



Harvest Call

March 3, 2019

OPC Ecumenicity

Elect Pilgrims

1 Peter 1:1-3

At the beginning of his letter, Peter addresses the “elect exiles” of the dispersion. Commentators differ as to the exact identity of the believers addressed by the apostle. But whether these Christians were primarily Jewish or Gentile, or exactly in which diaspora they find themselves, it really does not matter all too much.

This difficulty in identifying the precise recipients of this letter shouldn't bother us. It isn't who these people *were* that concerns Peter so much as who they *are* in Christ. True, they are exiles in real life, cast away forcibly from their homes, jobs, lands and friends by circumstances far outside of their control. They are indeed exiles in the Roman Empire living in Asia Minor, under threat and vulnerable to life's slings and arrows. But they are exiles in another sense too, a more important sense. They are *chosen exiles*. In other words, they are exiles because they don't belong to this world, or to this City, but to another. While they are earthly exiles, they are also spiritual pilgrims journeying toward their true home.

It must be said that **these Christians are not chosen because they are exiles, but are exiles because they are chosen** by God the Father and set apart by the Holy Spirit for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood. They have been chosen by the triune God to be his special possession and treasure. This is the basis of their pilgrimage. Peter writes to them, reminding them of who they truly are, no matter where they are. Their circumstances do not determine their identity, but rather God's choice does.

We would do well to meditate on this truth throughout this week. Our culture quickly sinks into the abyss of sin. Every day, Christians feel alarmed by what they read in the news or see on TV or by what assults their

senses on the internet. We live in a world that we cannot control and we feel evermore alienated from it. Perhaps this is not so bad for us, or for the Church. In all of what we face, Peter reminds us that our identity, our confidence and our hope is not in what the world does, nor in our political affiliations, nor in our country's economic strength or military prowess. Our identity isn't shaken because our culture slips farther away from God, nor is it made stronger if our culture were to repent and turn to God.

Our unshakable hope is in God's choosing and election. We know that here on this earth, in this life, this side of glory, we are *his* elect exiles, pilgrims awaiting a salvation ready to be revealed to us in the last days. While we sojourn, we give testimony to who we are *in Christ*, calling others to accompany us in this pilgrimage. We are willing to suffer any indignity, any loss for his name's sake, awaiting, together with the saints to whom Peter wrote, the outcome of our faith, the salvation of our souls.

Written by: Rev. Nick Lammé

OPC Congregation

Redeemer OPC, Beavercreek (Dayton), OH
- Rev. Robert Y. Eckardt

A Brief History of Redeemer OPC

Redeemer Orthodox Presbyterian Church's first pastor, Lawrence Eyres, opined that working in a transient Air Force community was “*no way to start a church.*” But by God's grace, the Lord has been faithful to gather and strengthen this congregation in the Miami Valley.

Redeemer Church traces its roots back to the fall of 1967, when Dayton residents Mr. and Mrs. J. Elmer Baird asked the OPC Committee on Home Missions to start a Reformed work here. Formerly an elder in the mainline Presbyterian church, Mr. Baird withdrew when the denomination adopted the Confession of 1967 (a document that effectively undermined the authority of the PCUSA's doctrinal standards).

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Pastor Eyres remained in Dayton until 1982, when he received a call from an OP church in South Dakota. In September 1982, Michael F. Frangipane, already a ruling elder of Redeemer Church, received a call to become the church's pastor.

In 1986, the church bought five acres along Indian Ripple Road in Beavercreek. It took two more years before enough funds were available to begin building. In November 1988, the congregation's first "real" church building was dedicated.

By 1996, the congregation was thriving enough to prompt thoughts of a second OP church in the Dayton area. The church issued a call to Rev. Charles Jackson, formerly a Cedarville University student who had attended Redeemer, to serve as pastor of the Dayton-North home mission work. Six volunteer families from Redeemer joined him in Vandalia to start what in 2001 became Covenant Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

Pastor Frangipane retired from the ministry at Redeemer Church in February 2005 after 22 years of service. Five months later, Pastor Robert Y. Eckardt was called to be the church's new pastor and installed by the Presbytery of Ohio.

In June 2009, the congregation moved just down the road to the former Mt. Zion Church property at 22 S. Fairfield Road. Within a year, the congregation also sold its former building to Agape Chinese Evangelical Church. In June 2008, Ken Montgomery moved his family across the country from California to serve a year-long pastoral internship at Redeemer. Shortly after moving into the new building, the congregation voted to retain Mr. Montgomery as associate pastor following the completion of his internship.

In several ways that the world might call coincidental, Redeemer Church has come full circle. Redeemer Church's first elders in 1971 were J. Roy Smith and William Shaw. Mr. Shaw later moved to Columbus, where he helped to start Grace OPC, whose first pastor was Robert Y. Eckardt, the same man who now occupies Redeemer's pulpit. Mr. Shaw's son John became an OPC pastor and served a summer

internship at Redeemer before completing seminary, serving in a pastorate, and now serving as the OPC's General Secretary of Home Missions.

Redeemer Church has met in six different facilities over the years. Numerous families, including church officers, have come and gone, sometimes returning through Dayton more than once due to job transfers. By God's grace, the church has survived these changes and grown to become a much larger but close-knit community of believers.

As Pastor Eyres noted in a 2001 article in *New Horizons*, the OPC's denominational magazine, Redeemer at least indirectly assisted in the planting of four additional congregations. Besides Covenant OPC in Vandalia, Redeemer also helped to start the Columbus church, where Mr. Eyres preached before Pastor Eckardt was called, and the Columbus church later went on to start OPCs in Pickerington and Mansfield, Ohio. Also since then, Covenant Church in Vandalia has planted Living Water OPC in Springfield, and is considering others. Redeemer has helped and supported Good Shepherd OPC in Cincinnati, and it is now renewing its ministry after a group was received from the PCA.

So you could say that through Redeemer's "*children and grandchildren*" a small group has multiplied to a whole group of churches in central and southern Ohio. Who'd have thought all this would come from one struggling little flock?

Since Redeemer's move to their current location, the Lord has blessed them with numerical growth to doubling in attendance, giving, and leadership. They have seen a new generation arise, with many younger families joining or being formed through a multitude of weddings, and then new children. Redeemer have seen new visitors arrive and become enfolded into the community of believers. The Lord has blessed the ministries to the elderly and to internationals.

In God's providence, Pastor Ken Montgomery and his family moved to take a church call in Marietta, Georgia, in November of 2016. Redeemer prayerfully awaited how the Lord may add to their new leadership in the coming years for the Glory of God.

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Leadership

Pastor Eckardt pastor grew up in a Christian home by the grace of God, as the son of a pastor. He came to know Christ as Savior and Lord at an early age. He went to Geneva college in Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania, with a major in Chemistry, and had graduate training at Indiana University, Bloomington.

After being convinced of developing teaching and pastoral gifts Pastor Eckard attended Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, PA, graduating in 1978, and was ordained to the gospel ministry in the Presbytery of Ohio in 1979 while laboring as associate pastor of Redeemer OPC, planting Grace OPC in Columbus, OH.

Subsequently, he has served Matthews OPC in Matthews, NC, and helped to plant OPC churches in Mansfield, Ohio, Lenoir, North Carolina, and Chattanooga, Tennessee. He has served for 8 years as pastor of Cornerstone Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Chattanooga until the recent call to return to Redeemer as the third pastor of this congregation.



Pastor Robert Y. Eckardt

Bob is married to Karen, and has three children, Erica, Emily, and Ethan.

THANKSGIVING:

- Thanks for a new elder elect.
- Thanks for the Nursing Home Ministry
- Thanks for the active Women of Redeemer

- For the English as a Second Language Ministry: Thanks for some internationals attending worship.

PRAYERS:

- Pray for safety for 9 expectant mothers and their children. One has already heard news of a birth defect that may result in a very short life. Pray for providence and comfort.
- For their year-long intern, Stephen Lauer (and family), as he looks for a call.
- Pray for the elders in continued counseling and discipline.
- Pray for a couple of families who are departing to attend other churches.
- Pray for former pastor of Redeemer, Mike Frangipane, that recent heart procedures may result in strength and freedom from pain.
- Redeemer OPC are transitioning to a new senior pastor in 2020, as Pastor Eckardt retires. Pray for a smooth transition.

SouthWest Presbytery News

Faith OPC, Garland, TX - Rev. Chad Bond

Faith OPC gives thanks to the Lord for steady attendance and faithful giving. Since our last meeting we they received five new members. Two babies have been born. A young lady made her public confession of faith. A new Deacon was elected – Mark Henley.

Giving in 2018 slightly exceeded budget. Sadly, however, two families are planning to move away in the near future, one to Michigan and the other to Wyoming. On the bright side, three new families and an individual have recently expressed interest in becoming members.

Pastor Bond is preaching through First Peter on Sunday mornings and the Shorter Catechism at our second service.

The adult Sunday School class recently finished working through R.B. Kuiper's 'The Glorious Body of

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Christ' and they recently started a new class on the miracles of Jesus, using Vern Poythress' book as a guide.

The high school class is working through The Confession of Faith chapter by chapter. The junior high class – all girls – just finished discussing a book entitled 'Lies Women Believe: And the Truth that Sets Them Free'. The younger classes are using GCP curriculum.

Faith OPC holds a monthly family Game Night, a monthly Men's Grill Night, and a Women's Bible study that is studying through Genesis. The session is also working on getting a new church website in the hopes of getting some more new visitors, as well as doing some door to door distribution of church invitations this year.

The session has granted Pastor Bond a three month sabbatical to be spread out over two years. Faith is blessed and thankful to have three ordained ministers in the congregation: Rev. Clarence Mays, Rev. Timothy Hammons, and Rev. Michael Preciado. These men are also available for pulpit supply around the presbytery (contact information is available upon request).

Finally, Faith OPC's deacons finished a Church Safety Plan which, once approved, can be made available to anyone interested. It's quite thorough!

PRAYERS:

- Please pray for the teaching, ruling, and serving ministry of the church leaders, and for a congregation that seeks first the kingdom of God, hungers and thirsts after righteousness, worships the Lord in the splendor of holiness, builds one another up in love, preserves the unity of the Spirit, exercises good stewardship of the manifold grace of God, excels in giving, and shines as lights in the world holding forth the word of life.
- Please pray for three of our members who are seeking permanent full time jobs.

- Please pray for the session's efforts to encourage straying members to attend church more regularly (or at least to clean up our membership roll).

Evangelism Work

Houston Harvey Mission - Rev. Nick Lammé

One of the exciting things that happened this week was an open house we put on in Spring, TX at the home of one of the families whom we were instrumental in helping after Harvey. Last Saturday, we held an open house taco party at Clint and Brandy's. After Harvey, the OPC sent a team to help this family recover and ever since, we have continued to maintain a close relationship with them. So, we decided to put on an open house and invite everyone we could who was important in their lives, both from family and from the neighborhood.

By my count, there were 65 people in attendance that evening. I was able to have many productive conversations throughout the evening. One such conversation really stands out. I'm thinking of Bob and Cindy, a couple who expressed interest in my work as an evangelist. When it came out that they did not attend any church, it was a real open door to inquire a bit further into their situation. Cindy was raised in a pentecostal church and Bob in the Roman Catholic Church. Since getting married, they have gone to many different churches, but as a couple, they haven't quite found a church home. And the truth of the matter is that while they know they should be in church, they haven't yet felt their deep need for the Lord and being part of his Body. Nevertheless, they were very receptive to me and our conversation was very nice. The next day, Clint told me that Bob and Cindy had been very pleased to meet me and that they were encouraged by our conversation. I invited them to church and to have coffee one of these days. I plan to follow up on them sometime next week.

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Other activities this week include:

- We have been strategizing about outreach activities at the Kingwood Farmers' Market.
- I have been writing evangelistic material to use in outreach and evangelism.
- We are seeking a partnership with Oak Lawn PCA in downtown Houston. This church is located in a largely hispanic neighborhood in Houston and offers a perfect base of operations to reach out to residents. We plan to offer English classes and Bible studies for Spanish speaking residents.

PRAYERS:

- Pray that we might be able to start at least three Bible studies in the coming months.
- Pray for those whom we evangelize, that the Lord would give me boldness and wisdom to know how to speak and reach out to those who need Christ.
- Pray for Bob and Cindy.
- Pray for Errol and Joy, the couple that came to church the other week, that the Lord would allow further ministry to this family to bear fruit.
- Pray for Keith from the Memorial Hills neighborhood that the Lord would do a work in his heart and show him his need for Christ.

Greg Huteson Update from Taiwan

Since our last update, Bonnie and I have welcomed three new OMF missionary families to Taiwan. Families from Australia and the US. We're thankful God continues to call missionaries here! We were reminded of the country's spiritual neediness during the recent Chinese New Year holiday, when many Taiwanese set up tables with offerings for gods outside their front gates and the temples were crowded.

As we rent and set up apartments for these families, God has allowed us to meet many Taiwanese businesspeople and landlords. There's a salesman in a large furniture store who tells us he always gives discounts to temples and churches. He gives us

discounts. There are the two workers in his store who deliver and assemble furniture while happily swearing at each other. There's a father and daughter who own a curtains shop. There's an elderly mover, a plumber, a locksmith, the man at the end of our lane who owns an appliance shop, and the guard at an apartment complex where two of our colleague families live. There are others, as well.



We recently chatted with one of the delivery men from the furniture store. He told us he's delivered furniture for twenty years. He has major feet trouble because of the wear-and-tear of his labors. We're praying for his healing. But more than that, we're praying for opportunities to share the gospel with him and the others. May God graciously turn their hearts toward Him!

The businessman we have the most contact with is Mr. Cheng. He's a realtor and he's helped us find four or five apartments. Some of these were for missionary friends outside of OMF. We heard that the landlord and landlady of one apartment turned down every potential renter for six months before Mr. Cheng persuaded them to rent the place to OMF. He told them OMF is a missions agency and its members are Christians. He assured them we would care for their apartment well.

Mr. Cheng is not a believer. But in God's delightful providence, he has become an advocate for OMF! He's also become our friend. He's introduced us to his girlfriend—now his wife—who's also a realtor. We've shared a little bit about the gospel with him and we're praying for opportunities to share more with both of them.

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We assist OMF's new missionaries and their families with a variety of issues. Sometimes they simply want to meet for conversation and prayer—it's stressful to live outside one's home culture! At other times, we arrange for doctor visits, call repairmen, contact landlords, accompany them to government offices, schedule outings, or give their children rides to the international school on rainy days. There are also monthly meetings, where they learn something about Taiwanese culture.



One of our duties is arranging for couples and singles near the end of their two years of full-time Mandarin study to visit ministry teams around the island. This allows them to see the variety of work OMF is doing and helps them decide where to request to be assigned. Last fall, I arranged for a young Taiwanese-American colleague to visit several ministry teams. Just last week, our field leadership assigned him to a church-planting team in south-central Taiwan. We believe it's a good fit. By God's grace, the team has planted a church in a rural area. The young church is thriving and some of the team members are eager to start on a second church plant nearby.

More recently, I've been arranging ministry team visits for a young Swiss couple later this spring. In the midst of our often-full days, we continue to pray for Bonnie's family. Just before Christmas, Bonnie's brother called her. What a surprising call that was! He told her he would be baptized on December 30th! His wife has

been a believer for several years; his children are also believers. But he has shown little interest in the faith.

Last fall, however, he started attending a small group with his wife at her church. In that context, he heard the gospel, repented, and believed. Historically, in Chinese cultures, baptism is regarded, among other things, as a public testimony of one's faith. Believers will often delay their baptism for years because they're aware of the often very real cost of publicly identifying as Christian. We're grateful for Bonnie's brother and his boldness.

Like most of Bonnie's relatives, he and his family live in the city of Tainan in southern Taiwan. Of course, we arranged to be there for his baptism.

PRAYERS:

- For patience and wisdom as we care for young missionaries, and for adequate rest.
- That these missionaries would settle well in Taiwan. At the moment, there are three couples and two singles among the newcomers.
- For opportunities to share the gospel with Mr. Cheng and other acquaintances.
- For growth in growth for Bonnie's brother.
- That God would graciously save more of Bonnie's relatives.

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