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S.T.O.R.M. REPORT

Short Term Outreach, Relief & Missions

A Newsletter From the Office of the Short-Term Missions and Disaster Response Coordinator

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“The reward for humility and fear of the Lord is riches and honor and life.”

—Proverbs 22:4

Why Is It So Hard to Receive Help?

by Glenn Moots

Homeowner in the Midland, Michigan OPC Disaster Response Effort

It is hard to accept help from others. As Christians, we hear the direction of Paul telling us to be “cheerful givers.” (2 Corinthians 9:7). Paul also tells us (quoting Jesus) “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35). We are tempted to infer from this that God loves givers more than receivers.

The Western tradition also commends giving more than receiving. Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics, a landmark text, and part of the education of the Protestant Reformers, praises generosity great and small. Aristotle emphasizes that while benefactors do something noble, the same cannot be said for their beneficiaries. In his *De Officiis* (often translated *On Duties*) Cicero offers extensive advice on giving. Like Aristotle, he also emphasizes reciprocity: It is shameful to receive without giving something in turn, ideally of similar value. Hence, while giving is honorable, receiving is not—and it puts us in debt to others.

As if all this doesn’t make receiving help hard enough, Americans are expected to be self-sufficient. Our culture prizes self-sufficiency and independence. We celebrate the entrepreneur and the innovator who solve problems, not those who fall prey to problems. Receiving help is associated with dependence, laziness, or weakness.

Finally, it just feels good to do things for others—much better than it does to receive help. Social scientists studying “positive psychology,” the psychology of happiness, have correlated giving and happiness in multiple studies. Not only are givers happier, but happier people are also more likely to give.

If we did not believe in a sovereign God, and the importance of the Church, all of this would be enough to

discourage any of us from accepting help. But let’s think through it a little more.

It is our sovereign God who directs our affairs. He not only puts us in circumstances where we should give, but in circumstances where we must receive. Even if it is more blessed to give, someone must be given to. There cannot be givers without receivers, and each are called to their position in God’s good time. Ephesians 2:10 tells us that as God’s handiwork we are created in Christ Jesus to do good works. Even if receiving isn’t a “good work” in the sense we typically think of it, deliverance is also good in its own way. Through the providential deliverance of God, we are able to understand His lovingkindness better (Psalm 107:43). We should not think that God loves us any less because we are receivers. In fact, it is when we are in need that we see the love of God most tangibly.

Read the entire article on our website:
opcdisasterresponse.org/why-is-it-so-hard-to-receive-help



One Year Ago

On May 19th, 2020 the city of Midland, Michigan suffered flooding as a result of the breaching of two dams following days of heavy rain. Several families from Christ Covenant OPC suffered the flooding of their homes; one was completely flooded. The diaconal committee of the Presbytery of Michigan and Ontario immediately mobilized a disaster response effort, in cooperation with OPC Disaster Response. We look back on this anniversary with thankfulness to the Lord for the many prayers, donors and volunteers He provided to restore the families’ lives.

Become a volunteer
opcdisasterresponse.org 

Let us know you are ready to help! Register at our website: OPCDisasterResponse.org/volunteer-registry.

Donate: GIVE.OPC.org/diaconal-ministries-summary

Is it Safe for Christians to Refuse to Welcome the Stranger?

by Rev. Chris Cashen,
Pastor, Trinity Reformed Church in Lanham, Maryland
and Chairman of the Refugee Ministry Subcommittee

A little over two weeks ago, on May 3, 2021, President Biden raised the 2021 cap on refugee resettlements in the United States fourfold: from 15,000 to 62,500. As he did so, the president stated that the previous limit "did not reflect America's values as a nation that welcomes and supports refugees." In the same statement, President Biden indicated that he would set the refugee admission cap at 125,000 for the 2022 fiscal year, which begins this year on October 1st. Shortly after President Biden's statements, Antony Blinken, the Secretary of State, declared that "It is in our DNA as a nation to open our door to those seeking refuge[1] . . ."

What does this mean? Who are these refugees? And how are we to respond? All good questions which require thoughtful answers.

Each year, the president sets a limit on the number of refugees allowed to resettle in this country. This means that the Executive has determined, for planning and budgeting purposes, that the United States will agree to grant permission (or immigration status) for that number of "refugees" to enter the country legally. It does not necessarily mean that the entire number will actually enter the US. But it gives the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR), those folks who are involved in refugee resettlement in this country, the ability to plan, budget and prepare. This is a bit like creating an annual budget for your local church. You plan, or budget, to spend a certain amount on electrical service, but if the summer is not too hot, you may not spend all the budgeted amount. It is the same with the refugee admissions cap.

Read the entire article on our website: opccdm.org/is-it-safe-for-christians-to-refuse-to-welcome-the-stranger/

June begins hurricane season!

Find out more about how to prepare on our website: opcdisasterresponse.org/disaster-response-resources



Short-Term Missions OPPORTUNITIES

UGANDA

- Farm project
- Facility maintenance
- Care and teach missionary children
- KEO preschool teaching assistants
- Missionary Associates

QUEBEC CITY, CANADA

- A **Missionary Associate** (M.A.) is needed to work with OP Missionary Rev. Ben Westerveld in Quebec City.

English Cafe

- St-Marc's Reformed Church in Québec City, hosts an outreach English Café friendship evangelism.

BOARDWALK CHAPEL, NJ

- Street Preaching Conference (May 27-31)
- School of Evangelism (June 7-12)
- End of Summer Staff openings (beginning July 10)

Go to our website to read the details on all of these opportunities: opcstm.org.



Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic:

Leonardtown, Maryland

Site coordinator, Curt Sproul, reports that progress continues, but is slow at times. In the next few weeks, they plan to finish the kitchen cabinets, install flooring, doors, trim, bathroom fixtures and complete some plumbing hookup. After that, household items will be cleaned and returned to the home. Please continue to pray for this effort.

The Committee on Diaconal Ministries' COVID-19 Pandemic Response (CPR) Fund

To date, the CPR Fund has received \$94,864.19 in generous donations and has disbursed \$57,695 of that to brothers and sisters around the world. Your gifts are appreciated. Find out how the donations are being disbursed on our website: opcdisasterresponse.org/opportunity/covid-19-pandemic-response-fund/.

To contribute to OPC Disaster Response, go to: give.opc.org/diaconal-ministries-summary.

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