



# Harvest Call

September 16, 2018

## OPC Ecumenicity

Christ instituted the apostolate with authority delegated from him (Matthew 16:18, 19; cf. John 20:21, 23; Ephesians 2:19-22). This apostolic authority is exercised now only through the inscripturated Word. But in the sphere of delegated authority the apostolate is supreme and will continue to be so to the end of time.

This is the way the Holy Spirit, as the vicar of Christ, abiding in and with the church, exercises his function in accordance with Christ's promise. He seals the apostolic witness by his own testimony and illumines the people of God in the interpretation and application of the same. Subordinately, however, in terms of Matthew 16:19, the hegemony of the apostolate is undeniable and it exemplifies the descending hierarchy which Christ has established. There is also in the New Testament institution the delegated authority of the presbyterate, always subject to the apostolic institution, to the Holy Spirit who inspired the apostles (John 16:13; 20:22), and ultimately to Christ as King and Head of the church, but nevertheless supreme in this sphere of government.

## OPC Sister Church of the Week

### The Presbyterian Church of Brazil (IPB)

The Presbyterian Church of Brazil (Igreja Presbiteriana do Brasil) is the oldest Reformed denomination in Brazil. It was founded by the missionary Ashbel Green Simonton (1833-1867), who arrived in Brazil in 1859. The heirs of the Presbyterian tradition arrived in Brazil somewhat as follows:

- Independent Presbyterian Church of Brazil (1903), with headquarters in São Paulo;
- Conservative Presbyterian Church (1940), based in São Paulo;

- Fundamentalist Presbyterian Church (1956), based in Recife; Renewed Presbyterian Church of Brazil (1975), based in Arapongas, Paraná.
- The United Presbyterian Church of Brazil (1978), based in Rio de Janeiro.

Currently there are several Reformed denominations in Brazil. These include the Independent Presbyterian Church, the Conservative Presbyterian Church and some churches created by immigrants from continental Europe such as Swiss, Dutch and Hungarians. However, the largest and oldest Reformed denomination in the country is The Presbyterian Church of Brazil.

A pioneer of the Reformed faith in Brazil, Rev. Ashbel Green Simonton (1833-1867), was born in West Hanover, Pennsylvania. Simonton attended the College of New Jersey and initially thought about being a teacher or a lawyer. Influenced by a revival in 1855, he studied Princeton Seminary. The famous theologian Charles Hodge, led him to consider missionary work abroad. Three years later, he applied to the United States Presbyterian Church Mission Board, citing Brazil as his preferred field. Two months after his ordination, he embarked for Brazil, arriving in Rio de Janeiro on August 12, 1859, at the age of 26.

The IPB is a federation of churches that holds to the Westminster standards, as well as its pattern of worship and community life.

### PRAYERS:

- For the Holy Spirit to raise men to shoulder the growing work of Christ's Church
- For hearts and minds ready to head and obey the call of the gospel
- For nurture of the saints in Brazil and for their walk and growth in grace

## OPC Congregation of the Week

**Lynnwood OPC, WA** - was founded in the late 1960s as a church plant of the Christian Reformed Church (CRC). In the early 1990s, as the CRC drifted further away from its Biblical and Reformed commitments, Pastor J. Peter Vosteen led the church to the OPC.

Lynnwood OPC is a congregation of approximately 140 members and regular attenders. We have services in the morning and in the evening. Members reflect the diverse demographics of the greater Seattle area, with a good mix of folks from (in no particular order) Dutch, English, Scandinavian, Philippine, African, Indonesian, and Chinese backgrounds (among others).

Benji Swinburnson was called as a pastor around 2007, and served alongside of Pastor Vosteen until his retirement. Lynnwood OPC have three ruling elders, and four deacons.

### PRAYERS:

- Pray for diligence and faithfulness for the Pastor, Elders and Deacons in faithfully administering their respective duties.
- Pray for a number of young people who are maturing and considering making profession of faith.
- Pray for a young married couple who lost their first child at birth, but are now expecting another baby boy.
- Pray for opportunities for fellowship and mutual encouragement throughout the week, as the heavy traffic along I-5 can make weekly gatherings difficult for many.
- Pray for the building committee of our church as they oversee construction of a new sanctuary on our church property.

## OPC Mission Work of the Week

**Merrillville, Indiana** - Pastor Ryan shares that July was an exciting month for the Merrillville mission work, largely in part to the visitors they received.

One visitor came to Mission Church (their newly decided name) by means of social media. She found their Facebook page and called to ask for a ride to church. After receiving a warm welcome, she immediately called her niece, recommended the church, and the niece requested a ride to church as well.



**Ryan and Rochelle Cavanaugh**

Please pray for these visitors to return, and for more people to find them through their growing web presence.

On Wednesdays Pastor Ryan attends a local Dungeons and Dragons gaming group. Those in the group know that he is a pastor, and Ryan has extended an invitation to all of them to come to worship. This past month, he had his first person take him up on his offer.

Pray for Ryan's continuing witness to the gaming group, and that many more would come and be brought to know Christ.

## SouthWest Presbytery News

**Christ The King OPC, Longview, TX**, began in 2000 when a group of people started a Bible study, hoping to see a Reformed church form in Longview. They began meeting for Bible study in a rented room at Letourneau University, and evening worship services began in 2001 in a home and moved to a local church in 2002, and the same year the group was received into the OPC as a mission work. In 2005 morning worship services began as they moved to the Holiday Inn Express in town and were particularized the same year.

It was at that time that hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans, and the congregation was at the center of relief efforts, coordinating from Longview housing refugees in their own and other OPC homes across the nation.

In 2008 the congregation also was given an historic church building in Gilmer, TX which they then had transported twenty miles by a building mover to the present worship location in Longview.

There are presently two ruling elders, no deacons, and one pastor, Rev. Phil Hodson. Pastor Phil in a former life founded [www.CheaperThanDirt.com](http://www.CheaperThanDirt.com), a company which distributes sporting goods, but soon walked away after from daily operations to pursue the ministry (1994). After graduating from Westminster in Philadelphia in 2001 he moved to Longview (where his wife grew up) and then served as a church planter after being licensed to preach in 2003. He was ordained in 2007.

The congregation has been involved for over ten years now in ministering to those in prison and discipling men after their release. There is a Bible study in the Powledge Unit in Palestine, TX which has been going on every Monday for almost ten years, and men have paroled and become members of Christ the King from this and other prisons. One now is an OPC minister.

Pastor Hodson also serves a local non profit hospice as their chaplain, visiting and praying with patients in their final months of life, and doing devotionals for the employees of the hospice.

The congregation recently read though Harry Reeder's book, *From Embers To a Flame: How God Can Revitalize Your Church*, which spurred some reflection and the drawing up of some strategic plans to show hospitality in the local community. This also sparked participation of congregants in outreach of various kinds. The congregation desires to itself plant a congregation in east Texas within five years.

### PRAYERS:

- Fruitfulness in outreach as a congregation and as individuals
- Our outreach to meet new students at the upcoming Letourneau University church fair
- For our new gratitude ministry, systematically sending thanks to those who serve in our area.
- Converting visitors to members
- That our children would profess and follow Jesus faithfully in His Church

## Listening In and Sounding Out

The following email came our way and is passed on for prayer for the safety of young men who are eager to serve the Lord, and for the saints in the storm-ravaged Carolinas whom they seek to serve in their time of need.

**From:** Rescue the Perishing - Email

**Date:** September 14, 2018

**Re: ... Three sons in Wilmington, NC.**

... They got in there last night pulling a skid-steer loader and toting along a high-volume waste pump (with a 3 inch hose that can drain most basements), chainsaws, winching material, a lot of tools, waders and extra fuel tanks (they don't want to sit in line at

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gas stations). [We are] taking [another son] to the airport tomorrow am to fly to Atlanta where he will meet up with his older brother and they will fly in together to Columbia, SC. (He did double his assigned home-school work this week to earn the privilege of working besides his older brothers. Though tired, his mother said he scored well.) So five of our sons along with two other men from the Atlanta area OPC church will work through a list of homes of Christians who are members of the OPC in the Wilmington area to help them out. When that list is completed then they go door-to-door to those member's neighbors. OPC denomination office is covering travel costs but all the rest (including lost salaries) are out-of-pocket.

Their and our complete trust is in the Lord. Also, when going to school in Virginia, one son [who] used drive toward hurricanes on the Eastern seaboard and they employ a lot of technology to keep an eye on things. So they are not novices as they've previously been to Houston to help on Harvey damage.

May Christ be praised. We covet prayers for their witness of the love of Christ to the body and to others. Please pray also for their protection.

Christos Kurios,  
Paul R. Dorr

**Note:** *The contents of the original email edited for publication.*

**First Reformed Presbyterian Church (PCA), Minco, OK** - was started in 1907 by J.M. Robbins and Rev. J.C. Story of the Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUS) with ten members. In 1921 the church was able for the first time to purchase a manse and call a full-time pastor.

There have been two changes of affiliation in the history of the church:

1. On September 11, 1962 the church requested to be dismissed from the Presbytery of Shawnee (PCUS) to become part of the

Mid-South Presbytery of the Reformed Presbyterian Church Evangelical Synod (RPCES). Changes the PCUS were troubling not only to the members of FRPC but many believers in the denomination which eventually brought many other churches and individuals out of the PCUS to join a Christ-centered, mission-minded body passionate about preserving historic Presbyterianism.

2. In 1981 the RPCES merged with the like-minded Presbyterian Church in America (PCA)--a denomination formed in 1973 out of the PCUS because of theological liberalism which denied the deity of Christ and the authority and inerrancy the Scriptures.

The church remains today a member of the PCA whose goal is to be "*faithful to the Scriptures, true to the Reformed faith and obedient to the Great Commission.*"

We are a small congregation of 41 members, 1 Ruling Elder, and 1 Deacon. Pastor Sam Rodriguez has been serving for almost five years.

## PRAYERS:

- For increased hunger and thirst after righteousness.
- For growth in grace.
- For continued faithful work unto the Lord in the Minco area.

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

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