, when the congregation I planted 23 years ago resolved to plant another church in a nearby city without a Reformed witness—we heard the same cautions: too small, not enough money. But we were convinced the Lord was calling us, and that his provision—not our resources—would determine the outcome.

Since beginning the work, we have already seen God supply what we needed and provide us with a gifted and experienced church planter, Rev. Tim Phillips. (Photo is from the first worship service of Liberty Reformed Presbyterian Church).

So I want to encourage men in ministry: consider whether the Lord might be calling you to plant a church. The task is hard, but the blessings are eternal. And to churches wondering if "now" is the right time—step forward in faith. The church in Antioch might have seemed too young to send Paul and Barnabas to plant churches, yet they obeyed, and the fruit remains to this day.

As chairman of ONA, I invite you to join us in striving to bring the gospel to the people of America. The Lord still blesses such faithful steps!



From the ONA Director

Rev. Morrie Lawing

Over the summer at Quest and Horizon I spoke to the hundreds of young people present and challenged them to consider their future:

“Might the Lord be calling any of you young men to pursue the ministry, particularly, church planting? The fields near your hometown are ripe for the harvest, and the ARP needs more church planters! Perhaps you guys and gals could suggest that your elders daughter a new church.”

Yeah, I was wearing my pickleball outfit and a floppy hat...but I was serious in my challenge to them. At one point I asked them to go back and ask their elders to include ONA during their next Missions Conference. Perhaps your church could “adopt” a church planting family in your presbytery and bless them with notes, gifts for their kids, join them for worship one Lord’s Day, help with the nursery, or their own church cookout. What a support that would be!

I have found that many of our ARP youth are quite enthusiastic about serving the Kingdom if they are just given a little nudge. Who knows? Their willingness to serve just might be contagious.

Moving from the youth of our churches to the broader congregation. Here’s a question for you: Who plants churches?

Just as your church’s pastor is not the sole man in charge of your church but rather submits himself to your session; so too, the Director of ONA is not in charge of church planting in the ARP. Instead, his

duties are spelled out in our governing document for Synod’s boards and agencies. The Manual of Authorities and Duties (MAD) lays out some of the duties and responsibilities for my role:

The Executive Director will guide the [ONA] board and staff in assisting and equipping presbyteries and congregations to start and strengthen an increasing number of congregations that are Presbyterian, Reformed, evangelistically engaged, and committed to making disciples through a passionate and winsome employment of the means of grace.

Whew! That was a long sentence. To be clear, it is not my place to plant churches. As Director, I desire to see the relationship strengthened between Outreach North America and our presbyteries, for it is presbyteries who start churches. Outreach North America’s relationship to the presbyteries is one of “assisting and equipping.”

How does ONA help presbyteries and congregations?

- By making efforts to train and equip men to become “means of grace” church planters.
- By providing resources to presbyteries to help plant “Presbyterian, Reformed, [and] evangelistically engaged” churches.
- By encouraging presbyteries to start churches “through a passionate and winsome employment of the means of grace.”

I am in the process of visiting ARP churches across our land. When I do I encourage them to ask the Lord of the harvest how they can serve the Kingdom through church planting. Some are already chomping at the bit to start a daughter church. May there be more!

At the presbyteries I have visited so far, I have challenged them to set a goal for the number of churches they desire to start in the next three to five years and even start a new church plant in their region by this time next year.

The Father has his elect in many cities across this great land who have not yet been brought into the Kingdom. Let’s all ask our Sovereign Lord to lead us as we further his Kingdom here in the USA.

You are Part of the Work

Eve Huffman

Office Manager and Events Coordinator

It is a joy to be part of the work of ONA as the office administrator and events coordinator. As a member of an ARP church, you are also part of the work of ONA. Here are some practical ways you can be a part of church strengthening and planting:

1. Pray. Pray the Lord would raise up church planters and for those who are laboring to plant and strengthen churches. Pray for godly wisdom in our churches and presbyteries as they seek to plant and strengthen churches. Pray about your own involvement in planting a church. Pray for your church. Pray for the encouragement and leadership of your pastor and elders. Pray for ONA, that God would be glorified through our efforts to support our presbyteries and churches.

2. Give. ONA provides financial assistance to new churches, to enable them to purchase property and expand their outreach. We can only do that with your help.

3. Go. Maybe your church is planting a daughter church. Consider being part of that plant. Maybe your church is focusing on revitalizing. Commit yourself to this work. This is not just the efforts of the pastor and the elders. Planting and strengthening require the entire body, not just a few.

4. Connect. Stay connected to your church, your presbytery, and all of the ARP. Connect with people outside of church, multiplying through outreach. In a world that seems increasingly isolated, relying solely on social media for community, personal connection is a powerful tool for the gospel.

As we seek the Lord, growing in him and in community, reaching out to the world around us and engaging in sharing the gospel through church strengthening and planting, our churches will grow stronger and further build God’s kingdom.

Start with Prayer

Tessa Taylor

Publications and Communications Administrator

While every church member has a unique role and calling in spreading the good news of the gospel, everyone is called to pray. I would encourage everyone to pray for our church planters as they share the gospel in their communities. One of my roles at Outreach North America is to gather prayer requests from our church plant and distribute them to our faithful prayer warriors. Please email me to receive our weekly prayer newsletters:

ttaylor@arpsynod.org

WHAT'S NEW?



Hickory Presbyterian Church Hickory, NC

Hickory Presbyterian Church is a new mission of First Presbytery and held its first worship service on August 3. Rev. Tripp Castell has a deep love for Jesus, his church, and the city of Hickory,

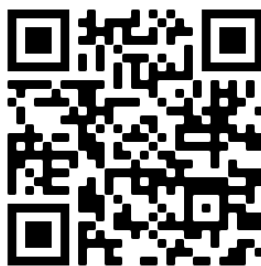
NC. A Hickory native, he graduated from Hickory High School and is thrilled to be planting a new church in his hometown—a place where he was raised and where he and his wife, Amy, have raised their six children.

Follow along: hickorypresbyterian.com

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