



# Harvest Call

September 23, 2018

## OPC Ecumenicity

All offices in the church of Christ can be filled only by the gifts of the Spirit, the structural subordination of the government of the church to the rule of Christ functions in living reality as a fellowship of the one Spirit. Everyone who has the Spirit of Christ is thereby called as a good steward of the manifold grace of God to minister his spiritual gifts to all the saints, so far as he is given opportunity. In particular, those whose gifts are for rule in the church must exercise such gifts in the communion of Christ and his church.

When these principles of gradation and communion are appreciated, and when coordinated with other considerations already established, especially that of the unity of the body of Christ, we appear to be provided with a pattern that points to the necessity of making the presbyterate as inclusive as is consistent with loyalty to Christ and the faith of the gospel. In a word, we are pointed to the necessity of unity in government, a unity that is violated when churches of Christ adhering to the faith in its purity and integrity are not thus united.

## OPC Sister Church of the Week

### The Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS)

The Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS) is a communion of Christian churches in the Reformed tradition. The RCUS stands on the great Reformation principles of salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, according to the Scriptures alone, to the glory of God alone.

The pioneers of the RCUS came to the United States in the face of many dangers, with the greater dangers behind them in the old world of Europe than those before them in America. They sought peace and freedom to worship God according to their beloved Reformed faith. The causes of this emigration are given in a Memorial published in 1754. *“Some of them*

*fled from the severe persecution to which they had been exposed at home on account of their being Protestants, others from the oppression of civil tyranny and attracted by the pleasant hope of liberty under the milder influence of the British government, others were drawn by the solicitations of their countrymen who had settled there before them, but far the greatest part by the prospect they had of relieving themselves under deep poverty and providing better for themselves and their families.”* It is said, there were 30,000 pioneers of the RCUS in Pennsylvania (15,000 Reformed) in 1731, and the British became alarmed lest Pennsylvania would become a German rather than an English colony.

Peter Minuit, the first governor of New Amsterdam (New York), who was a deacon in the Reformed Church of Wesel, Germany, and afterwards an elder of the Reformed Church at New Amsterdam (New York), came earlier (1626). Later, in 1638, he founded the first Swedish colony in Delaware, where a Dutch Reformed Church was founded at New Castle, but given up. It was not, however, until the end of that century that the Germans began coming in such large numbers as to form congregations. Many of them settled near Philadelphia, in a town which received its name from them, Germantown. Most of them were farmers and the most desirable farms in the neighborhood of Philadelphia had already been taken by the Quakers, they pushed out further into the wilderness and began settling Montgomery and Bucks counties.

At first they had no regular pastors, but sometimes would employ a pious schoolmaster who would read sermons to them or they would appoint one of their own number to hold such a service, and thus they would worship God as best they could. As an institution, the RCUS claims 1742 as the year of its beginning as an institution. Under the leadership of Rev. Philip Lewis Boehm. Although he began as a school teacher who would read sermons, in America he was pressed into service at the insistence of the churches. They were initially organized with three congregations, with a clear constitution and were committed to the Three Forms of Unity (The Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession and the Canons of Dort). Throughout much of their early

# Harvest Call

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history there was a shortage of ministers so ministers would often hold services in 2 and 3 congregations.

Over the years the RCUS grew throughout the new world. By the early 1900's there were over 1675 congregations, 58 Classes, and over 348 thousand members. Unfortunately, like most mainline churches, most of these were lost to liberal theology of the 19th Century. In the 1930's there was a strong ecumenical movement that led to a number of church mergers where churches agreed to put their doctrinal differences aside and fellowship together and eventually would call themselves the United Church of Christ (which is apostate today). The entire denomination, with the exception of one Classis, the Eureka Classis which consisted 20 German-speak congregations in North and South Dakota. Many of these were first or second generation Russian-Germans who had immigrated to America after their religious liberties were being revoked by the Russian government. They were allowed to leave, and many of these saw America as the place to which they wanted to go. In 1943 there were four ministers, one retired serving 20 churches.

Since this meager beginning a number churches that had gone along with the ecumenical merger, returned to the RCUS-Eureka Classis. Today there are 58 congregations consisting of approximately 3600 baptized members. The RCUS are zealously committed to the historic creeds and confessions. In fact, they hold to what could be called confessional church membership. The RCUS not only expect a confession of faith in Christ, but also a commitment to their confessional standards. They raise up their covenant youth and expect them to memorize the Heidelberg Catechism and to have a working knowledge of the Scriptures. By God's grace, the Lord has kept and preserved the unity of the RCUS.

## PRAYERS:

- That by the Lord's grace, the RCUS will continue to cling firmly to the truth and boldly proclaim the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- For divine protection of the church as she strives against the focus of materialism.

More information can be found at our denominational website: [www.rcus.org](http://www.rcus.org)

## OPC Congregation of the Week

**Christ Orthodox Presbyterian Church - Magna, UT -**  
In 1987, Jason Wallace was living in Savannah, Georgia, when he was shaken from a nominal faith by a young woman trying to recruit him into a cult called The Way International. Because of his interaction with the group, he became interested in sharing the gospel with pseudo-Christian groups. He visited Utah on a business trip in early 1988. He recognized that Mormons were much as he had been - - religious, but unconverted.

On his return to Savannah, he discovered that the Mormon church had moved missionaries into his apartment complex. He got to know and share the truth with them. He also began to regularly pray for the Mormons. After serving as a deacon at the Independent Presbyterian Church in Savannah, he entered seminary with the hope of ministering in Utah. He graduated in 1998 and moved to Salt Lake City, Utah, as a church planter.



The Salt Lake City area is the most cosmopolitan in Utah with over a million people in the immediate area, but even nominally Protestant church membership is barely over 4%. There had been a group that had unsuccessfully tried to start a mission work through another NAPARC denomination in Salt Lake City. A few

# Harvest Call

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of the people joined the new OPC mission for a time, but none stayed long-term. One of the great challenges for the congregation is that many people want to leave Utah after leaving the Mormon church. Those who are not from Utah can find advancement in employment difficult and feel alienated from their neighbors.

Despite the challenges, the Lord prospered the work, but it experienced schism soon after organization, and one of the ruling elders was excommunicated. The work survived and new members were added. In 2004, John Terpstra and Alex Michael were ordained as ruling elders. Elder Terpstra moved to Texas for work in 2006, and Elder Michael is now part of a daughter church in Ogden, Utah. Frank Meads was ordained as a ruling elder and currently serves with Don King, an augmented elder from the Ogden congregation.

The congregation has sought to be aggressive in its outreach, sponsoring hundreds of evangelistic book tables at venues such as the county fair, the University of Utah, community events, and even gun shows. They have also put on dozens of debates with Dr. James White and Pastor Wallace debating Mormons, Roman Catholics, homosexual advocates, and atheists. The debates opened the door to Pastor Wallace being able to host *The Ancient Paths*, a live, prime-time, call-in show on a local Christian television station. With a potential audience of 900,000 households, the show has helped bring people into the church and helped make the Ogden church get started.

Though relatively few have joined the church, the feedback has been overwhelming. Pastor Wallace is regularly stopped by people who tell him they love the show, but unfortunately, few seem convicted to follow Christ. The show lasted for 7-1/2 years until the station was sold and changed formats. Since then, the church has been making evangelistic videos for YouTube. Its first video, *An Earnest Plea to Latter-day Saints* was released in April 2016 and had over 100,000 views in its first two years of release. Several people have credited it with helping lead them out of Mormonism and to the Jesus of the Bible. It and seven other videos for a Mormon audience are free at [www.lds.video](http://www.lds.video). The congregation has also made An

Earnest Plea to Gay Christians ([www.gaychristian.video](http://www.gaychristian.video)) and An Earnest Plea to Roman Catholics ([www.romancatholic.video](http://www.romancatholic.video)). They are currently working on videos for atheists and Muslims.

Both churches are currently struggling. Last year, the pastor in Ogden demitted the ministry, and half the congregation left. Pastor Wallace is filling the pulpit there at the 9:00 a.m. worship and then driving to Magna for the 11:00 a.m. service. The church in Magna has also had three families leave the state in the past few months. Attendance in Ogden is now in the teens and in Magna, it is in the thirties.

Despite these challenges, the Lord has blessed the congregation with peace and unity. He also blessed them with a building - a former Mormon meeting house in Magna, a suburb of Salt Lake City. After years of renovating the building as funds were available, the work is nearly complete. There is also a group that meets for weekly prayer in Provo, 45 miles to the south. They are praying that the Lord will establish an OPC work there. Utah County has over 500,000 people, but only about 1,000 Evangelicals. Provo is the home of Brigham Young University and the LDS Church's Missionary Training Center.

## PRAYER:

- That the Lord will send His Spirit and convict those who have heard the Word.
- For the Lord to build up the Ogden congregation and raise up a pastor for them.
- That God would build up the group in Provo and establish a church there.
- For a local Baptist church that is reforming, even to the point of using the OPC's Directory for Public Worship.
- For Randy Rumpf, a member of the Ogden congregation is slowly recovering from a stroke.

## OPC Mission Work of the Week

### Pastor Jim Bosgraf, Presbytery of the Midwest, Regional Home Missionary

Jim shares that the Lord continues to bless the Presbytery of the Midwest in many ways and the Presbytery will have to be divided again in the near future. One of the most exciting developments over the past few years is the way God is providing the mission works and churches with wonderful places to worship and expand ministries.



**Jim and Judy Bosgraf**

One church worshipped in a public facility for nineteen years before they were able to build a beautiful new building of their own. Another church used public facilities for twenty years and has recently been able to purchase an older building and reconstruct it for many new programs. And the stories like these continue.

Jim shares, *“We realize that, as many have said, ‘you don’t need a building in order to worship God’. However, it sometimes helps to have a building to teach people the truth of that statement. We continue to praise God for his provision of worship facilities that at one time seemed impossible to consider.”*

**In Memoriam:** Judy E. Bosgraf, age 77, went to be with her Lord and Savior on Sunday, September 9, 2018, after a three year battle with pancreatic cancer.

She was born February 25, 1941 in Winchester, MA to Kenneth and Esther Anderson.

### PRAYERS:

- Please pray for Jim Bosgraf, and for the Bosgraf family, as they grieve the loss of Judy’s earthly companionship.
- For the growth of the Presbytery and for faithful outreach of God’s people where the Lord has placed this work.
- That the Holy Spirit will cause the light of the Word to be evident in the growth of the Church.

## SouthWest Presbytery News

**Christ Covenant Presbyterian Church (CCPC), Amarillo, TX** - In 1969 group from a Bible church in Lubbock met with Jim Halsey to discuss his recent visit to L'Abri in Switzerland and listened to tapes of Francis Schaeffer. Among the members of this group were Mike and Cynthia Mahon, Jim Halsey, Pam Stavely, Mike Bushell, Christine Wright, John Sanderson, and Richard Dark.

Over the next three years the group became convinced of the basics of the Reformed faith. In seeking a church which would embrace these doctrines, they examined several denominations. In early 1972 George Haney, then General Secretary of the Committee on Home Missions of the OPC, answered their correspondence and told them about the Abilene OPC, suggesting a meeting with the Rev. Jonathan Male.

By the end of the 1972 Mike Bushell, who had originally introduced the five points of Calvinism to the group, went on to Westminster Theological Seminary. During the next two years and before the establishment of an OPC chapel, Jim Halsey wrote a book, *“For A Time Such As This”*, about the work of Dr. Cornelius Van Til. He used the meetings with the Mahons and a few others as his *sounding board*.

The OPC was interested in Lubbock as a mission work and in 1974 sent the Rev. Robert K. Churchill (then in



# Harvest Call

Roswell, NM) and the Rev. Jonathan Male on Thursday evenings to stimulate public interest. In 1974 the Mahon family became members of the Abilene OPC, baptizing Gina at that time. In 1975 Jim and Pam Halsey went to Westminster Theological Seminary to study. By March 1976 the Rev. Glenn T. Black was called to Lubbock to pastor the small chapel of about five families.

In June 10, 1976, a public meeting was held at the Federated Women's Club building to determine interest in starting an OPC work in Amarillo. Pastors Glenn Black, Jonathan Male and Dennis Prutow were present. Thursday evening Bible studies were begun at the Fed. Women's building led by the Rev. Robert Churchill from Roswell, NM. After about three such meetings the Rev. Glenn Black began to come from Lubbock to lead the study now conducted at the Schooler-Gordon Funeral Chapel on West 9<sup>th</sup> continuing until December of 1976.

In July 1976 the Mike Mahon and family move to Amarillo. In September 2, 1976, Rev. Benson Male gave a public lecture on the subject *"To Whom Does the Land of Palestine Belong."* In January 3, 1976 – The Rev. and Mrs. Robert K. Churchill moved from Roswell, NM, to labor in the work in Amarillo.



## 1982 Particularization Service - Amarillo, TX

In January 7, 1977, under the ministry of the Rev. Churchill the first Sunday worship services were begun. In May 19, 1977, the first members were received into the Amarillo Chapel under the oversight of the Abilene Church. Those received were Mrs. Churchill, Mike Baughman, Joanne Wright, Christine Wright, John Sanderson, and Mike and Cynthia Mahon. At that service Mr. Mike Mahon was ordained as ruling

elder. Elder Mahon currently serves the Rio Rancho OPC.

The Rev. John R. Hilbelink began his labors in Amarillo in September 9, 1979, in answer to a call from the Amarillo chapel. Presbytery installed him as pastor on October 17, 1979.

Scott Oliphint became stated supply for two years after John Hilbelink. In August 8, 1982, Mr. David Brack was ordained as ruling elder, and Mr. John Brack was ordained as deacon. A congregational meeting was held to request the Abilene Church's concurrence in asking presbytery to constitute Grace OPC in Amarillo a particular church.

On October 1, 1982, the Presbytery of the Dakotas granted the request and declared that Grace OPC be divided from Abilene and be constituted a particular church, and that officers be installed on October 20, 1982.

The presbytery of the Southwest was formed out of the Presbytery of the Dakotas in 1985. Around 1991 Scott Oliphint went back to Philadelphia to finish his PhD. During David Brack was ordained in 1993 and during his time as Pastor, Andrew Moody was an associate for 5 years. David Brack retired in 2014 and Jeremy Boothby was called. Pastor Boothby is a graduate of Westminster Theological Seminary, PA.

## PRAYERS:

- For pastor Boothby as he continues his studies at Westminster Philadelphia in the ThM program.
- For the congregation to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord, especially through the preaching of the Word.
- For the evangelism and outreach committee as they seek to involve the congregation in reaching out to Amarillo for the gospel.
- For the Amarillo Reformed Fellowship (ARF), an ecumenical ministerial alliance, who meets regularly for fellowship and prayer.
- For ARF's Fall conference with Denny Burk on Gender, Sexuality and the Church, as well as for their Spring Conference on worship with Glen Clary.

## Listening In and Sounding Out

### More Houston Developments

A few people in Clear Lake Texas, which is located in Southeast Houston around the NASA area, have reached out to the OPC in Houston, inquiring about the OPC's interest in that area. Rev. Adam York from Providence in Kingwood has been meeting with them and talking about this interest. The group meets occasionally on Sunday evenings for informal worship and study. Please pray for the growth of the effort and for the Lord's guidance. If you know of anyone in that area who might be desirous of seeing an OPC work planted there, please contact Adam York at [aaylnx@gmail.com](mailto:aaylnx@gmail.com).

#### PRAYERS:

- Giving thanks this new inquiring group
- For wisdom in serving these saints and for their edification in Christ
- Giving thanks for this new inquiring group

### News from Greg Huteson, Taiwan

"We're thankful to report that Typhoon Mankhut missed Taiwan entirely. Southern Taiwan received some rain, but nothing significant compared to the Philippines, Hong Kong, and southeastern China.

Our field conference will be held in two and a half weeks. It will be a blessing to hear how the Lord has worked across the island this past year! There are many challenges to sharing the gospel among Taiwan's working class--teammates with conflicting strategies, Taiwanese congregations uninterested in sharing the gospel with the working class, non-Christian Taiwanese who look to their gods for practical assistance, but don't see themselves as sinners and rebels against the one true God.

Still, the gospel is being shared, and God is bringing people--His people--into His kingdom here.

The Australian missionary family will arrive tonight, Lord willing. Their flights were delayed because of Typhoon Mankhut. We expect to be busy for the next two weeks, helping them get settled.

In God's good providence, Bonnie and I went to their apartment yesterday to drop off a few supplies. While we were there, we discovered the lock on their front door was broken. Taiwan is so convenient--we called a locksmith and within 45 minutes, one of the young men from his shop had a new lock installed. It was a blessing we discovered the broken lock before they moved in."

#### PRAYERS:

- That the gospel may be received by hearts ready to hear and follow the Lord.
- For the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Taiwan.
- For protection for faithful missionaries to Taiwan.

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