

July 22, 2021

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

Dear Fathers and Brothers,

I have completed 25 years of ministry as Director of Publications for Great Commission Publications. A year ago, Marvin Padgett retired as Executive Director. I was asked to take on those responsibilities while also in the midst of Covid-19.

As you well know, in March 2020 Covid-19 caused many churches to conduct worship online. In most of these churches, educational ministries for children and adults came to a halt. This resulted in a 60% to 70% drop in curriculum purchases for GCP from April 2020 to March 2021 as churches were in varying stages of providing education for children. By March 2021, many more churches were not only regathering for worship in person but were doing children's ministry in earnest. However, many were not anticipating renewing children's ministry until Fall 2021.

Despite these major challenges to our ministry, through God's care and providence, GCP has apparently weathered the worst of Covid-19. Since the 1990s, GCP has operated on the basis of sales without contributions from the PCA or OPC Christian education committees. GCP did not have to print curriculum for the 2020-21 ministry year and was able to meet churches' needs with existing inventory. We also applied for and received two government grants through the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) for a total of \$291,000.

In addition to my duties as Director of Publications, I was assigned in 2013 the responsibilities as Associate Director of GCP. Therefore, moving into the Executive Director position last year gave me total responsibility in the areas I had previously been involved in. This involves me in most of the day-to-day operations of GCP, including overseeing the marketing efforts and the ongoing updating and upgrading of the websites. The websites allow GCP to better serve the churches and individuals that purchase curriculum but also are looking for additional help and resources. Providing a friendly and navigable website is critical today. Approximately 75% of all orders come through the website.

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.

Prior to Covid-19, we had completed *G2R (Genesis to Revelation) Bible Survey*, which is a complete Bible survey covering all the books of the Bible for grades 5–7. *G2R God's Promises* curriculum was introduced in Fall 2019. These Bible studies take middle school students through the Scriptures to see the covenant thread that goes all the way through. *G2R God's Promises* builds on *G2R Bible Survey*. Covid-19 interrupted the printing of *G2R God's Promises*. Over the next two years, we are anticipating having all eight studies (quarters) of this new curriculum available for churches.

During the Covid-19 period (March 2020–August 2021), GCP has provided curriculum and materials that can be used both by families at home and in church gatherings. We produced six Bible story video series for children (13 lessons each, 78 in total) with downloadable resources for parents and activities for children. In addition, GCP provided about a dozen training webinars and modules for parents, children's ministry directors, volunteers, and teachers, assisting them in their responsibilities during this season of ministry.

Show Me Jesus curriculum is our foundational material for children through ages 10–11: Toddler (ages 2–3), Preschool (ages 4–5), Younger Elementary (grades 1–2), and Middle Elementary (grades 3–4). *So What? Relating faith to life & life to faith* series provides 10 different 13-week studies for youth. GCP also publishes *Kids' Quest Beginning and Elementary*, which teaches *First Catechism*, and a 13-week curriculum on *Pilgrim's Progress*. Coming in 2022 is the revision of the Shorter Catechism material for youth, which will be called *Digging Deeper*. More information can be found in our catalog at www.gcp.org.

I attend and report at the GCP Board of Trustees meetings (twice a year), the PCA Committee on Discipleship Ministries (three times a year), and the OPC Committee on Christian Education (twice a year). I attend the OPC GA and PCA GA. At the PCA GA, I met with and was part of providing a 10-minute report on the work of GCP to the Committee of Commissioners for the Committee on Discipleship Ministries. A similar 25-minute presentation was made to the OPC Advisory Committee for the Committee of Christian Education. Also I presented a 15-minute presentation to the entire OPC GA on the work of GCP.

The challenges and opportunities are great. Please keep GCP and me in your prayers as I lead the publication 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.

Sincerely in Christ,

Mark L. Lowrey, Jr.