

2022 Oversight Board Report

It has been an honor to serve with the Oversight Board this year. Board members handle many areas of responsibility with wisdom, grace and excellence. Their passion for advancing Christ's kingdom infuses everything they do.

Members of the Board are: Tom Crawford, David King, Zach Bohler, Pete Fowler, Chuck Goldy, Paul Hoffman, Dave Mercadante, Debbie Noble, Deb Robinson, Dave Roudabush, John Ryser, Rusty Savage, Geoff Schultz, Norbu Tamang, and Ed Walsh.

On behalf of the Board, I want to express our gratitude to David King for his faithful service to the Oversight Board during his ten plus years of leadership as president of Malone University. We are thankful for his loving care of Malone's students, faculty, and staff. We pray that God will richly bless David and his wife, Winnie, in their next ministry assignment.

We also want to express our gratitude to Debbie Noble for her exuberant, wise, and visionary guidance as head of the Leadership Development Team. She truly is a Proverbs 31 woman.

Please express your thanks to EFC-ER staff and Oversight Board members as you have opportunity to do so during yearly meeting sessions. Pray for us as we discern God's plan and fulfill our mission, vision, and core values, based on the person and redemptive message of Jesus Christ.

The image of a father running to embrace his prodigal son in Jesus' parable is one of my favorites in all of scripture. But recently I've been drawn to the elder brother in the story. He was lost too. He worked dutifully attempting to "earn" his inheritance. Because of this, he could not celebrate the safe return of his lost brother. The father left the party to find his eldest son. Learning of this son's jealousy and hurt, the father assured him of his great love and explained that everything he had already belonged to him too.

I thought about my own heart. Has some elder brother attitude taken root? The more we experience the father heart of God, the more we view others with grace and mercy. We stop judging people with an "us" versus "them" mentality. We see them as pre-Christians, as potential disciples. This propels us to create spaces where the Word is taught and God's Presence is welcomed as we worship. In his book, *Letters to Malcom: Chiefly on Prayer*, C.S. Lewis wrote, "the perfect church service would be one we were almost unaware of. Our attention would have been on God."

Prodigals and elder brothers are healed and transformed when our attention is God-centered. We find we have no stones to throw in judgment, only good news to share of a loving heavenly Father who seeks a relationship with us through His Son, Jesus Christ.

As I was meditating on becoming more God-centered, my thoughts turned to David. He loved to worship and praise God. God saw his heart and chose him to be Israel's next king. He was anointed by Samuel and the Spirit of the Lord came upon him.

David was prepared to face Goliath, the Philistine giant taunting the army of Israel and mocking their God.

The British missionary, Charles Studd wrote, "When all Israel were on the run, David faced Goliath - alone. . .with God and he but a young man, and well-scolded, too, by his brother for having come to see the battle." There's that elder brother spirit again - so preoccupied with earthly things that it makes one in danger of missing what God is doing in the realm of the miraculous.

You have probably heard the saying . . .

Everyone else was afraid of Goliath, David feared God.
Everyone else was focused on Goliath, David focused on God.
Everyone else believed Goliath was too big to attack, David believed Goliath was too big to miss.

Years later, when David was anointed king over all Israel and began kingdom building, the Philistines showed up again. 2nd Samuel chapter 5 tells us that David inquired of the Lord before going to battle. God assured him that He would deliver the Philistines into his hands.

Pay close attention to the progression of these battles!

In the first battle, David's army routed the Philistines so fiercely that they left behind all of their idols, the "gods" they had brought to insure their victory, in their hasty retreat. The Israelites carried away their "gods".

As the Philistines regrouped for another attack, David again inquires of the Lord if he should attack. God answers, "Yes, attack but not from the front. Circle around behind them, and come upon them in front of the mulberry trees and wait until you hear the sound of the wind in the tops of the trees, then advance quickly. For then the Lord will go out before you, to strike the camp of the Philistines." The victory there completely drove the Philistines out of the land.

God has positioned each one of us to be here in this season. God is delivering us from our idols because He alone is the One who saves and is worthy of our worship. I believe we are living in the time of wind in the tops of the mulberry trees.

It is challenging to keep this heart perspective when cultural forces around us oppose God and His people. But our eyes are fixed on Jesus. He is building His Church and we will be victorious! Geoff Schultz stated it so well in a report to the Oversight Board, "As we see God sifting the Church at large, may we cling to Jesus in this moment. If we

don't have Him, even though we might have all other resources, we have nothing at all. When we have Him, we have more than enough.”

So this Yearly Meeting let us all:

1. Examine our hearts and surrender to our Heavenly Father's great love so that elder brothers find peace and prodigals are welcomed home.
2. Focus so fully on God that Goliaths fall and enemy armies flee before us.
3. Position ourselves under the mulberry trees and listen for the wind of God because the Kingdom advances and our enemies are defeated not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Living God. Amen.

EFC-ER staff and Oversight Board members have spent countless hours kingdom building in meetings; which resulted in more hours of work on policies, procedures, and the stewarding of expenses and available monies for churches and pastors. There have been conflicts to handle, opportunities to explore, and communications to send. Multiple teaching and training events were held to encourage pastors and church leaders. Please read all of the ministry team reports for more information. In this report, I'd like to highlight just a few items.

The Malone University Board of Trustees unanimously appointed Gregory J. Miller, Ph.D., as its 14th president. Dr. Miller has been a pastor, professor, and most recently provost at Malone. He is an ordained EFC-ER minister. His inauguration will take place during Malone's Homecoming 2022 weekend kicking off with a Pastors and Spouses Breakfast on October 13. The official inauguration ceremony will be on Friday afternoon, October 14. We invite you to save the dates and plan to join us.

A top priority for Dr. Miller is to strengthen the relationship between Malone University and EFC-ER. To that end, we agreed to partner with Malone to bring a professor of practical ministry to campus. This fall, Malone alumnus, Dr. David Williams '84, will teach courses in the Department of Bible & Theology during the 2022-2023 academic year. Malone holds a special place in Dr. Williams' heart because Walter and Emma Malone were his great-grandparents. He most recently served as lead superintendent of the EFC-Mid-American Region and as a faculty member at Barclay College.

Rusty Savage and Pete Fowler are leading an update of our Testimonies with subcommittee members Tom Crawford, Dave Mercadante, Deb Robinson, and Geoff Schultz. You will find an initial draft of these updates in your delegate packet. Pete will facilitate a Q & A time during the workshops on Saturday morning at Yearly Meeting and area forums are being planned for this fall and winter.

We celebrate the growing diversity of EFC-ER affiliated churches and continue to support missionaries and mission fields through Evangelical Friends Mission (EFM). Churches were provided with excellent resources for Multiplication Sunday. The return of the Missions Banquet is a welcome addition to this year's sessions.

Action: Please see the nominating committee report for current nominations.

I would like to close by praying Romans 5:13 over us all, "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." Amen.

On behalf of the Oversight Board,

Pastor Deborah Robinson
Oversight Board Chair