



Fall 2015



Participants in School of Missions spent two days covering the basics of missionary calling, work and the various aspects of the roles and relationships of sending churches, ARBCA and missionaries.

School teaches foundations for missions

By Steve Martin

The Association of Reformed Baptist Churches of America, in conjunction with First Baptist Church of Clinton, La., hosted its second School of World Missions.

Begun two years ago in suburban Cleveland, Ohio, the school attempts to teach ARBCA member churches and anyone caring to attend several things: (1) the

theological foundations of world missions; (2) the calling of the missionary church planter; (3) the relationship between the sending church and the missionary; (4) the work of the missionary; (5) the relationship between Reformed Baptist Mission Services (RBMS) and the missionary; and (6) a missionary biography.

This year's meetings were warmly

hosted with southern hospitality by a church sending out its first missionary, Associate Pastor Allen Beardmore. Pastors, prospective missionaries and laymen from Louisiana, Georgia, Tennessee, Illinois and Texas attended.

Cumberland Valley Bible Book Store

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ASSOCIATION OF REFORMED BAPTIST CHURCHES OF AMERICA

The Association of Reformed Baptist Churches of America is a nonprofit organization registered in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The purpose of this association is to advance Christ's kingdom by providing a fellowship in which churches of common confession may find mutual encouragement, assistance, edification, and counsel, and may participate in cooperative efforts such as home missions, foreign missions, ministerial training and publications — all of which are often beyond the scope of one local church.

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Commentary: John Calvin and the Great Commission

By Pastor Earl Blackburn

As Baptists in general, and Reformed Baptists in particular, we humbly pride ourselves in being “Great Commission” people.

The last words of Christ prior to His ascension are of indispensable and indisputable importance. They are in no way of secondary consequence to us; but, among many things, are primary. Contrary to popular evangelical thought, this is one strength of ARBCA’s Reformed denominational identity, and rightly so!

Many today think those who are Calvinistic are without compassion or burden for the unsaved. When the average evangelical, who is mostly ignorant of exegetical and biblical theology, not to mention church history, hears the mention of “Calvinism,” there is the quick assumption of a cold heart and no concern for perishing souls. This caricature is often bolstered by untaught church leaders who are fearful of what they do not know or understand.

What did John Calvin believe about evangelism? What did the great Protestant Reformer of Geneva think of the Great Commission, and how did he understand and implement it?

Did he believe that we should search out, find those with a big red “E” tattooed on their foreheads, and preach the gospel only to them? Did he think that we should preach only to “sensible sinners”? Did he teach that even if someone wanted to be saved with all his heart, if that person was not one of God’s elect, he could not be saved? Did he have no concern for lost souls or those heathen lands and hostile peoples where Christ was not named?

What did Calvin believe?

The same questions must be asked of those who would unashamedly identify themselves as Calvinists. To answer simply the above-mentioned questions: the answer is a resounding “NO”! In order to discover fully the answers to these questions, an examination must be made of Calvin’s writings.

Calvin’s Old Testament Writings

Rather than trying to interpret Calvin,



with all sorts of nuisance, let us let him speak simply for himself. He is quite clear and unmistakable in his expositions of Scripture and in his other writings. He has numerous quotes other than those cited below. The quotes used herein are simply a taste of what he believed, and these can be found in his 22-volume Calvin’s Commentaries, under the respective book and pagination, and in the citations of the footnotes.

Psalm 117:1 – “Praise Jehovah, all you nations. The Holy Spirit having, by the mouth of the prophet, exhorted all nations to celebrate the praises of God’s mercy and faithfulness, Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, very justly considers this a prediction respecting **the calling of the whole world**, (xv. 11).

... Besides, the prophet does not mean that God shall be praised everywhere by Gentiles because the knowledge of his character is confined to a small portion of Judea, but because it was **to be spread over the whole world.**” (emphasis added)

Ezekiel 18:23 – “God certainly desires nothing more than for those who are perishing and rushing toward death to return to the way of safety. This is why the gospel is today proclaimed throughout the world, for God wished to testify to all the ages that He is greatly inclined to pity.”

Micah 2:1-4 – “The Kingdom of Christ was only begun in the world

when God commanded the gospel to be everywhere proclaimed and . . . at this day its course is not complete.”

Calvin’s New Testament Writings

Matthew 28:18-20 – “Go out, therefore, and teach all nations... The meaning amounts to this, that by proclaiming the gospel everywhere, they should bring *all nations* to the obedience of the faith, and next, that they should seal and ratify their doctrine by the sign of the gospel [baptism].”

He continues: “Teach all nations... Such is the import of the term *go out*; for the prophets under the law had limits assigned to them, but now, *the wall of partition having been broken down*, (Eph. ii. 14,) the Lord commands the ministers of the gospel to go to a distance, in order to spread the doctrine of salvation in every part of the world. . . . Mark means the same thing by *every creature.*”

Mark 16:16 – “He who shall believe and be baptized shall be saved... This promise was added in order to allure all mankind to believe; as it is followed, [*but he that believes not shall be damned*], on the other hand, by a threatening of awful destruction, in order to terrify unbelievers.”

Luke 24:46-49 – “To all nations, beginning at Jerusalem... Christ now discovers clearly what he had formerly concealed—that the grace of redemption brought by him extends alike to all nations.”¹

Acts 1:8 – “In all Judea... Here he shows, first, that they must not work for the space of one day only, while that he assigns the whole world unto them, in which they must publish the doctrine of the gospel.

Romans 1:16 – “I am not indeed ashamed, &c... By setting forth one salvation, he cuts off every other trust. When men withdraw themselves from this one salvation, they find in the gospel a sure proof of their own ruin.

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Institute of Reformed Baptist Studies: Remedy for secularism

By Dr. James M. Renihan

2015 will be remembered as a year in which American Christians began to realize and experience the momentous cultural shifts taking place all around them.

Secularism boldly stands triumphant, taunting the old guardians of morality, or to put it more bluntly, trash-talking to Christians. We are ridiculed, mocked and pushed to the margins of society. For many believers, the response is anger, a sense of loss, and perhaps even despair.

But it doesn't have to be that way.

In reality, our circumstances today are not really so different from those faced by Jesus and his apostles. They endured opposition and persecution, both from the political powers of the day (namely Rome) as well as from the cultural elites of Israel (Pharisees, Sadducees and scribes).

Matthew's Gospel supplies us with illustrations. We read there that our Lord preached to crowds of needy and oppressed people. For example, 9:36 says, "When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd (ESV)."

Jesus' words here are graphic. The crowds, not simply nameless mobs of people, but individuals, women and men who together form a multitude, are like sheep that have been beaten and are lying on the ground powerless. Their earthly lords have abused them, and their shepherds have abandoned them to the ravages of their enemies.

Jesus understood the depth of their difficulties, and he was moved to compassion for them. But notice what he did.

He turned to his disciples (probably here not only the Twelve, but all of his followers) and urged them to pray, and to pray specifically. The metaphor about sheep morphs into an image about harvest, because Jesus knows the remedy for those in this demoralized body.

The harvest consists of these downtrodden folk, and the disciples are

urged to pray that God, the "Lord of the Harvest" will send out laborers to gather in the fruit of the harvest. It is not cultural restoration, but rather healing of weary sheep that is at the front of his mind.

Bishop Ryle said it best:

"Let us mark... our Lord's tender concern for neglected souls. "He saw multitudes" of people when He was on earth, scattered about 'like sheep having no shepherd,' and He was moved with compassion. He saw them neglected by those who, for the time, ought to have been teachers. He saw them ignorant, hopeless, helpless, dying and unfit to die.

The sight moved Him to deep pity. That loving heart could not see such things, and not feel.

Now what are our feelings when we see such a sight? This is the question that should arise in our minds.

There are many such to be seen on every side. There are millions of idolaters and heathen on earth—millions of deluded Mohammedans—millions of superstitious Roman Catholics. There are thousands of unsaved Protestants near our own doors.

Do we feel tenderly concerned about their souls?

Do we deeply pity their spiritual destitution?

Do we long to see that destitution relieved?

These are serious inquiries, and ought to be answered. It is easy to sneer at missions to the heathen, and those who work for them. But the man who does not feel for the souls of all unconverted people, can surely not have 'the mind of Christ.' (1 Cor. 2:16.)

Let us mark, in the last place, that there is a solemn duty incumbent on all Christians, who would do good to the unconverted part of the world. They are to pray for more men to be raised up to work for the conversion of souls. It seems as if it was to be a daily part of our prayers. 'Pray therefore that the Lord of the harvest will send forth laborers into his harvest.'

If we know anything of prayer, let

us make it a point of conscience never to forget this solemn charge of our Lord's. Let us settle it in our minds, that it is one of the surest ways of doing good, and stemming evil.

Personal working for souls is good. Giving money is good. But praying is best of all. By prayer we reach Him without whom work and money are alike in vain. We obtain the aid of the Holy Spirit. Money can hire workers.

Universities can give learning. Congregations may elect. Bishops may ordain. But the Holy Spirit alone can make ministers of the Gospel, and raise up lay workmen in the spiritual harvest, who need not be ashamed.

Never, never may we forget that if we would do good to the world, our first duty is to pray!"

— From "Expository Thoughts"

Our task at the Institute of Reformed Baptist Studies is to labor to prepare men to go into the harvest field. We are exceedingly thankful for the outstanding men the Lord has given to us, but we long for more men, faithful men, to be prepared to bring in the harvest.

Is it possible that the darkening world around us provides us with a greater opportunity to shine the light of Christ's grace to lost souls?

Will you pray that the Lord will send us an abundance of men?

Only He is able to raise them up, only He can thrust them forth. But the need is great.

The remedy for obnoxious secularism is not a counter-punch from Christians, it is rather prayer that God will raise up men to minister to the needy and abused sheep. Will you pray that God raises up men like this for our day and the next?

Perhaps Matthew Henry's comment on our text says it best: "The melancholy aspect of the times and the deplorable state of precious souls, should much excite and quicken prayer. When things look discouraging, we should pray more, and then we should complain and fear less."

RBMS missions around the world



“Where there are no oxen, the manger is clean, but abundant crops come by the strength of the ox.”

At first glance, this agricultural comment made by King Solomon in Prov. 14:4 does not seem to have much to do with a 21st century missionary enterprise. The reality expressed by this observation may even have been passed on to the king by one of his cattle managers and, as far as the present author is aware, not one missionary in history has left a record of this verse being inspirational in his motivation to leave all that he loved and held dear in order to preach the gospel to the distant heathen.

However, a number of principles taught by this text can be applied to the work of missions in general and to the work of a New Testament missionary and his sending church in particular.

The text teaches a 10th century B.C. farmer that maintaining clean stables is very simple: no oxen, no mess. Nothing could be more straightforward or more obvious.

For a hard-working man of the field who depended on cost-saving measures to provide for his family, this principle would be very attractive. If his stables were clean, he might reason, then the wages for a stable boy could be eliminated. Furthermore, he could even dismantle his clean and now unused shed in order to use the material for a far more pressing need, such as repairing his house.

Without an ox there would be no need for a manger or for hay. Perhaps the lack of an ox would free up the farmer to do other work necessary to keep up an orderly farm. Without long days spent plowing behind a yoke of oxen in the field, fences could be mended, new wells could be dug and more fields could be scouted out and purchased with the extra income. How fresh and clean everything would look! A place for everything and everything in its place.

In some ways, it is not hard to imagine the first part of the verse as a wistful sigh from a farmer overwhelmed for the moment

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by the numerous and sometimes dirty details of running a big operation. Wouldn't it be far more satisfying and restful to lie down every night with all in perfect order and cleanliness?

However, the text goes on to pull the farmer from his pleasant reverie and the lovely prospect of a clean stable.

No oxen in the stable certainly means no mess; “but” cleanliness ought not to be the only consideration of a farmer. Nor should it be the primary consideration of a farmer. Instead, “abundant crops” ought to fire the dreams of a man responsible for feeding all those dependent on him. Strong oxen bringing in abundant crops ought to hold far more weight with a farmer than no oxen no mess.

If a visitor were to stop by such a man's farm and observe a stable boy working hard to clear a great deal of muck, a manger in need of slight repair and a farm hand yelling at the oxen in the field, he might be accurate in his criticism of the boy's appearance or in his comment that such a place was not aesthetically pleasing or restful but the wagon load of abundant crops entering the barn would silently justify the scene.

Now, having examined the two leading principles of the text, how ought this to be applied to present-day missionary labor?

The first general application pertains to the missionary's sending church. A local church can easily remain “clean” and tidy by refusing to take on the task of sending or supporting a foreign missionary. Obviously, missionaries are not the only

people in a church capable of making a mess just as oxen are not the only animals on a farm that dirty the stall. However, when a local church commits to supporting a missionary, several messy situations may arise – especially if the church will be the sending church.

Church budgets are often tight and space must be carved out in order to financially support a man and his family. In practical terms, this will mean the elimination of one or more previously supported ministries.

For First Baptist Church of Clinton, the mess will be the gap that a departing associate minister creates. The muck includes broken hearts as relationships change because of distance. The cost in both time and money for an officer of the church and his wife to fly for 30 hours one way and stay for at least two weeks in order to provide proper support to our family will be extremely high.

Being a stable boy is not easy or glamorous but that is precisely the position of a sending church. The church will be doing a great deal of work that could easily be avoided by the removal of their “ox”.

The second general application for missions work pertains to the goal of missions. The great objective of any church activity ought to be the glory of God and even the desire to see the lost come to Christ ought not to replace that primary purpose.

However, it is surely true that the salvation of a sinner is not necessarily

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RBMS missions around the world

Here in Fort Worth, we are averaging about 70-80 at the chapel service.

I am currently preaching through the book of Hebrews and leading two groups through Jerry Bridges' book, "The Pursuit of Holiness."

I have also been asked to teach the longstanding Chapel Bible Study, since the current teacher has become ill. I am enjoying pastoral visitation throughout the base and have occasional walk-in counseling sessions, usually concerning relationships.

We minister at the chapel every other

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week and are at our church every other week. This is working pretty well; though

it is not an optimum schedule, it is the best way we can continue together as a family.

Beardmores

From page 5

mutually exclusive to desiring the glory of God and therefore local churches ought to long for the conversion of the lost as a means whereby God is glorified. Christ himself gave his disciples a command to "pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest" (Matt. 9:38).

When we examine the New Testament's account of carrying out this command, we see that the local church fulfilled Christ's will by sending men to plant churches. In other words, local churches ought to desire "abundant crops" above the desire to eliminate the mess created by those men sent out to bring in the harvest.

Also, a gifted man capable of accurately and lovingly preaching the truth and who has the church's confidence ought not to balk at being called an ox. Oxen make big messes and when an elder of a local congregation leaves for a foreign field, church members will be forced to clean up after him. No loving shepherd of the sheep desires to see those whom he has served now care for him when it has been his calling to lay down his life for them. However, the harvest can only be gathered when an ox hauls it in.

How do the Scriptures provide a local church and a local church elder the motivation to maintain a proper perspective for this difficult work? The subsidiary reasons are many but the primary reason remains very simple: Christ is worth it.

Christ is worth cleaning up after a messy missionary. Christ is worth leaving a loving congregation to work in a part of the field where the laborers are few.

Isn't this God the Father's own view of his Son? Does the Father think a meager harvest provides a fit reward for Christ's perfect obedience? Does the LORD not say, "It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth" (Isa. 49:6).

When a local church desires an abundant harvest because they have come to see the surpassing worth of Christ's work they are exactly in line with God's own will. When a congregation understands that Christ's resurrection reveals him to be the "firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep" (I Cor. 15:20), they will gladly clean the stall of an ox sent out into the field to bring in the whole harvest. When a minister grasps the fact that Christ will be finally and fully exalted only when the whole harvest reaches the barn, he will joyfully labor in

whatever corner of the field the Lord of the harvest determines is best for him.

The commentary above provides something of a background for the thanksgiving to the Lord which I now wish to give.

In God's providence, Katie and I found ourselves presented as missionaries to an association of churches at the same time that association faced a serious theological controversy. We did not know, and our sending church did not know, how we would be able to receive all of our funding, especially since living in Perth, Australia, costs a great deal.

However, God in his kindness has provided for our needs.

We found that local churches and ministers wrestling with important matters of doctrine were not unwilling to clean out ox stalls.

We found that individual believers we had known for years loved Christ as we did and found him worthy enough to self-sacrificially give in order that "abundant crops" could be brought in from the field.

We found that an RBMS committee, newly reorganized, did not consider the job of maintaining an ox in the field too big a burden but rather a privilege for the One whom they served.

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RBMS missions around the world



Have you ever had something that you dearly wished would happen but were nervous in case it might not?

Well, I have had a dose of that experience for the past while. We have (finally) put an offer on a site for a building in town and it would seem that the owner is willing and we are progressing with plans for the local council to approve and, once they do, we can purchase the site.

I have to remind myself often that a building is not what I am about! Although having been in rental property for the past 30 years, along with the social changes by the state I think having our own property will give us options we never had before.

I am still called to build spiritual bricks in a Holy Temple.

I have had more radio opportunities of late, due to the usual speakers being unable

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to do the 40-minute radio program. The radio station will broadcast our Christmas evangelistic service on Christmas Day again this year! This is another seed-scattering opportunity!

Please pray that in the heart of some hearer Christ might be born anew in them.

Ireland has an upcoming referendum next year on abortion, and the liberal left are gearing up with another wicked

diatribe saying it is a human right! It is neither human nor right.

Please pray that God would not leave Ireland in its dark and devilish ways.

Knowing, brethren, that such experiences are common to us all, I take encouragement soldiering on here in my dugout, knowing you are fighting where you are.

Beardmores

From page 6

We are profoundly thankful to have seen first-hand the love of Christ in the hearts of so many saints. It is with this thanksgiving in view that we now wish to provide a brief update with respect to beginning our work in Perth.

As many of you know, our first visa attempt was denied by the Australian government. The visa we originally desired was a temporary "bridge" visa, which would have allowed me to work as an employee of First Baptist Church, living in Perth. However, now that the government does not allow overseas churches to sponsor visas, we have decided to apply for a self-sponsored visa.

This particular visa requires the applicant to meet educational and professional standards specific to a certain job title. In God's providence, I meet the application requirements for medical physics. If approved, this visa will provide permanent-resident status for myself and

my family.

In addition, I will not be required by the government to work in the medical physics field but will be able to devote myself to full-time church planting.

There are three steps to complete before being approved for this visa. The first requires approval from the Australasian College of Physical Scientists and Engineers in Medicine.

This body regulates the medical physics profession in Australia and the government will not accept my visa application without their recommendation. Right now we are waiting for their authorization and hopefully we will hear back before the end of December.

The second step will be to submit an expression of interest (EOI) to the government. The EOI formally requests permission to apply for my visa and processing this will take about one month. Once the EOI is accepted I will be able to apply for my visa. This step takes the longest and I will probably not receive their decision until mid-to-late March 2016. As you can see, although I meet all

the requirements on paper and humanly speaking the process is very straightforward and simple, a great deal of prayer is needed – especially with respect to the timing of approval.

While waiting for our visa to be approved, I have been able to do some groundwork with those in Perth interested in becoming part of the church plant.

In September I traveled to Perth in order to preach several messages on Christ's promise to build his church (Matt. 16:18). At our Saturday meetings we had a little over 30 people attend and in the two Sunday worship services we had the same number.

The Lord allowed me to faithfully preach his word and several people expressed appreciation for the truths being taught. During this brief visit I was also able to sit down and discuss the proposed future of the church plant with the several individuals and families most interested in committing themselves to the work. At the end of the meeting we decided that two of

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RBMS missions around the world

Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning: Great is Your faithfulness.

This is certainly a scripture that we need to remember over and over again, though this is a very familiar one. God's faithfulness is so inclusive as it applies to every single detail of our life.

I just turned 68 years old and I am most thankful to my God for the privilege of serving Him as He provides me with strength and vision in the ministry.

Last summer I had the opportunity to be more regularly in the pulpit in our church in Quebec City during the absence of Pastor Jacques Pelletier, who went on holiday. I preached a short series of messages on the touchy subject of doubt in the morning services while I taught on Solomon's prayer at the Temple dedication (1 Kings 8) at our midweek prayer meetings and Bible study.

I just finished a series of meetings with a couple who are preparing for marriage. The ceremony should take place early in 2016. The man is Mexican and the lady is Colombian.

Of course, the big event of the last months had been the starting of our new church plant in Montreal. Fourteen years ago, I was involved in a church plant in Montreal but, for obscure reasons, that church terminated its activities on Sept. 20 after the pastor left to join another association.

Our new church plant officially started on Sept. 27 with our first worship meeting. We are very thankful for the hall we are renting in a private school. Thus far, we have an average attendance of 12-15 adult people. Our worship is held every Sunday morning at 10 and we stay together for lunch and fellowship afterward.

The name of this new church is Église réformée baptiste de la Trinité. I am pretty sure you will not have any problem knowing what it means in English. I keep expressing my deep gratitude to our God

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Raymond, left, leads the first service of the church plant.

for the two men who are helping me in this project, Denis Pépin and Hugues Pierre.

Both of them have been involved in the pastoral ministry and they are precious collaborators. We ask your prayers for the going forward of this promising project. We are very enthusiastic with what has been done so far and we stand in great expectation before our God for the future.

The way it works, at this point, is that I travel from Quebec City to Montreal every weekend. I leave my place on Saturday morning and I return on Monday evening. On Saturday, I can have meetings with the two men working with me and, of course, on Sunday, we have our worship meeting, followed by a time of fellowship and, possibly, visitation.

On Monday, I teach a course on anthropology at the Faculté de théologie

évangélique. They asked me to teach another class for the winter semester but I had to refuse in order to dedicate more time to our church plant.

Let me leave you with a few prayer requests:

- Our church plant project in Montreal;

- Our radio station ministry as I have less and less time to take care of it;

- A man named Pierre who is attending our new church every Sunday and we pray that he will come to a personal and saving knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ;

- Francine, a very kind lady who is also attending our new church in Montreal; she comes from an Adventist background.

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RBMS missions around the world

At a recent meeting of the Fellowship of Reformed Baptist Churches in New Zealand, Pastor David Yan spoke to us from Luke's account of the church in Acts, particularly the events of Pentecost and the period that followed.

He pointed out that they were extraordinary days in the history of the church, but that the hallmarks of commitment expressed in Acts 2:42 are just as relevant in the ordinary days of the church's life and witness. And certainly, these are "ordinary days" in the life of Crosspoint Church!

I rack my brain, and sift through the clutter of memories that tell the tale of life since the last Quarterly Update, desperately hoping that there might be something newsworthy, something extraordinary to fill a half-page and excite you, the readers and supporters of our labors in Palmerston North. But these are the days of the "ordinary," not the extraordinary.

These are the days of preaching Sunday morning by Sunday morning through the Gospel of Luke: such familiar territory, with vistas of the life, miracles and teaching of Christ that we have viewed so many times before.

And yet, while we've stopped at these view-points on previous journeys, the light is different each time and the scene reveals little details we had not noticed before. And so the comments come: "I never saw that connection;" "That passage always puzzled me until you pointed out those details;" "I don't know how I missed that truth before;" "I love to be reminded how Jesus fulfilled his mission so perfectly;" etc.

These are certainly ordinary days, with ordinary incremental growth in knowledge, understanding, application, love and devotion. We give thanks to God for the ordinary days!

These are the days of preaching Sunday evening by Sunday evening through the book of Leviticus. In contrast to Luke, this is unfamiliar territory. As we round every corner, the scene presented is

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puzzling, confusing and even disturbing at first. We have to tread more carefully, lest we stumble or become entangled in the undergrowth of rites and rituals so alien to our experience.

Yet we know to look for Christ in all the Scriptures, and with care we see Him here. Here He is in the sacrificial lamb, here He is in the festal gatherings, here He is in the priestly routines. Over and over again we encounter Christ in the shadows, and see the beauty of the unfolding revelation of God in his plan to reclaim, redeem and renew.

These are ordinary days, with slow and sometimes faltering progress in understanding, but leading to an ever increasing appreciation for the plan of God in our salvation. We give thanks to God for the ordinary days!

These are the days of working Wednesday by Wednesday through the Baptist Catechism, being reminded of truths long accepted by the church, the "old paths" that, while often neglected today, have been well trodden and proven true.

These logical questions and carefully crafted answers lead us again and again to bow awestruck in the presence of the glory of our graciously sovereign God. So, week by week we bow together in the routine of prayer in the knowledge that God is there with us, hearing us, guiding us, answering and blessing us. These are ordinary days, with the cost of weekly commitment to getting out to study and pray together, but the rich rewards of fellowship with God and his people which accumulate over time

in a growing confidence in our God. We give thanks to God for ordinary days!

And what more? Well, we are beginning to plan for the annual routines of the Christmas season. These, too, have an ordinariness about them. I suppose they are a special kind of "ordinary;" it is, after all, a festive season!

Nevertheless, they are ordinary rather than extraordinary, and while many around us will be trying to amp up the vibe, we are content with the ordinary: to celebrate the birth of Christ and proclaim his saving grace as we have done each December for over a decade in this city.

Yet, perhaps next time there will be something extraordinary to report. We cannot help but long for that. We are thankful for the ordinary, but we do yearn for the extraordinary – a powerful work of God among us that accelerates our growth in knowledge and grace, adds to our number those who are being saved, and exalts and glorifies our Savior in the sight of all.

Soli Deo gloria!

Perrons

From page 8

■ Pray for a couple who visited us the first Sunday; they keep saying they will come back but we have not seen them since.

May our Majestic God keep pouring His rich blessing upon the work of our hands!



RBMS missions around the world

I have been assigned to the 1st Special Operations Wing (1 SOW) for just over a year now, and am about to head out on my second deployment since being here.

The first, to Qatar, was very brief; while this upcoming one, to Afghanistan, will last for some time. If you would like to correspond with me, etc., while I am downrange, I welcome it. The ARBCA office will have the address.

This past quarter I have noticed a shift in my responsibilities. It is obvious I am in my last assignment as a captain. I am taking on more and more duties related to administration and supervision. I supervised a chaplain candidate, a Lutheran (LCMS) seminarian, this summer. It is the sixth time I have had the privilege to help mentor a chaplain candidate, and this individual made this my most rewarding experience in doing so.

I am grateful for godly young men who desire to glorify God in all things, and to serve Him in a military setting. It is enjoyable working with individuals who know and cherish the gospel, and who have the intestinal fortitude to stand contra mundum.

I pray and trust that the energy I invested into this young man will prove profitable as he serves in the years ahead as a chaplain.

Much of my work in these recent months has dealt with advising leadership, which is a core capability of Chaplain Corps members. I was selected to represent the 1 SOW Chaplain Corps to address 23 executives (i.e., corporate CEOs, university presidents) for the Senior Leader Engagement Program sponsored by the Secretary of Defense.

I detailed how chaplains promote resiliency among our military members and their families, and how the nature of absolute confidentiality (offered only by chaplains) is an asset to our work in this regard. I also briefed five Department of Defense analysts regarding the resiliency program sponsored by the Chapel. I

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believe such engagements are vital for the continuation of the Chaplain Corps mission, especially when many are calling for our disbanding (even though we have existed since 1775).

While it is important for such work to take place, I still find the most important and satisfying part of my job to be unit engagement. I am welcome within my squadrons, which leads to a great deal of counseling.

Without fail, the most common type of counseling conducted deals with marital relationships. The relentless pressures placed upon military families by ongoing deployments and the stresses related to budgetary constraints (i.e., sequestration, downsizing) keep couples on the ropes. This is one of the reasons our family resiliency program is so important.

Other than marital counseling, another constant theme is depression. War takes a spiritual and emotional toll, and individuals are often unprepared to handle such depletion in a healthy manner. Please pray that such sessions bring opportunities to offer the hope of the gospel.

Within the Protestant Chapel parish this past quarter, I have been responsible for the vast majority of the preaching in both the traditional and contemporary services. At this point, I only have three services remaining in which I will preach. I am preaching currently on the "solae" of the Reformation.

Both congregations have been very receptive to the preaching of God's Word, and I often hear sincere encouragements about "preaching the Word like it is" and

"not preaching empty fluff."

My experience preaching in chapel settings has consistently followed this pattern. Our folks want to hear Scripture taught plainly, and they know when they are being given skubalon instead

Fortunately, we have solid believing chaplains who place a high premium on the truth. Several members have stated recently that they believe our parish in a state of blessing because God's Word is being proclaimed faithfully.

Recently, I was tasked to represent the Chapel for an interview by the local newspaper. The main topic was resiliency, and it was mentioned that the Hurlburt Chapel won the 2014 Air Force Special Operations Command Large Chapel Award.

The benefit of the article, from my perspective, was that it increased the visibility of the Chaplain Corps, and many of our group and squadron leaders (especially commanders) found it to lend credibility. Because of this, they became even more willing to lend their support to chaplains.

I believe this is one of the ways the Lord has answered your prayers to give favor with leadership. Such matters increase the already-intense workload, but it is worth it because greater numbers of people seek the help they need from chaplains (as opposed to mental health, etc.).

As always, please know that my family and I appreciate all of the love and support we receive from you. Your prayers and support are a constant encouragement.

Pro Deo et Patria.

RBMS missions around the world



Greetings in the Lord!

At the 2014 GA, Pastor Darrell Gustafson, director of the Counseling Center at Grace Covenant Church, led a breakout session on the importance and need for biblical and pastoral counseling. The lessons he shared resonated with me then, and prove true almost daily in the chaplaincy ministry.

On average, I see about 40-50 airmen per month who come to me for counseling, and in most cases they would not have sought out a chaplain or pastor otherwise. The Lord has used this to teach me the importance of counseling in our ministries.

While I cannot go into a lot of detail, due to confidentiality, I would like to share a few of the general things I see in counseling ministry.

At the top of the list is marriage and relationship issues. We all know that marriages are hurting in our culture. From our own experiences we know that marriage is a lot of work and is rarely easy. Yet many of our friends, family, and coworkers are struggling in their marriages and seemingly have nowhere to turn. Complicating the issue further, many churches no longer offer counseling services, leaving these families to the mercies of secular counselors.

Several of the couples that have come to me shared that they went to their churches first, only to find out that their pastor did not do marriage counseling and their churches, even large churches, had no counseling ministry. In September I was in New Orleans for a DMin class and during the course one of the professors expressly told the class of pastors, "Men, you are not counselors. Stop doing counseling and refer your people to the professionals." I couldn't believe my ears. Not only are many churches lacking in counseling ministries, pastors are even being told not to do it.

Families and individuals are being pushed from our churches to secular

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sources, and in many cases the advice they are getting is utterly unbiblical. One wife was told by her counselor that she should leave her husband because she wasn't happy, and "God would want you to be happy."

A husband told me his counselor told him that he thought the man's wife has a mental illness, having never met her, and that he would be justified if he left her. By the time these couples come to me, I not only have to work through the issues in their relationships, but also all the bad advice they've been given by their doctors, mothers, brothers, sisters and friends.

The lesson in all this for me has been that biblical pastoral counseling is a valid and vital form of ministry, one that cannot be neglected. My primary passions are preaching and teaching, and before coming to this assignment two years ago almost all of my focus was on those. Here, the Lord has taught me that I need to give as much attention to counseling from His Word as I do for preaching from His Word. And I am thankful for that.

Again, I cannot go into detail but I will share that over the past months there has been a lot of fruit in counseling. Marriages have recovered. Others have at least taken divorce off the table and committed to working through their issues. Several have turned to the Lord in the midst of divorce. One man who was coming to me for advice has committed to reading Scripture for the first time.

Airmen who have been raised in

false religions have been moved to tears by the gospel. One couple I'm working with even inquired about baptism, and although they are not ready for this step yet, it is a blessing to hear them ask and know that they are seeking.

Certainly, not all my encounters are success stories. Some people come wanting me to justify their decisions or normalize their bad behavior. We can never do that. Yet, we can lovingly confront them with the truth and pray the Lord uses even those brief encounters to open their eyes. In all things, our role is to be faithful stewards of the gospel and to be that voice of truth amongst the lies people so often hear.

In addition to the counseling opportunities, the Lord has been gracious in granting me several opportunities to preach and teach over the past months.

The current assignment I am serving in is one in which my duties are primarily counseling and visitation. For our first year here in Las Vegas, that grieved me deeply that I wasn't preaching and teaching regularly. However, my family and I have settled in an excellent local church where I have opportunity to fill the pulpit on occasion and to serve in children's ministry.

In addition, I get calls regularly from my fellow Air Force chaplains here in town asking me to preach for them when they are out of town. I have been blessed to see the Lord stretch me to develop new

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RBMS missions around the world

Beardmores

From page 7

the families should begin meeting regularly together every Sunday.

At the moment, I am scheduled to visit Perth again from Dec. 2 – Dec. 14 in order to preach a total of eight times. These messages will be split up over two consecutive Saturdays and Sundays and will continue to deal with the theme of Christ building his church.

The week in between will be busy as I am scheduled to visit Stanmore Baptist in Sydney to present my work in Perth. Pastor Michael Prodigalidad and his church are interested in financially and prayerfully supporting another Reformed Baptist congregation.

In addition, I will be meeting with several of the men and women I met during my last trip, as well as with some whom I have not met, in order to further inform them about the type of church I will be planting. Lord willing, I will make one more trip in late January or early February before all of us go over together as a family on a permanent basis.

One way the Lord has been pleased so far to bless our attempts in beginning this work concerns the men and women he has provided to form the nucleus of the church. I have been privileged to get to know Israel and Carol Malekano, as well as the Yap family.

Israel is an engineer from Zambia and his wife Carol, also from Zambia, is a nurse. Both of them were members in Conrad Mbewe's church prior to their arrival in western Australia and they are eager to see a Reformed Baptist church take root in the northern part of Perth.

Hon Seeng and Hong Ling Yap are from Malaysia, where they sat under the ministry of Dr. Poh Boon Sing. They have three children named Ping, Shaun and



**Hon Seeng and Hong Ling Yap
and their children, Cheyne,
Shaun and Ping**

Cheyne. At present, Hon Seeng's mother also lives with them and these two families have already begun to worship together each Lord's Day.

Both Israel and Hon Seeng have been good friends to me and have already done quite a bit of work in helping me become acquainted with Perth. It would be impossible for me to make these preaching trips without their work in preparing the meetings.

There are a number of ways in which our family, First Baptist Church and the church plant would benefit by your prayers.

We ask that you pray for me as I travel to and from Perth. Please thank the Lord for these opportunities but pray for safety and good health, as well as a quick recovery from jet lag on either end. Please pray that the time would be well spent in getting to know the people and in understanding how best to communicate the truths of the



Israel and Carol Malekano

gospel.

We ask prayer to grow in patience and in waiting on the Lord while our visa is processed. First Baptist Church would appreciate your prayers with respect to the preaching and teaching ministry while I am overseas.

Elder Mitch Axsom will be shouldering my load while teaching full-time at a local charter school. Thank the Lord that he is able to do this and pray that the Spirit would accompany his messages. Please pray for us as a congregation as we continue to learn how to grow in our ability to take the gospel overseas.

The Malekano family and Yap family would greatly appreciate your prayers as they meet together for a mid-week prayer meeting as well as for Sunday services. Thank the Lord that they have been so enthusiastic and faithful and pray that the Lord would enable them to continue. We take comfort in the fact that Christ builds his church. We take comfort that Christ intercedes continually for his people.

We are thankful that the Father has given him the nations as his "heritage" and "possession."

Missions

From page 1

(CVBBS) provided a large book table, which RBMS Chairman Jerry Slate thought to be the most comprehensive missions book table he had ever seen.

Pastor Slate, from northwest suburban Atlanta, began our time Thursday afternoon with an overview of the theological foundations of world missions. From God's covenant and decree down to the sending of His Son and the giving of the Great Commission, Pastor Slate warmly and clearly opened up what the covenant making, covenant keeping Triune God has been doing since eternity past and into what men call "time" to save a people for His glory. An outline of his message and a basic bibliography of missions expanded the profitability of Pastor Slate's message. Each session was followed by a Q & A time so that more good could be squeezed out of our time together.

After a break, Pastor John Miller from Clarksville, Tenn. taught about the calling of the missionary church planter. Pastor Miller showed both the subjective, inward call of the missionary along with the objective, outward acknowledgment of that call by the local, sending church. One of the many problems that has plagued missions for centuries is that some men have "run" when they have not been called.

It was clear that an inward call alone is not sufficient but must be ratified by the sending church. How the missionary candidate is to assess his inward call and how the sending church were to assess their potential missionary were also very instructive. Another Q & A session followed.

Dinner was served with a Cajun flair as the women and men of the church sumptuously provided for our meals. There was no lack of enticing food and desserts and no one went away hungry.

After dinner, retired ARBCA pastor Steve Martin from Atlanta spoke on the sending church and the missionary. What can the missionary expect from its sending church and in turn, what can the sending church expect from its missionary?

Following from the examples in Luke's



Participants, above, sit in the sanctuary of the First Baptist Church of Clinton, La., left.

"missionaries," but what constitutes real missions work? Pastor Miller showed us that the Great Commission of Matt. 28:18-20 has not been rescinded, but is still in force.

He explained what it means to go to the lost in evangelism, discipling those who respond in repentance and faith, and teaching them to observe all things, including being enfolded into a local church. John was given Holy Spirit grace to preach to all that the sacrificial work of Christ was to be repeated in the lives of those taking the gospel to the lost. While only Christ's suffering was mediatorial, nevertheless God has ordained that other suffering of the Body of Christ take place in the fulfillment of the Great Commission. There were few dry eyes as Pastor Miller called us all to the imitation of Christ in our going.

After a break, retired pastor Martin spoke on RBMS and the missionary. What does RBMS expect from the missionary? What should the missionary expect from RBMS?

RBMS is a means for churches of common Confession to work together, pool

account of the early church in Acts, a pattern of relationship was seen linking the local, sending church and the missionary who is sent out. Missionaries of the first century were not rugged individualists and loners, but men who worked well with others on the field and in their home church. Another Q&A session followed.

Friday's sessions began in the afternoon with Pastor John Miller speaking on the work of the missionary. Many Christians simply go overseas and call themselves

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In The Books: Interview with author Starr Meade

By Gary Marble

We recently had the opportunity to interview author and educator Starr Meade on the subject of educating young people in the Scripture. Starr Meade and her husband Paul are members of Grace Covenant Church, in Gilbert, Ariz., where she has served for many years as teacher and director of children's ministries.

She has taught Bible and Latin classes in Christian schools, and has written 10 books to date, which help Christian families – particularly their children and teens – better understand the Bible and doctrine.

Gary Marble: As I look over the titles of your books, you appear to have a particular aim in mind; what do you hope to accomplish through your books?

Starr Meade: My books have grown out of my lifelong ministry of seeking to explain Christian doctrine and biblical truth in a way that children and early teens can grasp. My aim would be that, from using my books, children – and maybe even their parents – would understand the most important truths of Scripture well enough to articulate them themselves, with the hope that, as they better understand them, God would produce a love for them in their hearts.

GM: What are some of the areas that need improvement as you look at Christian homes regarding the biblical education of our young people?

SM: To rephrase the Nike slogan: “just doing it”! I work with children and teens from a diversity of Christian churches. All the young people I work with come from Christian homes. In many cases, either they know next to nothing about the Bible's content and about basics of Christian doctrine, or they know a handful of basic stories and a few memorized phrases which, when they're asked, they cannot actually explain.

GM: Do you see areas in the churches where the biblical education of young people needs improvement?

SM: In many (most?) churches, the bar is set too low. It's assumed that children won't understand theology, so the most basic and simple of truths are taught, over and over. The same basic Bible stories are



Starr Meade

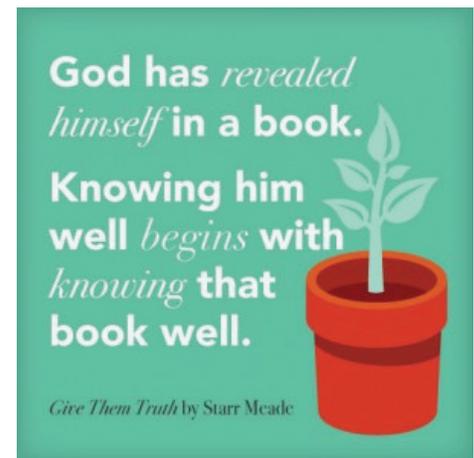
told and retold (often, I might add, from a moralistic perspective – “So you should be like this main character,” rather than from a God-centered perspective – “What do we learn about God from this story?”). On the other hand, in some of our churches where doctrine is a high priority – doctrine, doctrine, doctrine is drilled (catechisms, confessions, etc.), while the Bible itself is seldom taught, and children grow up with many memorized theological facts, but knowing very little Bible content.

GM: What encouragement and advice do you have for Sunday school directors and teachers regarding biblical education?

SM: In no particular order:

Set the bar high. Children can “get” it; we just need to find a way to explain biblical truth in such a way that they do. Hand in hand with that, be sure to devote the time to learning how to communicate biblical truth to children. Don't just pump out the same information you'd give to adults without working through how to make it understandable and interesting for children.

Make the biblical education of children a priority. Recruit your best communicators to work with the children, and call on them to commit to at least one full year of



teaching. This work is important enough to give it our best.

Learn to see moralism and/or child-centeredness in curriculum lessons, and avoid them both. When presenting any Bible story, ask (and train the children to ask): What is God doing in this story? What do we learn about what God is like from this story?

GM: As an educator, what advice do you have for parents of homeschoolers in the area of biblical education? And as a follow-up, what advice do you have for children who are educated in the public school system regarding biblical education?

SM: Again, in both instances, just do it. Are a grasp of the Bible's content and a knowledge of God and of his salvation as important, say, as math? Are these things as important as soccer or piano? I maintain that they are. Just like math and soccer and piano, Bible and Christian doctrine won't teach themselves. Time must be spent on working out a plan for teaching these things and then working the plan. It won't always be fun, and children won't always want to do it. If we're faithful, we'll teach anyway.

GM: What would you say to those who worry that too much head-knowledge of the Bible will produce puffed-up, Pharisaic children?

SM: I have several things to say about that.

It very well might! That's because our children, like us, are sinners, and we're all experts at taking the best things God gives

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Meade

From page 14

and finding some way to use them for sinful purposes.

Building good character in our children and teaching them to exercise love and charity to people can also produce puffed-up, Pharisaic children. I know one dear little boy who told me once, “We’re good people. We stop and give bottled water and food packages to homeless people when we see them.” But just because sinners can sin by using God’s good gifts doesn’t mean we despise those gifts, right? Some people

commit the sin of gluttony with food, but that doesn’t mean we should all avoid eating.

It’s important to be continually reminding children who are learning biblical truth of its implications for them. Have we taught the doctrine of total depravity? Have we taught the need for a Savior? We need to take the opportunities that present themselves in daily life to point out that our children, too, are sinners, and that certain behaviors and attitudes they exhibit are sinful. We need to be always reminding them of how these things apply to them. But leaving them ignorant of biblical truth is certainly not the answer.

Here’s the hardest thing, for me anyway—we need to add to our teaching faithful, consistent prayer, since God is the one who takes the truth we teach and uses it to open blind eyes, to humble proud hearts, and to draw people to the Savior.

We hope this interview has provided insight toward that essential duty and joy of teaching the Word of God to our young people. Perhaps we could summarize the content in this interview with words from our author’s book, “Give Them Truth:” “God has revealed himself in a book. Knowing Him well begins with knowing that book well.”

Missions

From page 13

their resources and be more fruitful as a group than a single church. ARBCA and RBMS can only give commendation and fellowship to a local church.

Conversely, the only things they can take from a local church are commendation and fellowship. RBMS along with the local, sending church ‘holds the ropes’ (in the words of the 18th century Particular Baptists) while the missionary goes down into the abyss of foreign missions, leaving all behind.

Finances, distribution of resources and accountability were explained. A joint Q & A with John Miller and Steve Martin followed.

After another sumptuous supper, Pastor Slate concluded the conference by giving a biographical sketch of Particular Baptist missionary icon, William Carey and the Greatest Generation. With a nod to NBC broadcaster and author Tom Brokaw’s book, “The Greatest Generation” (that generation persevered through the Great Depression, fought and won World War II and Korea, and produced the abundance of the Eisenhower years), Jerry concluded that the generation of William Carey, Samuel Pearce, Andrew Fuller and the Particular Baptists of the late 18th and early 19th century did far more with less.

With few numbers, little money and no government support, they began the modern work of missions in India, with William



William Carey

Carey leaving in 1793. In the immortal words of Carey, he agreed to be lowered down into the abyss of missions, far from home and native land while the Particular Baptists in England ‘held the ropes’ for him.

Pastor Slate explained both Carey’s strengths and admirable qualities while not white-washing his weaknesses (e.g. his wife, fragile enough in England, went insane in India and was under house arrest in her bedroom for the last 12 years of her life). It was a moving final message for the conference.

The conference concluded with a time of corporate prayer led by Pastor Fred Malone of First Baptist of Clinton. It ended Friday evening so pastors and laymen could return

to their homes on Saturday and be ready for the Lord’s Day on Sunday.

The responses during the two days of the conference were most encouraging. Several laymen noted in the presence of this writer that the conference had greatly helped them to understand what they were getting into by sending Allen Beardmore and his family to Australia.

They believed they better understood the role of RBMS, the role of their sending church and the role of the missionary church planter. They believed they understood how to pray better and more for Allen and their church.

One woman noted that the conference had convicted her how little she gave of herself and her means to the Lord. She seemed determined to change that immediately.

Another man, a prospective missionary from another state, spoke on how much it helped him understand the work of missions and how to get from A to Z, from his local church involvement to the field as a missionary.

It was acknowledged by all that there was a warm and winsome spirit that pervaded all the sessions, free time and meals. The messages seemed to be owned of the Holy Spirit and both local church members and visiting Christians said they profited greatly from the sessions.

If any sister churches would like to host a School of World Missions for 2016 or following years, please contact Pastor Jerry Slate, RBMS chairman, at pastorslate@gmail.com

Commentary

From page 3

Since the gospel invites all to partake of salvation without any difference, it is called the doctrine of salvation: for Christ is there offered, whose peculiar office is to save that which was lost; and those who refuse to be saved by him, shall find him a Judge.” (emphasis added)

He adds: “*First to the Jew and then to the Greek...* Under the word *Greek*, he includes all the Gentiles, as it is evident from the comparison that is made; for the two clauses comprehend all mankind.”²

Calvin’s Understanding Of The “Free Offer Of The Gospel”

Calvin without equivocation believed in what is termed theologically the “doctrines of grace” or as some call them “the five points of Calvinism.” (It should be noted that Calvinism, as it is historically termed, did not originate with Calvin. He derived his beliefs from a careful exegesis of all the Holy Scriptures.) His beliefs in predestination, election, definite atonement/particular redemption (yes, contrary to the naysayers, Calvin did believe in a definite atonement for the elect only), and total inability did not quench his zeal for evangelism and missions; these truths inflamed him to make the gospel known to the entire world!

“Since we do not know who belongs to the number of the predestined and who does not, it befits us so to feel as to wish that all be saved. So it will come about that, whoever we come across, we shall study to make him a sharer of peace . . . even severe rebuke will be administered like medicine, lest they should perish or cause others to perish. But it will be for God to make it effective in those whom He foreknew and predestinated.”³

See Calvin’s comments on the same ideas in his “Institutes of the Christian Religion” (II.5.10; III.23.10).

1 Timothy 2:4: “. . . he demonstrates that God has at heart the salvation of all, because He invites all to the acknowledgment of His truth. . . the Apostle simply means, that there is no people and no rank in the world

that is excluded from salvation; because God wishes that the gospel should be proclaimed to all without exception. Now the preaching of the gospel gives life; and hence he [Paul] justly concludes that God invites all equally to partake salvation.”⁴

“Now the duty arising out of that love which we owe to our neighbor is, to be solicitous and to do our endeavor for the salvation of all whom God includes in His calling, and to testify this by godly prayers.”⁵

Is Calvin contradicting himself when he speaks with such passion about the sovereign and predestinating purposes of God towards elect sinners and then speaks of God’s “heart” inviting “all equally to partake of salvation”? Isn’t he a bit muddled? Isn’t he being a hypocrite? How can he seemingly speak out of both sides of his mouth? Isn’t God giving with one hand and taking away with the other?

Non-Calvinists and anti-Calvinists get confused over this matter because they do not understand what our Baptist forefathers, and theologians of bygone days, termed the free offer of the gospel. Professor John Murray succinctly defines the free offer of the gospel as:

“The presentation of Christ to all men, not only to the elect, in the preaching of the gospel. Christ is presented as a Savior who (1) is all-sufficient to save all who believe on Him; (2) is perfectly suitable to the needs of all men of every kind; (3) commands all who hear His word to ‘repent . . . and believe the gospel’ (Mark 1:15); (4) promises to receive and save all who come to Him in faith (John 6:37; Matt. 11:28; Rev. 22:17).”⁶

Calvin, more clearly than any of the other Reformers, understood and formulated this great biblical truth. Furthermore, Calvin knew there was no contradiction between God’s predestinating purposes and the universal inviting of sinners (using John Bunyan’s words) “to come and welcome to Jesus Christ.”

Calvin incited Christ’s servants to carry the gospel to ends of the world and make the islands and nations of the earth glad. God has done the choosing, the redeeming, and will do the saving; but it is ours to do the offering as stated in the Great Commission!

Murray concludes his treatise on the free offer with these words: “It is on the crest of the wave of the divine sovereignty that the full and free overtures of God’s grace break upon the shores of lost humanity.”⁷

Examples of Calvin Putting the Great Commission into Practice

There is one tragic event during Calvin’s ministry in Geneva, which not only was a blot against him, but brought him great heartache and condemnation from his enemies. It involved a man named Michael Servetus.

Who was Servetus? He embraced certain Anabaptist beliefs concerning baptism, but was not an Anabaptist. He practiced medicine and is reputed to be one of two who discovered the circulation of blood in the human body. He vehemently denied the Trinity and the deity of Christ and had written profusely against these doctrines (e.g., “On the Errors of the Trinity”). He also wrote against predestination and was a vocal proponent of free will and the basic goodness of man. He was extremely Pelagian in his views of man and salvation. He also denied eternal and everlasting punishment. He was equivalent to modern-day Jehovah’s Witnesses.

Servetus had been condemned to die as a heretic by the Catholic Church and was hunted all over Catholic and Protestant Europe.

“There was a certain inevitability that Servetus would one day find himself surrounded by burning faggots. The only uncertainty was by whose hands would it come — Protestants or Catholics.”⁸

Christian History magazine gives us a laconic account of what happened next:

“In an extraordinarily foolish move, Servetus, having just escaped from a Roman Catholic prison, decided to go to Geneva. He knew full well that Geneva was not likely to be hospitable. With some uncontrollable urge pushing him forward, Servetus boldly took a seat in the Cathedral of St. Pierre while Calvin was preaching. He was recognized immediately and arrested.”

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Servetus was tried for heresy and blasphemy. Calvin met Servetus face-to-face at his trial and Servetus publicly and venomously denounced Calvin in the presence of the full assembly. After weighing all the evidence, the court of the Geneva City Council unanimously sentenced Servetus to die as a heretic.

Their meeting at Servetus's trial was not the first time the two had encountered each other. Years before, Calvin returned to Paris one last time.

"Nearly twenty years earlier [1534], Calvin jeopardized his life by returning to hostile Paris in order to share the gospel with a young heretic named Michael Servetus. Years later Calvin wrote, 'I was even willing to risk my life to win him to our Lord, if possible.' But Servetus's erratic behavior was evident even then. After arranging this meeting with Calvin, Servetus did not appear."⁹

For some unknown reason, Servetus had a hatred for Calvin. Calvin did not reciprocate. Again the Christian History magazine gives some valuable insight: "Despite his angry denunciations of Calvin at his trial, Calvin visited Servetus in jail and earnestly sought to persuade him of his errors. Servetus dismissed Calvin with a laugh."

In the Middle Ages and Reformation days, the universal sentence for heretics and blasphemers was death by fire. Calvin did not oppose Servetus's sentence of death, but was consenting to it. However, before Servetus' death, Calvin sought to win him to Christ, and when that failed he interceded on Servetus' behalf for leniency.

"When the sentence was passed upon Servetus, Calvin requested that the Genevan city government grant Servetus a more humane death. [Calvin pled for a speedy death by sword.] The judges remained adamant, and Calvin's request was denied. Servetus was burned at the stake in Geneva on October 27, 1553."¹⁰

A few bigoted Catholics, in their hypocrisy, tried to use this event to discredit Calvin. It did not work. The Genevan City

Council stood their ground and sought to exonerate Calvin.

What should we think of this burning of Servetus? Without question, it was a horrible thing to do, and thankfully we live in a wiser day. But we must remember that Calvin and all the Reformers, along with the Catholics, were men of their day and time. Philip Schaff observes that Catholics and Protestants in the 16th and 17th centuries shared in the view that the burning of Servetus was just.¹¹

I can do no better in summarizing the Servetus affair than close with the words of the Christian History magazine:

"No one should excuse Calvin for his consenting to the execution of this confessed heretic, [though his hands were tied to stop it] but one should understand that men of the sixteenth century viewed blasphemy as a capital offense. This was no less true of Catholics than of Protestants."¹²

Another example of Calvin implementing the Great Commission was his Missionary Training Center. In Calvin's Geneva, biblical Christianity (i.e. the Reformed Faith) was restored, the church established, and many souls converted to Christ.

Under Calvin's direction, Geneva became a receiving center for Protestant refugees from all parts of the world: from France, Italy, England, Scotland, the Netherlands, Russia, Poland, and elsewhere. Calvin set up an Academie, (aka Missionary Training Center) where he trained men for the gospel ministry.

It is estimated that 1,200 men finished their theological training under Calvin's tutelage, many of whom were sent out as pastors and missionaries into all parts of France and Europe.

One man, who trained under Calvin in Geneva and was a thorough-going "Calvinist," later became a metropolitan in the Russian Orthodox Church. Approximately 600 men were sent to France as ministers of the gospel, of which 70 to 75 percent of them were martyred for their faith.

What most people do not realize is that Geneva became a hub of vast gospel missionary enterprise. The recovery of the gospel, after centuries of being obscured

by Catholicism, and free justification by grace alone, received by faith alone in Christ alone, emboldened the men of Geneva.

"Calvin's missionary vitality led to the tremendous spread of Calvinism throughout Europe, eventually superseding Lutheranism as the most vibrant representative of Protestantism.

"Historically, one of the most telling characteristics of Calvinism was that it thrived in those countries where opposition was the greatest."¹⁴

If you were asked who was the first Protestant missionary or missionaries, what would you answer? Most minds would perhaps think back to William Carey, the "Father of Modern Missions." However, they would be wrong. The first Protestant missionaries were sent out from Calvin's Geneva.

Under Calvin's supervision, a missionary party of seventeen, with Pierre Richier and Guillaume Charpentier as their leaders, was sent to Brazil, South America in August 1556 to preach the gospel and evangelize the Indians. It should be studiously noted that the missionary party, shortly after their arrival in Brazil, was betrayed by the Governor and slaughtered by the Jesuits. The first Protestant missionaries were Calvinists, and they failed; not because of lack of concern for lost souls, but by devilish treachery of the Evil One and his bigoted minions.

John Calvin's Legacy and the Great Commission

The distinguished secular historian, Will Durant, was no friend of Calvin or Calvinism. Yet, he grudgingly acknowledged and observed that Calvin (and Calvinism) was the chief architect of western civilization. Notice Durant's list of the accomplishments of Calvin and Calvinism:

1. Sprouted the buds of democracy;
2. Was the first to make public schooling free and available to everyone;
3. Inculcated discipline in an undisciplined society;
4. Helped the burghers of Holland oust the alien dictatorship of Spain;

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5. Supported the revolt of the nobles and clergy in Scotland against Bloody Mary;

6. Made the strong souls of the Scottish Covenanters, the English and Dutch Puritans, and the Pilgrims of New England;

7. Steadied the heart of Cromwell;

8. Guided the pen of blind John Milton;

9. Broke the power of the backward-facing Stuarts;

10. Encouraged brave and ruthless men to win a continent (North America);

11. Spread the base of education and self-government until all men could be free.¹⁶

What about on the spiritual plane? As mentioned earlier, the first Protestant missionaries were Calvinists. The Father of Modern Missions, William Carey, was a Baptist and a full “five-point” Calvinist. So was Adoniram Judson, the first missionary sent out from America. The storied history of Christ’s kingdom since those days have been filled with Calvinistic missionaries who saw no inconsistency between predestination, election, particular redemption, effectual calling, and the command to carry the gospel into all the world with a full and free offer of salvation.

Many Calvinists, like David Livingston, William Burns, and Samuel Zwemer, chose the most difficult peoples and places and there thrived. The more hardened the people and the more formidable the place, the more their labors flourished.

May Christ, the only and great Head of the Church, raise up more missionaries within ARBCA with the same mentality, burden, vision, vigor, and compassion to go to the difficult places at the ends of the earth and make the nations glad!

We’ve a story to tell to the nations, that shall turn their hearts to the right,

A story of truth and mercy, a story of peace and light, a story of peace and light.

We’ve a Saviour to show to the nations Who the path of sorrow hath trod,

That all of the world’s great peoples, might come to the truth of God, might come to the truth of God.

Chorus: For the darkness shall turn to dawning, and the dawning to noon-day bright.

And Christ’s great kingdom shall come to earth, the kingdom of love and light.

Footnotes

1) Calvin’s Commentaries, vol. XVII.; 377-387.

2) Ibid., vol. XIX; 62-63.

3) John Calvin, “Concerning the Eternal Predestination of God,” trans. J. K. S. Reid (London: James Clarke and Co., Limited, 1961) 138.

4) Vol. XXI, “The First Epistle To Timothy;” 54.

5) Ibid., 55.

6) “Collected Writings,” vol. 1: Banner of Truth Trust, Edinburgh, Scotland; 147.

7) Ibid., 147.

8) Christian History magazine, 29.

9) Ibid., 29.

10) Ibid., 29.

11) History of the Christian Church: The Reformation, vol. VII.; Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Mich.; 270).

12) Christian History; 29.

13) “The Minutes of the Consistory of Geneva” have been translated into English and will be published shortly. The exact numbers, which I have rounded off, will be known then.

14) Christian History Magazine; 23.

15) “Register of the Company of Pastors in Geneva at the Time of Calvin: translated with Introduction by Philip E. Hughes,” Grand Rapids, Mich.; 28.

16) “The Story Of Civilization: Part VI;” 489.

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gifts while still giving opportunities to use the other gifts he has given me.

Janet and the kids continue to do well and are really enjoying our time in Las Vegas. We live in the same neighborhood as the pastor and several families from church, so we have been able to build some strong friendships.

Also, many of those families homeschool as well and Janet has started a co-op with the other wives, something she and the kids really enjoy. Elisa (11) started a new school program this year through an online charter academy. This not only relieves some of the teaching burden at home, but also gives Elisa an opportunity to meet new classmates, gain computer skills, and interact with other teachers. She is loving the program.

Caleb (10) and Katelyn (8) are still doing traditional homeschool and are doing very well. Still more, they both have made really good friends with our neighbors, something that is vitally important for homeschool kids.

Lukas (17 months) continues to grow and learn and is an absolute joy for our family. He’s an energetic, talkative, and hilarious little ball of energy and we are so blessed to have him.

I believe I did mention in the Spring that Janet was pregnant again, however since then she had a miscarriage. The Lord was gracious and granted Janet extraordinary strength and comfort during that time, and we absolutely trust his purpose and plan.

We so appreciate the prayers and support of our ARBCA family. May the Lord bless all of you as you have been a blessing to us.

Church Planting: The mission of Home Missions

By Bob Curley

The ARBCA Policy manual states the responsibilities of the Home Missions Committee as follows:

The Home Missions Committee is the church-planting ministry of ARBCA. This committee is responsible for assisting ARBCA member churches and potential church planters in the planting of Confessional Reformed Baptist Churches in America. Specifically, the Home Missions Committee's responsibilities and duties are:

- To encourage ARBCA churches to plant confessional Reformed Baptist churches throughout America.

- To update the ARBCA web page regarding all new church plants, working in conjunction with the publications committee.

- To reply to all incoming inquiries on church planting.

- To re-route all inquiries to the ARBCA web page to the appropriate ARBCA church in that area.

- To provide information to ARBCA churches as to how to go about planting Confessional Reformed Baptist churches.

- To assist ARBCA churches in acquiring financial assistance for church planting/planters.

- To work closely with the coordinator, providing him with contacts of any churches or pastors who may be seeking to establish a potential ARBCA church.

In addition to these responsibilities directly related to planting new churches, the policy manual charges the Home Missions Committee with the responsibility of providing oversight to ARBCA's Pastoral Assistance Policy. This policy is designed to provide assistance to churches struggling to support their pastors.

Both these responsibilities are focused on evangelism. Planting churches promotes evangelism by providing the God-ordained structure for the preaching of the Gospel through which the Lord carries out His supernatural work of grace by saving guilty sinners. Helping struggling churches survive accomplishes the same purpose; such help maintains the preaching of the Gospel in existing churches.

These responsibilities are rooted in the



New Testament model.

In Acts 11:19-21, Luke writes: "Now those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to no one but the Jews only. But some of them were men from Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they had come to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord."

This was the first step in planting the church at Antioch and the beginning of the spread of the Gospel beyond Jerusalem and to the Gentiles. Later, the Book of Acts records the commissioning of Paul and Barnabus to be "sent out by the Holy Spirit" (13:4), which was the beginning of Paul's missionary journeys. Throughout his travels, the apostle preached the Gospel and planted churches. Acts also records that Paul went back to the church plants "strengthening the churches" (15:41).

Other churches quite frequently provided financial support for both his

church planting work and his work of strengthening churches.

So, the center of the mission of Home Missions is planting churches and strengthening churches – the two pillars of evangelism. There are many components of this central mission, including praying for "the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest," encouraging men to consider whether God is calling them to the Gospel ministry, providing for the training and development of these men, developing church planting strategies, identifying locations to plant churches, and financially supporting church planting projects as well as struggling churches.

By working together to carry on this mission, each church in ARBCA can contribute to building a strong foundation for the work of the Reformed Baptist Mission Services and the cause of worldwide evangelism.

– Bob Curley is a pastor of Emmanuel Reformed Baptist Church of Georgetown, Texas, and chair of the Home Missions Committee.