

The 2014 OPC Timothy Conference

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At the OPC Timothy Conference held April 9–12, 2014, Matthews OPC in Matthews, North Carolina, and Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Greenville, South Carolina, hosted eighteen young men from OP churches as far away as Hawaii and as close as Matthews itself. Greenville students shared a meal with the conferees and welcomed them into their seminary classes, including a senior class on Missions, during



which Dr. Tony Curto actively engaged his guests in the class discussion. On the last evening, Pastor Nathan Trice introduced the group to Southern cuisine, courtesy of Mrs. Ashley Trice, as the men enjoyed fellowship and discussion with the conference speakers in the Trice home. These flavors of love and consideration for the men sent by their

sessions in order to be challenged to consider gospel ministry are part of what makes the Timothy Conference a special event in the lives of those who attend.

Of course, the main course was delivered by the six lecturers at the heart of the conference. Pastor Stephen Oharek chauffeured three men up from Florida and spoke during the conference about the importance of the ministerial office and the work of a pastor. That labor can apparently include being a taxi driver. Pastor Boyd Miller, as part of his lecture on the internal and external aspects of God's call, shared how the Lord called him into the ministry. There was something very special about this single pastor, twenty years into his first pastorate in LaGrange, Georgia, addressing young single men and explaining how he struggled with his sense of calling and how the Lord used seminary training and the people in the pews to confirm his call to the pastorate. Pastor Trice gave ten concrete and prioritized pieces of advice on preparing to serve the Lord, from being deeply embedded in the life of the church to the importance of marrying well. It was good that the men could come to his house to see how this last piece of advice was bearing fruit in his own ministry.

Having noticed that the Timothy Conference has attracted quite a few young men who are new to the denomination, Danny Olinger and Dave VanDrunen decided to add some historical context to the conference format this year. The OPC's church historian, ruling elder John Muether, delivered a lively lecture filled with humor and insight into the Lord's guiding and shaping of our church into what she is today.

Here are some comments from some of those who attended in 2014:

Ben Wagner wrote that he took home “an increased appreciation for my pastor and a clearer understanding of what he invested to make himself worthy of leading a church through the grace of God” and “a greater appreciation for his duties and labors and why I need to be supporting him in prayer.” For his personal development, Ben said, “I believe that every man needs to be ‘elder material’ in terms of personal integrity. The Timothy Conference showed me how high the Lord sets those standards, and how I need to be making strides through Christ to show myself a workman who will not be ashamed.”

Ben Ward said, “The Timothy Conference encouraged me, as one who has had a desire for the ministry, in the conviction that the Lord might be calling me to serve in gospel ministry.”

David Carnes commented, “One of my favorite parts of the Timothy Conference was the time spent fellowshiping with the speakers and other students. All of the speakers were very accessible and willing to answer any questions we had.”



Ian Brackbill expressed appreciation “for the Timothy Conference speakers’ emphasis on maintaining a relationship with an Orthodox Presbyterian church while at college.” He added, “I will be sure to find a congregation near whichever college I select to attend.”

Thomas Roof came away saying, “I intend, God willing, to be more involved in the local church and presbytery. Some long-term future plans are that I will continue my college education in English and Philosophy and pursue the ministry through a seminary education. Throughout this pursuit, I will be ever attentive to the wise counsel of godly men and women and to guidance from the Holy Spirit through God’s holy Word.”

Joel Stanton explained, “One reason why I came to this conference was to learn more about the OPC’s roots, legacy, and identity. I was not disappointed, as Professor John Muether gave a phenomenal lecture on the identity and history of the OPC. To quote him, ‘The OPC is a small church with a large witness.... It seems small, but it stands for something big.’ I also really appreciated Dr. VanDrunen’s lecture on seminary education.”

Joel added: “To any young men who are even faintly considering pursuing the ministry within the OPC, I would highly recommend you approach your local church session about attending this conference. I guarantee that your time will be well spent, and your plans for the future will be improved as you glean godly wisdom from men who are passionate about the future of Christ’s church here in America and around the world.”

Boyd Miller, a conference speaker, commented: “I must say that I was not prepared for the blessing that I myself received from listening to all the messages. I also was struck at the quality of the singing and surprised by the speed at which the young men seemed to bond in fellowship with one another. I too was fired up to return to Covenant Church in LaGrange and work more intentionally at training the young men in our congregation.”