



Harvest Call

August 5, 2018

OPC Ecumenicity

The unity of the church is attained unto by growing in spiritual maturity (Ephesians 4:13). Unity and maturity are the result of mutual, loving admonition and joint submission to Scripture. Such maturity is manifested by speaking and acting the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15).

Each member is essential to the body, and the growth of the body depends on the active participation of each part (Ephesians 4:13, 16). The work of the officers of the church is to prepare the members for, and assist them in this work (Ephesians 4:11-12).

OPC Sister Church of the Week

The Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ireland (EPCI)

The EPCI seeks, by God's grace to be faithful to the Bible where, they believe, God had spoken. They confess the Bible to be divinely inspired and infallible. In an age when man has so much to say and thinks so highly of his own opinion, God is the One we need to hear.

The EPCI subscribes to the Westminster standards as subordinate to the Bible, and as being founded on and agreeable to the Word of God. To maintain a position of confessional integrity they all holding office bearers to subscribe without reservation to the Confession and Catechisms. Members of an EPCI Presbytery are required to renew their subscription annually.

The EPCI is deeply rooted in the history of Irish Presbyterianism, tracing its origins to the Scottish Reformation. In the closing years of the 19th century *Higher Criticism* of the Bible and modernist theology took root in the Presbyterian College at Belfast. One of its leading exponents was Professor J E Davey.

This confessional conservatives were concerned leading to the formation of the Bible Standards League in 1926. A group of evangelical ministers and laity brought five charges against Professor Davey, alleging that what he held and taught was contrary to the doctrinal standards of the Irish Presbyterian Church. He was charged with:

- *Holding and teaching what is contrary to the doctrine: "God pardoneth all our sins and accepteth us as righteous in His sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us."*
- *Teaching what is contrary to Holy Scripture concerning the absolute perfection of our Lord's character.*
- *Teaching what is contrary to the Word of God and the Westminster Confession of Faith regarding the inspiration, infallibility, and Divine authority of the Holy Scriptures.*
- *Holding and teaching what is contrary to the doctrine that "the sinfulness of all sins proceedeth only from the creature and not from God."*
- *Holding and teaching that the doctrine of the Trinity is not taught in the Word of God.*

Despite evidence to the contrary, both the Belfast Presbytery and the General Assembly found him "not guilty" on all five charges. In addition, the Assembly reacted against James Hunter for non-compliance with Belfast Presbytery's direction that there should be no public reference to the case before the hearing of Appeals. Mr. Hunter found this unacceptable with implications for his freedom to prosecute the battle for orthodoxy in the future and so he resigned his membership of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland in July 1927. In October of 1927 the Irish Evangelical Church was formed. The name of the Church was changed in 1964 to the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. Today there are 9 congregations across northern Ireland.

Please pray that in all her battles the Lord may preserve the faithful witness of this sister church.

OPC Congregation of the Week

Emmanuel OPC, Castle Rock, CO, began as a church plant from Reformation Church, Elizabeth, Colorado (which left the OPC in 2018), in May 2014 with two elders and three deacons Emmanuel OPC organized as a particular congregation in April 2015. The church grew to about 80 communicant and 40 non-communicant members. Pastor Chapa was called in the fall of 2015 after completing seminary and ordination exams and was ordained and installed as the founding Pastor in Oct 2015.

Church attendance dropped recently with many leaving the OPC, but they are now enjoying renewed peace and unity. The Sunday School program is focused on the Westminster Shorter Catechism. The congregation have served food to the needy joining with a local larger church on a monthly basis. Pastor Chapa meets with local pastors weekly for prayer.

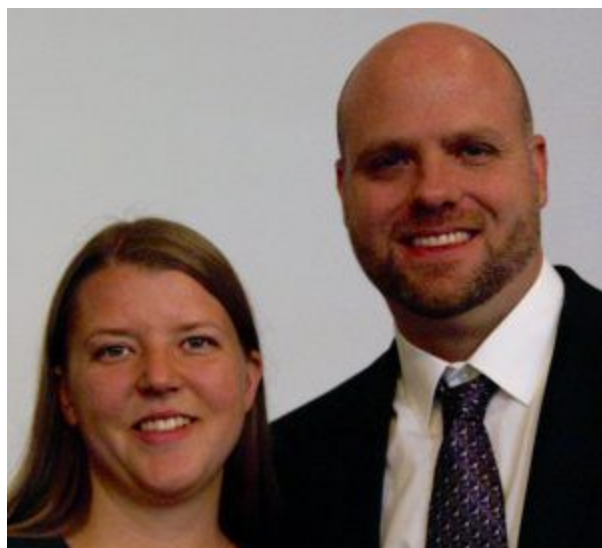
One Ruling Elder leads a weekly outreach service to an assisted living facility which reaches the staff as well as the tenants. Another Ruling Elder rotates with other Reformed churches nearby for a similar activity at another facility. Pastor Chapa recently supported the OP mission work in Uganda teaching at the Theological College in MBale and doing evangelism/teaching in Karamoja. Emmanuel have supported several short term mission trips to the Czech Republic and Kazakhstan.

The church has canvassed the neighborhood near the school at which they meet, handing out OPC tracts with invitation to worship. This has yielded response to the Gospel. The custodian of the school at which they meet regularly attends Emmanuel's fellowship meals. Emmanuel OPC are thankful to God for the OPC and those committed to truth and love. Pastor Chapa says: *"We are trusting in God for His will to be done in us as it is in heaven. And through all this we realize we can do nothing apart from Christ and pray for His blessing daily."*

Please pray for Emmanuel OPC:

- For faithful and trusting witness of Christ, for strength and perseverance to weather the storm of the recent membership upheaval
- That they may be led to a new meeting facility and to reach the community for Christ without compromise

OPC Mission Work of the Week



Corona Presbyterian Church, CA - Matt and Elin Prather - Praise God for his continued blessing on the mission work in Corona, CA. In addition to growing in love for one another, Corona Presbyterian Church is also growing in numbers, with ten new members scheduled to join in the near future. Pastor Prather requests prayer for outreach to the large Muslim community in Corona. He recently had the opportunity to tour the local mosque and interact with a guide named Essan. After the tour, the two spoke at length about the gospel, and particularly the need for Jesus' death to satisfy the justice of God. Essan and the other members of the Corona mosque seem very willing to speak about the differences between Islam and Christianity. While this has proven to be a good starting point, the challenge has been moving beyond comparative religion to showing them that the differences are not just a matter of opinion but have

eternal implications. Please pray that continuing interactions will lead to conversions to Christ.

SouthWest Presbytery News

San Antonio Reformed Church, TX, began as a home Bible study with two families in 2011. Since then, God has grown her a little bit at a time to where there are now about 60 people gathering for worship each Lord's Day. San Antonio is known by some as military city USA, due to the several large military bases and supporting contractors. It is normal for us to have families coming and going for training with the military or with changes in their duty station. However, the local economy remains strong and the city continues to grow and expand.

There is a large Roman Catholic influence, however, for the most part people are either unchurched or attend churches where the gospel is not preached. The Lord has planted us in a mission field, to sow the seed of His Word, and reap His harvest! We are focused on facilitating and encouraging outreach into our neighborhoods around the city. We are trying to fulfill the Lord's call to love our neighbors which is a challenge in a world where people are isolated in their homes and generally fearful of their neighbors. We are learning to use hospitality as a kingdom building tool. Our ladies book club is studying *The Gospel Comes With A Housekey* by Rosaria Butterfield, and are finding it to be both convicting and stimulating.

We have recently come into contact with an inmate in the Bexar County Jail who has sent us a list of 34 other inmates that we are reaching out to with the good news of Jesus. Church members are volunteering to begin writing some of these people, and to begin to share our faith in Jesus with them. We have no idea how the Lord will use these letters, but we pray He will use us to bring the light of Christ into the darkness of our local jail.

We recently had a family movie night, and have used it as an opportunity to invite friends and family for an evening of fellowship. We viewed the classic movie

The Princess Bride, and Pastor Moody led a brief time of discussions afterward using some themes of the movie to discuss the gospel. We are hoping to have more of these in the coming months.

We currently have two ruling elders and no deacons. One of our elders is deployed with the Air Force, and should be returning within a couple of months. We are praying for the Lord to provide more officers to lead and serve in the coming years. We recently erected five committees to serve in various ways in the life and ministry of the church, and they are already making a great impact. We are hopeful the Lord will continue to grow His church in San Antonio, and that He will see fit to use us to glorify His name through our humble service.

Listening In and Sounding Out

Covenant OPC, Abilene, TX:

- Has been without a pastor as of May 7, 2018, and reports that four (4) able ministers from within the Presbytery of the Southwest are being considered. The Session expects a decision mid-august, in time for a call to be processed at the Fall Stated Meeting of the PSW. The church is doing well, membership has held steady, and finances remain healthy.
- Please pray for wisdom in the decision process; for harmony within the congregation. Pray also for the men who have candidated at Covenant OPC.
- Please give thanks to the Lord for all His marvelous work, and in particular for His providence over His people.

Harvest Call is published by South Austin Presbyterian Church (OPC), Austin, TX

Email: clerk@southastinpres.org

Phone: (512) 900-1654