

October 28, 2015

Mr. Roger G. Collins, Stated Clerk
Mississippi Valley Presbytery
130 Byram Boulevard
Byram, MS 39272

Dear Fathers and Brothers,

I have completed 19 years of ministry as Director of Publications for Great Commission Publications. As you know, Great Commission Publications is the joint ministry of the Presbyterian Church in America and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. As the publishing arm for our denomination, GCP provides resources that are used in Sunday School, catechetical instruction of children and youth, Vacation Bible School and adult education for our churches and others.

Since the unexpected death of GCP's Executive Director, Tom Patete, in December 2012 there have been numerous extra duties that I have taken on. During the first 10 months of 2013 I worked with the Interim Director, Marvin Padgett, by providing history and procedures for various areas of GCP as well as assuming a number of further roles. In October of 2013 Marvin Padgett was named Director of GCP. At that time in addition to my duties as Director of Publications, I was also assigned the responsibilities as Associate Director of GCP.

Additional duties have included overseeing in 2014 and 2015 the development of a new website that provides churches and individuals not only a more navigable website but also many more educational resources and content regarding the various curriculum products. The website "store" is easier for individuals and churches to use. At the same time GCP implemented a new financial and business software. Both the website and financial software went "live" in November of 2014. This year the website has continued to be "filled-out" and upgraded. The financial and business software is enabling us to better service the churches that purchase our curriculum.

In June 2015 a new customer relationship management software was implemented. The new software has greatly increased our abilities to provide services to churches that use GCP products. The software is also enabling GCP to respond to inquiries that come through the website as well as from conferences and events.

Over the last year and a half GCP has experienced 4 staff departures, each with over 10 years of work history, who left for normal and acceptable reasons...retirement, move to the West Coast to be near family, mission field with MTW, provision for family care and assistance for an adult sibling. In each case, I was involved in some way with the interviewing, hiring, and training of all new replacements. In one of the situations, the marketing department, the new hire reports directly to me. I head up the marketing team of 4 staff and work directly with the marketing director on weekly planning and the daily implementation of GCP efforts.

For the Fall of 2014 a new curriculum was introduced for Elementary children based on *Pilgrim's Progress*. This 13-week curriculum is based on a new children's version of *Pilgrim's Progress* that is faithful to the original version. The curriculum is being used in

various situations...for Sunday and mid-week children's programs, as a class prior to communicant classes, as a VBS program, and as an inter-generational church-wide curriculum.

In 2014 the last of the initial 9 new Youth Bible Studies in the *So What? Relating faith to life & life to faith* series became available. In summer of 2016 a new Bible study on the book of *Philippians* will be available in this series. These studies provide resources that will assist youth leaders in helping youth to take ownership of their faith as they learn more about how to understand and study the Scriptures. An inductive process is used in the studies and a weekly devotional journal for the students is provided with each of the Bible study modules. A GCP dedicated website, www.sowhatstudies.org, provides additional resources and information for these new studies.

In Fall 2015 the first of the new *G2R: Bible Survey* (Genesis to Revelation) modules was introduced. This is a reworking of what was the previous Older Elementary material. This is a repositioning of the curriculum to be used with a wider range of ages: grades 5 through 9 (junior high). During the remainder of the 2015-2016 school year, all four modules of the Old Testament will be introduced. The four New Testament modules will be introduced over the 2016-2017 school year completing the *G2R: Bible Survey* curriculum.

It is critical that our preteens and early teens have a complete Bible Survey covering every book of the Bible. At these ages students are able to take the stories of the Bible and learn how God's progressive, historical-redemptive One Story came to God's people. The entire OT and NT Bible Survey will be available to be used by churches on a flexible two-, three-, or four-year schedule since churches sometimes do not use 4 quarters a year.

The completion of the *G2R* product line is presently being worked on with the revision of the Junior High curriculum. The *G2R: God's Promises/The Covenant* curriculum will build on the Bible Survey. This curriculum will take middle school students through the Scriptures to see the covenant thread that goes through all of Scripture.

I attend and report at the GCP Board of Trustees meetings (twice a year), the PCA Committee on Christian Discipleship (three times a year), and the OPC Committee on Christian Education (twice a year). For the OPC at their yearly GA, I met with their Advisory Committee (our Committee of Commissioners) for about 30 minutes. I also had the privilege of providing a 25-minute report to their entire General Assembly on the ministry and work of GCP.

I continue to advise and consult with pastors and staff as time allows. I have also taught a block of instruction (4-5 hours) on Christian Education as part of M.Div classes at RTS Orlando and Charlotte. I taught a number of workshops as part of CDM's Connect Conferences. Additionally, I served 4 months as the leader of a men's group in the PCA church we attend.

The challenges and opportunities are great. Please keep GCP and me in your prayers as I lead the publications' efforts and carry on numerous additional duties at GCP.

I ask that the Presbytery permit me to continue my labors another year on their behalf as I serve them, the Presbyterian Church in America, and the church at large at Great Commission Publications.

In preparing this report I realized that I apparently did not file an annual report for 2014. Please accept my apology for that and also for being late in submitting my annual report for 2015 and my request to continue to labor another year outside the bounds of Presbytery.

Sincerely in Christ,

Mark L. Lowrey, Jr.

cc: Shepherding and Advisory Committee