



Harvest Call

September 2, 2018

OPC Ecumenicity

The church is the body of Christ and there is no schism in the body (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:25). As in the human body, there is diversity in unity and unity in diversity (cf. 1 Corinthians 12). The point to be stressed, however, is the unity.

If there is unity it follows that this unity must express itself in all the functions which belong to the church. Since government in the church is an institution of Christ (cf. Romans 12:8; 1 Corinthians 12:28; 1 Timothy 5:17; Hebrews 13:7, 1 Peter 5:1, 2), this unity must be expressed in government.

The necessary inference to be drawn is that the government should manifest the unity and be as embracive in respect of its functioning as the unity of which it is an expression. A concrete illustration of this principle is the decree of the Jerusalem council (Acts 15:28, 29; 16:4).

OPC Sister Church of the Week

The Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia (PCEA)

On February 3, 1788, the first church service in Australia was led by Rev. Richard Johnson, the Anglican Calvinist chaplain of the new penal colony of New South Wales, which then covered the eastern part of the Australian continent. Victoria and Queensland were later separated out and colonies in South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania also existed. On January 1, 1901, the six Australian colonies united to become a nation. Through federation, the Australian states transferred some of their law-making power to the federal Parliament.

The Rev. Dr John Dunmore Lang was the first Presbyterian minister to arrive in mainland Australia

reaching Sydney in 1823. He encouraged further ministers to come from the United Kingdom, although he was himself somewhat of a divisive personality. The splits in Scottish Presbyterianism, particularly the division of the Established Church of Scotland in 1843 over State interference which led to the forming of the Free Church of Scotland (free of such interference in Christ's prerogatives), had repercussions in Australia. The Australian Synod was in legal and moral connection with the Established Church of Scotland and refused to break that connection or change its compromising name.

As a consequence, on October 10, 1846, the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia was formed as an independent body, and maintained fellowship with the Free Church of Scotland, from which it obtained ministers. However, the gold rush which began in 1851 brought in a spirit of pragmatism and compromised the stand taken in 1846, leaving only a remnant of the PCEA to continue a fully confessional position. By 1875 the mainline Presbyterian churches were in serious spiritual decline; they federated as the Presbyterian Church of Australia in 1901 and a majority joined a liberal ecumenical merger in 1977 forming the Uniting Church. The PCEA, despite being largely based outside the main cities was able to assist the continuing Presbyterian Church which is today a much healthier body although with a modified adherence to the Confession inherited from 1901.

Today the PCEA has 12 parishes across Eastern Australia and a following of approx. 800 members. She practices exclusive psalmody without musical accompaniment. There is a shortage of two or three ministers at present.

The PCEA is in full ecumenical relations with the Free Church of Scotland, is a member of the International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC) and can interchange ministers with the Reformed Churches of New Zealand and with the OPC. Rev. Dr Rowland S. Ward, (PCEA), has written the PCEA History which is

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available as a free download from the website
<www.pcea.org.au>

PRAYER:

- For a powerful witness in a country with 25 million inhabitants and the size of the United States.
- That the voice of the Lord may resound through her faithful witness, that her churches may grow in number and in the proclamation of the gospel.
- That the Lord will provide additional men to fill vacancies so that her work may be enlarged.
- That her leadership may be encouraged and strengthened in their calling with a renewal of vision and commitment.
- With great thankfulness for Divine protection and service of His faithful witnesses since the early days of Australia.

OPC Congregation of the Week

New Covenant OPC, South San Francisco, CA (NCOPC)

The Presbyterian Guardian, September 1960 - Vol 29, No. 9, provides the following insight into some origins of NCOPC, additional sources came to light. This is a story of the wonder of God's grace!

Brentwood OPC of South San Francisco dedicated its building on August 7, 1960. Ruling Elder Samuel Moncrieff, led the volunteer effort, himself a volunteer worker, using building materials from demolished WWII buildings in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Rev. Edwards Elliott gave the dedication message, *"When the Seventh Eye Rejoices"* (Zech. 4). Rev. Elliott's pastorate at the First Church, San Francisco, led the

work in Brentwood (Now New Covenant OPC, South San Francisco).

Another man who labored for the cause was Rev. Arthur Riffel, then an elder, who was installed as the first pastor of the Brentwood congregation.

Services were previously commenced in a house on the present property in the winter of 1957. *"It was a common sight to see people working most every evening and all day Saturday during the time of construction,"* observed pastor Riffel, *"and now we hope that we may be such a testimony to this community that people will come to learn the Scriptures and to serve God in their daily lives."*

The Presbyterian Guardian, May 1962, records that Rev. Arthur J. Riffel, pastor of the Brentwood Church took a call from Santa Cruz OPC, CA.



On Friday, March 31, 1967, licentiate Erickson was ordained to the gospel ministry. Growing up in a non-Christian home, Carl Eric Erickson came to faith as a teenager. Sensing a call to ministry, he studied at Covenant and Westminster Seminaries, graduating from the latter in 1964. After interning at First OPC in Manhattan Beach, California, for two years, he returned to the Bay Area to pastor Brentwood (later New Covenant) OPC in South San Francisco in 1967. Three years later he married the former Kathryn Albright (daughter of OPC minister H. Wilson Albright, who gave over 50 years of continuous service in his congregation).

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Rev. Erickson celebrated not only the fiftieth anniversary of his ordination, but also his retirement as pastor of New Covenant OPC in South San Francisco, California. On Friday, March 31, 2017, current and former members and friends of NCOPC gathered from near and far (Northern and Southern California, Hawaii, Missouri, and Spain) to pay tribute to Pastor Erickson's faithful ministry to the saints at New Covenant. Heart-warming tributes to Pastor Erickson's loving care for the flock were given by many.

Pastor Erickson served as chairman of the Credentials Committee for fifteen years and as dean of Family Conference for twenty-five years. During that time, he also served as a trustee for the San Francisco Crisis Pregnancy Center and , for several years as a trustee for Westminster Seminary, CA.

Early in his tenure at Brentwood pastor Erickson's parents began to attend services. *"I continued to pray, teach and testify before them through the years,"* he later reflected in New Horizons. This culminated in his experience of what he described as *"God's covenant blessings in reverse,"* as he went on to explain: *"On June 24, 1990, I had the privilege of baptizing my own parents and receiving them into the church upon their profession of faith. There wasn't a dry eye in the congregation as we all rejoiced over the wonderful grace of Jesus to my 83-year-old father and 79-year-old mother."*

NCOPC is presently searching for a minister. Elder Dennis Fullalove serves this humble congregation of 50 souls, now in his 38th year of service. Deacon Burnie Villanueva is approaching his 20th year of service.

PRAYER:

- That the Lord will lift up His work in the South San Francisco area.

- That the Lord will provide a full-time minister to serve His people at NCOPC.
- Give thanks for the many works God has done in and through NCOPC over more than a half century.
- For growth, encouragement, and continued faithfulness.

OPC Mission Work of the Week

OPC Mission Work in Haiti

When we in North America think of Haiti, our minds are occupied with images of poverty and great need. The need is very real! Haiti has received at the Lord's hand several setbacks through hurricanes and earthquake. This makes mission work in Haiti interesting and important. Not only is Haiti the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere, but much of the population practices Vodou and worships demons. Natural resources are very few and there exists little hope for a population that is mostly illiterate.



An earthly shadow of hopelessness covers much of the country, but in the darkness there is the light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Thankfully we have in Haiti brothers who have zealously embraced the Reformed

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faith and the Lord is bring His saints into the Church. The OPC is privileged to be able to minister in this country with the aim to help establish an indigenous Reformed Church.

Please be in prayer for Ben and Heather Hopp in Carries, Haiti. Ben writes: *“We give thanks to God for the way he has used us in building the church in Haiti. But we are always looking to the future—and asking: How is God raising up the next generation of leaders for a solidly Reformed and Presbyterian church in Haiti? On our second day, we made good progress discussing and answering questions on the draft Book of Church Order that will someday soon be used by the Eglise Presbytérienne Réformée d’Haïti. We enjoyed good food and fellowship provided by Pastor Esaïe in Gonaïves.”*

The focus of that group came to expression in a church covenant that summed up their purpose in this way: *“For the glory of God and the furtherance of His kingdom, we hereby covenant together to begin a Presbyterian church in Tyler, Texas, based on this covenant, loyal to the Scriptures, the Reformed Faith, and committed to the spiritual mission of the Church as Christ commanded in the Great Commission.”*

God has blessed TPC with leadership. On May 25, 1983, John Johnson was called to pastor the new church. In July 1983 the church reached out to the OPC and Glen Black and John Hilbelink came to Tyler to meet with the group. Through the fall of 1983, steps were taken to affiliate with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

SouthWest Presbytery News

OPC PSW Congregation of the Week

Tyler Presbyterian Church (TPC) - On the evening of March 27, 1983, a group of 30 people gathered in a home to talk about starting a new Presbyterian church in Tyler.



Pastor John H Johnson



Three men from the Presbytery of the Dakotas were instrumental in facilitating that process: Jack Peterson, Gerry Taylor, and Fred Klatt. On January 4, 1984, the pastor and elders, Kenneth N. Brown, Robert P. Lewis, Thomas G. Robinson, and H. Kenneth Turman, were installed, and we were fully organized as a congregation of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

From worship and Sunday School in homes to rented facilities, the church grew and purchased land and a building and moved to its current location with the dedication of the facility April 20, 1986.

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With the ebb and flow of membership the congregation grew to the point of needing a new worship facility which was finished in March of 2008. An updated Fellowship Hall followed and was completed in 2015.

There are currently four ruling elders and two deacons. Several men are in training to join these ranks hopefully later in 2018.

PRAYER:

- For wisdom and grace to minister to the varying needs of the flock
- That recently added men on the session and diaconate will assist faithfully in the oversight of the church
- That as added pastoral staff is considered, the Lord will enable us to proceed in a way that encourages and blesses the church body
- That we may be faithful to always hold forth Christ in our preaching and teaching

Footnote: *The OPC Presbytery of the Southwest has its roots in the OPC Presbytery of the Dakotas. The Presbytery of the Southwest was formed in late 1984.*

Listening In and Sounding Out

Wichita Falls, TX - is coming along at a good clip. A group of 20 people (adults and children..... 9 adults) met recently in a Galatians Bible study. Robert Mossotti is still leading that. They meet twice per month. They have seen a new PCA couple join in w/ them recently. We are working on a web site. They held a 2-day outreach ministry on August 23-25.

We are also now booked with Rev. Glen Clary to do a seminar there in November on Reformed Worship. Things are humming along well. Some of the folks will likely be at the PSW September 21-22 Presbytery meeting, They call themselves **Living Stone Fellowship**.

PRAYER:

- For Holy Spirit to move this work to steady growth.
- That grace and mercy of the Almighty may rest upon them unto the establishment of a living and durable testimony to the Lord's Name.

Jehoash Presbyterian Church in Catlett, VA -

a mission work of the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic, On Sunday, August 5, received its first members. The service included baptisms, professions of faith, and the celebration of the Lord's Supper. A great day!

PRAYER:

Thanksgiving for God's marvelous grace.

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