



Spring 2010



Delegates and visitors at the 2010 General Assembly turned out in record numbers this year at Grace Baptist Church in Taylors, S.C.

G.A. focuses on balance in churches

By Scott Swanson

“A Biblical View for a Balanced Church” was the topic for Association of Reformed Baptist Churches of America members who gathered April 20-22 for the annual General Assembly.

The 2010 GA, hosted by Grace Baptist Church of Taylors, S.C., drew 244 registered attendees, which made it the largest ever, Pastor Bob Selph of GBC, said.

The keynote sermons, presented by Dr. Sam Waldron of Heritage Baptist Church of Owensboro, Ky., Dr. Jim Adams of Cornerstone Church of Mesa, Ariz., and

missionary pastor David Vaughn of France, focused on the GA’s theme, “A Biblical View for a Balanced Church.”

Waldron preached the first evening on “A Church with a Passion for God’s Son and God’s Glory,” warning against spiritual apathy and beginning a theme that prevailed through the next two messages – the central necessity of preaching Christ crucified to the ministry and outreach of a church.

Adams’ topic was “A Church Alive with the Life of God’s Spirit” and he continued the theme of the centrality of preaching the true gospel, telling the story of his own

awakening to the truths of sovereign grace while a college student, and how the true gospel is central to the life and function of the church.

Vaughn, whose appearance at the GA was in question due to the shutdown of airline flights from Europe by volcanic ash from the eruption of Eyjafjallajokul in Iceland, managed to get a seat and arrived on the second day of the conference. He preached powerfully on the final evening on “A Church Consumed with God’s Great

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ARBCA Update

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Commentary: Seeking revival amid spiritual decline

By David Vaughn

In our first article, published in the Fall 2009 Update, we saw how the teaching of Micah 7 makes it clear that the Christian Church in Europe and the America needs God's hand in reviving and restoring grace.

The first part of Micah 7 pictures our own contemporary situation too well for us not to see ourselves and our need mirrored there. But on what basis could we hope to see such a revival?

In the second article, published in the Winter 2010 Update, we discovered God's answer to that question through his prophet. All spiritual restoration and revival has its source in the merciful heart of our God who "does not retain his anger forever, because he delights in steadfast love. He will again have compassion on us; He will tread His people's iniquities underfoot." We also learned of the remarkable character of heaven-sent revival. We would have never imagined on our own that God could and does do the sorts of things described in Micah 7:11-17.

The burning practical question for us now is how to seek such revival, especially in times of spiritual decline such as our present situation in which our own guilt and responsibility are great. God gives the prophet Micah instruction for just such a situation. He is given a vision of Zion's attitude and response as the Lord moves her from chastisement and spiritual decline to revival.

Though our local churches may be in different situations spiritually from one another, we are all part of the Church of the Western World, which finds itself in the very situation as Zion in Micah's day. We should all take the keenest spiritual interest in the teaching of Micah 7:7-10 as, through this vision, our Lord teaches chastised Zion how to react to her decline and to seek revival. Some aspects of the teaching of these verses may indeed come as a great surprise and encouragement to us. Let us look at them with our own situation and need in mind. We hear the voice of Zion representing God's people:

But as for me, I will look to the LORD;

I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me.

Rejoice not over me, O my enemy; when I fall, I shall rise;

When I sit in darkness, the LORD will be a light to me.

I will bear the indignation of the LORD because I have sinned against him,

Until he pleads my cause and executes judgment for me.

He will bring me out to the light;

I shall look upon his vindication (literally: righteousness).

Then my enemy will see, and shame will cover her who said to me, "Where is the LORD your God?"

My eyes will look upon her; now she will be trampled down like the mire of the streets.

Looking to God as our only help in the midst of our spiritual decline

Remember that these verses describe Zion's response at a time when the godly have perished, when all lie in wait for blood, when the most upright of men is like a thorn hedge and when Zion herself sits in spiritual darkness under the chastising hand of God.

Nevertheless, taught by her God, she says:

"But as for me, I will look to the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation."

And this waiting is not passive; it's very active as you see by the next phrase:

"My God will hear me."

Waiting upon God means addressing prayers, lamentations and heart groans to God that say: *"Oh our God, do pour out your Spirit upon this land!"*

In these words of Micah 7:7 we notice that the first step in seeking revival in times of spiritual decline is very simple. But we must ask ourselves if we are there. God tells us through his prophet that we must set our heart to look to the Lord and to him alone for restoring and reviving grace in the church.

We cannot look to man. We cannot look to man-made techniques. We cannot even look to our faithful use of the means of grace. We must be locked in a true personal

engagement of dealing with the living God, our Lord. That this is a very conscious and resolute activity is clear from the way that Zion announces it: "BUT AS FOR ME, I will look to the Lord..."

Responding in faith to our spiritual decline

In verse 8 we discover the second aspect of seeking revival in the midst of spiritual decline:

"Rejoice not over me, my enemy; when I fall I shall rise; when I sit in darkness the Lord will be a light to me."

This may come as a very surprising word to us. Here are God's people in the midst of terrible decline; there are hardly any godly in the land and our enemies are saying, "Where's your God?" Yet the Church responds in a spirit of confident assurance: "Rejoice not over me my enemy" because if I fall and I admit my decline I will rise. And if I sit in darkness and even if it lasts and I'm sitting for some time in that darkness the day will come and the Lord will become a light to me."

Amazingly, Zion responds with bold faith long before there is any sign that God's blessing has returned to her. Despite the fact that she is still fallen and sitting in darkness, she replies with a faith in God that enables her to refuse the enemy's doomsday prognostics for her future: "Rejoice not over me my enemy; when I fall I shall rise, when I sit in darkness the Lord will be a light to me."

As Christians in the West in 2010, this is the last thing we would be led to say if we were left to our carnal sense, looking at circumstances or self. However, this is faith's response to a seeming dead end. It is confidence that we shall rise and be restored because there is no God who pardons, restores and revives like our God. It is trust in our gracious Lord's sworn commitment not to allow His blood-bought people to languish forever in weakness and failure.

If the Church in our day is to rise and to seek revival aright, we must learn to respond in this same way from the depths

See **Revival**, page 16

Institute for Reformed Baptist Studies

How much does your church give?

James M. Renihan

The churches of our Association are very generous in their support for Gospel work. Whether it is foreign missions, special projects, or the Institute of Reformed Baptist Studies, I am always blessed by the faithful contributions which come in from our congregations. But perhaps there is an area where our giving could be increased.

I came to faith in Christ in 1970 through the ministry of an average-sized evangelical Baptist church in a small city in Massachusetts.

There really wasn't much remarkable about the church. It was a downtown church with about 150 years of ministry in the city. It had been planted as the second Baptist church in town, and had served well for all of those years. Attendance was probably around 250, with a mix of older people from the neighborhood, families that had grown up in the church and now drove in to the services and new faces visiting on a regular basis.

The church had a generous missionary budget, and an annual missions conference. We had a youth group of about 20-25. The congregation had all of the regular activities familiar to the day—it was a typical church in every way—with one significant exception.

I was a sophomore in high school when I began to attend and was baptized. There were two grades of students ahead of me and, of course, by the time I was a senior, there were three grades behind me. From these young people who were part of that church between 1969-1976, 10 men entered the gospel ministry — eight in pastorates in the U.S., and two in foreign missions. Now, 35 years later, these men are still in these positions. The more I think about this, the more remarkable it seems to me. Why did that very typical — even average — church send so many of its men out to serve in the ministry? This is a question worth considering.

Several reasons come to mind, and

these perhaps may serve as thought-provoking points for our churches to reflect on. Here are some to contemplate:

The pastor and assistant pastor regularly encouraged all of the spiritually minded young people to consider what was called “full-time Christian service.” Sometimes this was emphasized publicly in various meetings, but also it was frequently presented to us privately. It was not unusual for one of these men to speak directly and personally to one of us and urge us to consider whether Christ might be calling us into the ministry. There was no guilt manipulation, simply personal exhortations to pray and consider. These exhortations forced us to confront the matter of a call on a regular basis. We had to consider carefully the Lord's will. It was not just a general question for others—it became a personal issue for each of us.

The male leadership of the church (being a very traditional Baptist church, we had a pastor and deacons, but they really functioned more like elders) were also actively involved in encouraging men to consider the ministry. One of the key moments in my own life was a meeting I had with the pastor and deacons of the church.

As part of their oversight of the church, they scheduled a conversation with all of the young men my age, seeking to give some advice and direction for the future. When they met with me, they told me directly that they were convinced that I should attend seminary and train for pastoral ministry. I came away from that meeting convinced that I could not ignore the unanimous counsel of the spiritual leadership of the church.

The people of the church also prayed for and encouraged men to pursue gospel ministry. When they learned that one of us was considering Christ's call, they were very supportive. There was almost a sense of excitement that another of their own would one day be serving Christ in a position of leadership. This congregational

interest promoted a special climate for each of us. We saw respect and appreciation for ministers.

We saw the esteem in which Christ's servants were held. For young men, this made the ministry seem to be an honorable calling — it was something to aspire to under Christ. Lest I be misunderstood, this did not breed pride in anyone. Rather, it provided a sense of the value and importance of the work, and gave to us a desire to be useful with God's blessing in such a great work.

I could easily continue with reasons, but perhaps these are enough for now. Pastors, do you encourage your men to consider the gospel ministry? Do you spend personal time with them and encourage them to pray about this? Do your elders likewise seek to press this matter upon your young men? Do they urge these men to consider the possibility of Christ's call? And what about your people? Do they esteem ministers? Will they rejoice when one of their own gives himself to serve the Lord in the ministry? I am convinced that our churches must place a higher priority on cultivating their men for service in the church.

In 1833, a South Carolina Presbyterian, George Howe, published an article appealing for men to pursue the Gospel ministry. Consider some of his questions:

1. Every church requires the labors of a pastor. Should not every particular church, then, have one of her sons in training for the holy ministry? If she takes one man from the church at large, as her spiritual guide, should she not put one of her sons into the field to supply his place?

2. Should not every church, having a number of youth within her bosom, who have natural qualifications, which, if improved, would fit them for the ministry, furnish all she can for this sacred office? Should not our vacant pulpits be filled? Should we not pour a constant flood of spiritual instruction over the wide plains

See **How much**, page 5



RBMS missions around the world

The Word of God says in Isaiah 54:10: *“Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed, says the Lord, who has compassion on you.”*

I write several days after the occurrence of one of the strongest earthquakes in known history, the second strongest in Chile, and the 5th in the world. It had an intensity of 8.8, considered 50 times stronger than the one that hit Haiti, and according to NASA it moved the earth’s axis 8 centimeters. It was a difficult experience for us and our beloved country. I had not been able to write you because we were without internet, telephone and electricity. We only had water and natural gas, and a few things to eat. Today (Tuesday) some things are returning to normal, at least in Santiago, but in the south, the scene is chaotic.

I now want to relate to you some further details of what has happened and is happening.

The wee hours of the morning of Saturday, February 27 will be difficult to forget. At 3:34 we were awakened by a violent earthquake. My wife was upstairs in the house caring for the grandchildren, while our young son and I were on the first floor. Our daughters were at the home of friends from church that night.

Due to the intensity of the earthquake, it was impossible for my wife to come downstairs with the twins or for me to go upstairs to look for them, which was even more dangerous. So she stayed upstairs with the twins—minutes that seemed interminable, filled with the anguish of not knowing how it would all end.

Thanks to God the house held up well and we are evaluating material damages

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Chile



that are minor compared to what those in the central-south of Chile suffered. The church people are all fine and we are looking at how we can help those who suffered more.

The cities that suffered greatest damages are Constitucion, which practically disappeared as a result of the tsunami, and Dichato, another town that was left in ruins; the island of Juan Fernandez also was virtually wiped out by the tsunami, and the city of Concepcion, the second largest in Chile, was left with huge damage.

I was a pastor in that city for eight years, and a bridge about 2 kilometers in length that connected the city with other nearby areas fell. To see the pictures and the news saddens us greatly.

The city of Santiago held up better, but several buildings fell, and part of the freeway that circles the entire city also fell. There are other buildings with structural damages that will surely have to be demolished.

Brothers and sisters, it is not easy to describe adequately or relate to you all that has taken place and has affected us as a country. We are saddened and very concerned. We can only beg our gracious God, sovereign in all He does and permits,

to give us wisdom and strength to help our fellow citizens in spiritual matters as well as physical.

We beg you to continue praying for us and our country. The news that we see as days go on are revealing the magnitude of this tragedy, tragic scenes of people that have lost all, things and family, children orphaned and parents that saw their children and spouses die. It all shakes us deeply. The government estimates that the country will take some five years to recover in some aspects.

It’s also saddening to see how at a time of so much tension some of the terrible sides of the human heart surface—people robbing (not from necessity), burning stores and destroying houses; but on the other hand we see also people who in common grace help as they can.

Thank you for praying and for your desire to help. Your help is needed, and we are looking into ways to channel this help. There is a trustworthy Christian organization that we know of that will be able to assist in this.

Receive our affectionate greetings and thanks for the spiritual support that you give us. Many have already written, expressing oneness with us in Christ. Our sincere thanks!

How much

From page 4

lying south and west of us, and send out our sons thither to preach Christ? Assimilated

as we are in climate to the great body of the heathen world, have we not a solemn and important work to perform in sending the gospel to them?

3. Perhaps you are a minister, or

an elder in the church. Have you ever interested yourself to lead ingenious, prudent, and devoted young men to reflect

See **How much**, page 6



RBMS missions around the world

It amazes me to think that it has been a year since the Administrative Council met in Omaha to consider us as the first national church planter for ARBCA.

What a joy and privilege it has been for me to continue to work with the churches that have been so faithful to us over the past 10 years of labors in Argentina. The Lord has been so gracious to us through you and your many expressions of support from individuals in your churches to your prayers and encouraging cards and letters. The Lord knows our hearts are full of praise to him for each of you.

The church here in Asheville, N.C. (Fletcher, actually) is progressing from strength to strength by the grace of God. The Lord has been particularly faithful in giving us many visitors and opportunities to witness to the lost in our daily lives.

Being new to the area, it was not long after the first of the year that I realized that I had exhausted all the open doors to relationships with visitors from our official launch of the work under our new name (Crosspoint Church) back in November. So I began to pray that the Lord would give me new relationships with needy people to “make disciples” of Jesus Christ.

Within about three weeks and several interesting providences I found myself visiting and praying with a sick woman and her husband in a hospital, hanging out with a dog kennel operator, and in the living room of neighbors telling them about the God of the Bible and his work in Christ for them. How quickly the Lord answered my prayer was startling to me.

I hope you will not hear this and think that very soon these will be converted and awaiting baptism. The truth is that our gospel witness is a long labor of love for Jesus’ sake that should take us from the pulpit and pew to the sidewalks and sale counters of the world around us.

Over the past two months these relationships have resulted in a couple of visits to our services and mostly they have become “kindling” for prayer in our

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Don, Gail and Ian

HOME MISSIONS



congregation and we seek a deeper burden for the lost. We continue to water, cultivate and plant the precious seed of gospel truth. Please continue to join with us as we long to see the gospel bear fruit in the lives of lost men and women.

Gail and I are also volunteering at a local crisis pregnancy center in Asheville as they try to reach one of the fastest growing demographics for abortion services in the U.S. – young Spanish-speaking women. This has already been very rewarding.

Through Gail’s work with one young Ecuadorian woman, she has decided against abortion, after seeing the ultrasound of her living baby and being encouraged by the support she received at the center. We are now beginning to make contact with the pastor of a Latin American church in the area that can help these young girls by giving them a community of loving support in the gospel.

Many of these girls are alone and “illegal,” abandoned by boyfriends or husbands, and with little work. Please pray for us as we seek to engage them with the gospel and encourage them to reject the pull of cultural convenience to abort their unborn children.

The latest news on Crosspoint Church is that we are moving in May to a new location for our meetings. However, in the providence of God we will not be moving far, just across the parking lot, actually.

Another evangelical church has rented a space for their offices and some training area that they do not use on Sunday. They have agreed to let us use the space for one-third of

the month and pay one-third of the rent. This is a wonderful situation for us and also keeps us from relocating to another part of the city. We are so thankful for this answered prayer.

Please continue to pray for our growth in grace and unity as a body. We do hope that we can constitute our membership before the end of summer if the Lord allows. We recognize that there is not a strict formula for such things but, we have sought to make our plans subject to the Spirit and His faithful work among us.

We continue to pray with thanksgiving for each of you and rejoice in our fellowship in the gospel of our great God.

How much

From page 5

on the duty of consecrating their lives to personal efforts for the salvation of souls? Can you recollect any golden opportunities of putting a sanctified, well-balanced mind into operation, with the sole object of doing good; opportunities which you have suffered to pass by unimproved?

Will you not now look around you, and see if there are not young men within the circle of your influence, who would be an acquisition to the effective force of the ministry, if they were educated for it? Will you not pray the Lord of the harvest to send them forth into his harvest?

How much does your church give? Has it given any men to serve Christ in the gospel ministry?

RBMS missions around the world



As I look back on the many months that have gone by, I can clearly see God's almighty power and His great care, not only for His people but for the whole island of ours.

Many evangelical churches, on every corner of the island, keep warning people of impending judgment and their need to repent. Some churches have established services to help the unfortunate and the ones that are crying out for help. Despite all this, the people of the nation despise the God of Heaven and continue in their corrupt ways.

Both Grace and Faith started out the year with a week of prayer and also a week of soul searching.

The idea of soul searching is that our people are given a biblical description for their personal walk with God through the year and some of the responsibilities that God requires of them so that God may be known personally and His name honored and glorified.

The results of these meetings should leave the believer mortifying sin in their lives, witnessing for Christ as the opportunity arises, reading not only the Bible and whatever literature that would honor God, and being in the house of

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JAMAICA



God when the doors are opened.

I must confess, though this is the expected norm, not all have followed as was expected. Thus, we did not see the expected Fruit.

We, however, held our Daily Vacation Bible School in partnership with the churches of Hazleton and Carlisle under the guidance of Elder and Mrs. Kelly Knowlden.

The group managed both churches very well – 9 to 12 at Grace and 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. at Faith. At Grace we had more than 100 children, while Faith had a much smaller number because of violence in the area.

After the brethren from Hazleton and Carlisle left we set up times to meet and play games with those who came but

to be honest, nothing came from such meetings.

At Grace, Oneil Thomas, who heads the Evangelistic Committee, has started a youth group with the Sunday School children. It is still active but they are not showing any signs of the repentance, which is what he is gearing their lives towards.

At Faith, Winston Donald is moving in the area, especially in the Mico University Ladies' Hostel, with not only tracts and leaflets, but with academic programs, hoping to attract the young ladies and then present the Gospel of Jesus Christ to them.

With the Grace of God we will continue to preach the Word of God and pray for the people of this nation.

We have had the joy of welcoming back into membership a woman who, for various reasons, left the church some years ago.

It has been wonderful to see how the Lord has worked in her life. With her return she has been bringing her family and it is quite possible that her sister and her husband have come to faith. The Gospel is one telling another of what Christ has done for them.

With the Catholic Church mired in scandal after scandal, it is our prayer that people might seek the Christ of Scripture, to that end we have been trying

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IRELAND



to advertise the biblical Jesus in the local newspapers – we would hope that serious, thinking Catholics might seek us out and discover a perfect Priest.

We are seeking to reach out with

the Gospel in different ways – youth clubs, men's soccer nights, radio, tract distribution and personal witness. Please pray that we might have some divine appointed conversations and contacts.



RBMS missions around the world

As you may remember, I announced to the church a little over a year ago that I would be leaving the work here in Grenoble in the summer of 2011.

I have begun regular trips to preach to a small group of Reformed Baptists in the city of Aix-en-Provence in the south of France.

There are only eight people in the group (after two of the members died in April!) but they form a constituted church that has recently adopted the 1689 Confession.

The church has existed for some 20 years as a dispensational church, but became reformed over the last several years, losing a number of members as a Reformed position was adopted. The group has two French elders, but I received news this week that the younger of the two elders and his wife have just accepted a job transfer to China.

This will leave the church with five members and about seven regular attendees. They will be forced to give up their rented building and are hoping to be able to find a room to rent just for Sunday morning in order to keep holding services.

Despite dwindling down to almost nothing, they are convinced that their city needs a Reformed Baptist Church and are asking God to provide them someone to take this work back up or simply start a new Reformed Baptist Church with them.

We have developed a very happy relationship with them and they are hopeful that when we leave Grenoble that we will come to help them.

Aix-en-Provence is a large university city and is home to the only Evangelical and Reformed seminary in France, a paedobaptist seminary whose dean, Paul Wells, is a esteemed friend of mine with whom I have worked for several years on the organizing committee of an annual Pastors' Conference.

Being in Aix-en-Provence could be

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a wonderful opportunity to influence many theological students who will be going out to pastor churches in France. The great majority of them are not from Reformed churches and know nothing of the Reformed Faith when they arrive at the seminary.

Evangelism

The local church in Grenoble is turning its focus to intensified evangelism in this last 15 months of my stay here.

We recently had a brainstorming meeting with about a dozen of the church members to come up with new ways of reaching out with the gospel. Some of the things we have done for years were getting stale and we needed to get out of a developing rut.

My fellow elder led the meeting and asked everyone to take about six or seven minutes to write down the new ideas they have for evangelistic outreach. After this brief time of reflection we had 63 ideas which we then classified in eight categories.

Even after combining ideas that were suggested by more than one person, we still had a good number of interesting proposals to follow up on.

Our first endeavor in a few weeks is a distribution of Gospels of John to all the homes in the suburban town of Domene, where our church is located. We will all meet at the church on a Saturday morning to go out and distribute the gospels physically ourselves.

We hope in this way to also meet

people and be able to have conversation with some of them.

With the gospels will be a flyer describing the church and inviting people to come to a service.

This effort is not so much evangelism as it is an effort to make our church more visible in the community. It is more a "pre-evangelistic" effort at making contacts, which is always part of the struggle to bring the gospel to people. Some of the other efforts this coming year include "evangelistic dinners" and "seven-week evangelistic Bible studies" in homes.

The idea of the evangelistic dinners is for a church family to invite a number of their non-Christian friends to dinner, informing them that a couple of the family's church friends will be telling about how they discovered the Christian faith and how their meeting Jesus Christ has changed their lives.

At the dinner, one or two people will give their testimonies and one of the men of the church will give a brief explanation of the gospel.

This is designed to be brief and simple, but to help the family to engage their friends with the message of the gospel and to follow up on what their friends have heard at the dinner.

We are very grateful for your prayers and fellowship in the gospel and feel ourselves privileged to labor together with you for the glory of our worthy Savior.

RBMS missions around the world



The first trimester of 2010 is already behind us and it has been an eventful one.

First, as the CRTC has responded positively to our request for a new frequency for our radio station, we had to start the whole process of getting a new antenna, redoing our identification according to our new frequency etc... Though it has been a long and costly process, we are thankful to God that now we have a secured frequency so that we know we'll no longer lose it.

Then, at the beginning of April, we held our Quebec Association GA. This year, our Montreal Church was the host and they did a magnificent job. Our guest preacher was Pastor Olivier Favré from Switzerland who brought three wonderful messages on the doctrine of adoption. It has been a blessing as well to listen to the reports from our Churches and to see God's faithfulness in leading each one of them. We can only express our deep gratitude to our God for the time we had at our 2010 General Assembly in Montreal.

We are about to finalize an agreement concerning our CERB (Centre d'études réformées baptistes or Reformed Baptist Study Center), which would give a university accreditation to our program; this is going to be very beneficial for our students.

Concerning our training program, we have two courses coming on soon, one in June with Dr. Tom Nettles who will teach History of Theology and another one in September

One of the precious things that we have through our partnership in RBMS/ARBCA is the knowledge that much prayer is steadfastly made on our behalf.

It is important then, to provide feedback such as these reports that thanksgiving may be added to our prayers. Primarily, we rejoice that we have this bond in Christ – this fellowship – that enables us despite our distance to know that we are bound together as a true worldwide Church of Christ.

If you were to step into Covenant you would both hear and see that "worldwide" aspect of our church. We rejoice in living

The Perrons

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Raymond and Diane

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with Dr. Mike McKelvey on the Prophetic books. In the future we will have Dr. Joseph Pipa for a course on worship as well as Dr. Thomas Schreiner on Pauline Theology and Dr. Joel Beeke on The Puritans.

We would appreciate your prayers as I have accepted five invitations to preach at conferences in the U.S. this year. I feel very honored to be invited to preach God's word everywhere but at the same time it is always an agony for me to preach in English (and I feel so sorry for the people who have to listen to me.)

We would also ask for your prayers as our Brother Pascal Denault, who is struggling with his agenda in order to finish writing his master of theology dissertation. Pascal is the main teacher at our St-Jérôme Church and he also serves as chaplain in a prison.

We would also covet your prayers for a family in our Quebec City Church, who have been there since the very beginning of

our church and, for unknown reasons, have stopped attending. I have contacted them a few times, but they don't want to talk about the matter.

We know that the man, a medical doctor, has suffered a burnout, but the reason for their sudden withdrawal from the church is still a mystery. Please, pray for them, especially because one of their sons was very interested in the things of God.

Beginning in February, we had Caroline Vaughn spend three months with us. She has been a real blessing to us and to the church; she has been involved in the music, the youth group, the ladies' group etc... She is a very fine young woman with a great spirit of service. We are going to miss her very badly as she leaves at the beginning of May.

We keep rejoicing in our God through the different seasons of life as we know that He doesn't change and that His love for His elect is everlasting.

The Powells

<pastor@covenantbaptistchurch.com>

Chris, Val, Hannah and Noah

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Toronto, ON M1B 2N7

Canada



in the most multicultural city in the world. While that presents some challenges in our pluralistic society, as a pastor, I rejoice as I

see people whose first language is Tagalog,

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RBMS missions around the world

Greetings from Parris Island, S.C.!

We recently finished a study on biblical parenting using Ted Tripp's book, "Shepherding a Child's Heart" and a study using John Piper's book, "Don't Waste Your Life." The numbers have been small but we have seen some encouraging growth among the people in attendance.

I spend about an hour each day visiting the 950 people that make up the Marine battalion I serve. These folks come from so many varied places and families – so many stories, lots of needs. We pray God will move in their hearts and stir other believers around them.

I see about 20 or 30 people each month for different counseling needs, mostly concerning relationships. Thankfully, God has left us a complete Word to help in these matters. We have another long-term theology study that has been going

The church of Montreal in the last months has experienced some fast growth. We have grown from 20 to 40-45 people in the worship service, from zero to 15 children. Other families are possibly going to be added. This forces us to grow in our ability to welcome every family in the name of Christ.

One of the families that has joined us has a Presbyterian background. The father is a doctor in theology and teaches at the Faculté de théologie évangélique de Montréal. This situation is forcing us to think about the implications of the status of membership and participation in the Lord's Supper. I have appreciated counsel I have received from the pastors of our association, as well as with David Vaughn and Olivier Favré. It is good to have fellowship with brothers.

As regards the Aylmer's cell (near Ottawa), André and Carole persevere in spite of difficulty. A few weeks ago a former student of the Faculty of Theology of Montreal joined the cell. Let's pray for

The Joyners

Patrick, Rhonda, William, Audrey,
Jordan, Maggie, Noah,
Laurel Anna, Mary M'Cheyne
thejoynersfamily@gmail.com
Chaplain, 2nd Recruit
Training Battalion, USMC



well as we go through Wayne Grudem's Systematic Theology book, one chapter at a time.

I am hoping to start a few other groups soon, probably on biblical decision making and another using R.C. Sproul's book, "Choosing My Religion."

Rhonda and the children are doing well. The spring has awakened the soccer

players and coaches in our family, as well as the runners. Our music has brought a few new opportunities to sing and play to the glory of God.

We had a delightful visit from Dennis and Clara Hoskins from Grace Fellowship in Bremen, Ind., on a recent Lord's Day. We enjoyed a wonderful time of fellowship with these dear saints.

The Durands

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Marie-Therese and Jean-Rene
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André and Carole, that the Lord will renew their strength.

The church in Montreal has begun to look for a building. Meals and other church activities have been held in our home. But with the number growing, it is not possible any more. And the building which we occupy for Sunday worship is only available to us on Sunday afternoon.

We looked at a church building that was for sale some weeks ago, but another association bought it. We pray that the Lord will be with us and direct us, especially as the buildings in Montreal are rather

expensive. We really need a new place, especially since the arrival of young people. We would like to be able to have activities with them.

On April 6 and 7, the church of Montreal hosted the General Assembly of the Association of Baptist Reformed Churches of Quebec, and the speaker was Olivier Favré who presented to us the doctrine of adoption. Thanks to the Lord for His Word. We saw the brothers and the sisters of the church mobilizing to serve and welcome

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RBMS missions around the world



The churches

Both La Alborada and San José de Bavaria have increased in attendance during 2009 with 13 baptized. La Alborada continues without a pastor, but with oversight from the three deacons and from the pastor in San José de Bavaria, Marco Antonio Orjuela.

Church plants

The Bosa congregation was able to buy their own lot, and are now in the process of building their chapel. Their present meeting place simply doesn't hold everybody! Ramiro Beltrán continues as pastor. The **Los Alpes church plant** hasn't prospered, and there is no certainty at this time as to what to do.

Curití, Santander, church

Likewise, there has been very little growth there. In fact there has been decrease in the sense that some of the members of Curití in July began meetings in San Gil, led by Roberto Rodríguez. Attendance has been low so far, but a serious effort is being made to get out the Gospel. Alirio Sierra and Agustín Ballesteros pastor in Curití. We used to have a church in San Gil some years ago, but that disintegrated.

Library For Pastors

We still have not seen this ministry develop as we would like in the use pastors make of the facilities for study. We have had good attendance at the meetings in which we speak on the doctrines of grace.

This year we are not encouraging pastors to attend who have already heard or embraced these teachings. Rather, we have scheduled 10 monthly meetings designed to introduce pastors (and others) who have not yet heard. And we must make decisions about 2011, if this ministry should continue as is or not.

Internet has provided pastors with

The Lines

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Stan and Bev

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COLOMBIA



access to an enormous amount of good study resources, and this makes the Library even less likely to be used as a place of study. Enrique and Mercy Abadía continue to serve valuably with us in the library (and in the churches), but their time here will end towards the end of the year.

Evangelistic letters

These we continue to distribute to the homes around the churches and in our neighborhood. Of course we recognize that much more effective evangelism is carried on by Christians testifying and living the Gospel person to person with neighbors, friends and family.

Christian school

Permission was given to add 10th grade this year, 2010, and 11th grade in January of 2011. We have 200 students at the moment, 20 less than in 2009.

Government examinations given to fifth- and ninth-graders show us doing very well academically. Spiritually, we don't yet see the progress we pray for.

A building permit still hasn't been granted mainly because some neighbors are contesting our right to enlarge and reinforce our present building, something we need to do to meet government standards for earthquake safety.

Election year in Colombia

Our present president, Álvaro Uribe Vélez, was constitutionally not allowed to

seek a third term, so the future politically and security-wise is uncertain. The guerrilla movement has been contained, but by far not eliminated.

Illegal drugs provide financial support for subversion. Presidential elections were scheduled for May 9 at this writing. Congressional elections were held March 14, and the parties that won a majority are expected to continue support for President Uribe's policies, to some extent at least. Colombia continues to be surrounded by leftist-leaning governments, and the situation is sometimes tense.

We thank you for your prayers on behalf of Colombia!

Durands

From page 10

the delegates of the other churches, in the meals, in the hospitality, and in all other services. We give thanks to the Lord for his work through the various churches.

We have been preparing for the arrival of two Brazilian families who immigrated at the end of April. We want to help them and to take care of them. May the Lord accompany them in these steps and that he helps them to settle down well in Montreal.

Thank you for your prayers and your support always appreciated.

And let us not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. (Gal. 6:9)

GA

From page 1

Commission.”

For information on how to get recordings of the sessions, contact the ARBCA office at (717) 249-7473 or by e-mail at arbca@reformedbaptist.com.

Four new churches were added to the ARBCA membership: Cornerstone Fellowship of Newburgh, Ind., pastored by Eddie Goodwin; Free Grace Baptist Church of Bremerton, Wash., pastored by Guy Smith and Ben Selph; Grace Baptist Church of Alton, Ill., pastored by Matt Oley; and Grace Reformed Baptist Church of Pine Bush, N.Y., pastored by Paul Gordon.

Delegates also elected seven Administrative Council members: Pastor Ron Baines of Grace Community Church of Topsham, Me., to a second term; Pastor Jon Hueni of Grace Fellowship Church of Bremen, Ind., to a fourth term; Pastor Donny Martin of Grace Baptist Church in Hartsville, Tenn., to a second term; Pastor Fred Pugh of Grace Covenant of Olmstead Township, Ohio, to a fourth term; Pastor Donny Martin of Grace Baptist Church, Taylors, S.C., to a second term; Elder Pete Van Dorn of Reformed Baptist Church of Northern Colorado in Boulder to a fourth term; and Pastor Larry Vincent of Heritage Baptist Church, Mansfield, Texas, to a fourth term.

Pugh, Selph, Adams and Martin were elected to the Board of Trustees for the Missions Committee (Reformed Baptist Mission Services corporation).

Delegates approved a proposed budget of \$325,505 for the 2010 fiscal year, approximately \$1,500 less than the budget for 2009. Treasurer Pete Van Dorn told delegates that the economic downturn has affected churches' giving, as the actual income from member churches in 2009 was \$236,520.80, substantially less than the projected income of \$327,077.

“A lot of churches are struggling,” Van Dorn said.

His budget report showed that despite the shortfall in giving, the association ended up only \$3,284.12 short in income of what it spent in 2009.

“This is another year where God provided for our needs,” he said.

Among the presentations at the business



Members of this year's Administrative Council are, in front from left, Steve Marquedant, Donny Martin, Jon Hueni and Ron Baines. In second row, from left, are Coordinator Gordon Taylor, Fred Malone, Larry Vincent, John Giarrizzo and David Campbell. In rear, from left, are Bob Selph, Peter Van Dorn, Hank Rast and Fred Pugh.

meeting was a Day of Prayer for Church Planting proposed by Administrative Council member Hank Rast of Heritage Church in Fayetteville, Ga.

Rast announced that a particular day of prayer for pastors and elders would be held May 13, during which participating church leaders would spend the morning offering worship, thanksgiving and confession, then pray for the world and the nation in general as well as for particular church planting projects (described on page 14 of this Update). Rast also proposed that a general day of prayer by church members, for laborers to spread the gospel, be held in the fall.

The assembly also approved seven special projects for 2010:

- \$10,000 requested by Trinity Reformed Baptist Church of Kirkland, Wash., for ministry in Cuba. The money will be used to supplement training of pastors in the David K. Straub Pastoral Training School and to continue education for Los Piños pastors, provide books for pastors and ministerial students, help with repairs of a hurricane-damaged church building and pay for trips by ARBCA pastors to Cuba, where

they will speak to pastors and students, preach and teach young adults in summer camps.

- \$5,000 each year (for three years, for a total of \$15,000) requested by Faith Reformed Baptist Church of Media, Pa., to help the publishing efforts of Injili Bible Church and the Reformed Baptist movement in Kenya.

The funding will be provided in cooperation with churches in Great Britain and will include the publishing of a series of pastoral training booklets covering all major areas of theology, which are already being widely used in Kenya and have been introduced in eastern Congo.

The money will also help publish evangelistic tracts that already are being distributed by the thousands, and translating books by such authors as J.C. Ryle, Ralph Venning, Richard Baxter and John Piper into Swahili.

- \$5,000 requested by Heritage Church of Fayetteville, Ga., to provide theological books for a seminary in South Africa where

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GA

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Pastor Martin Holdt, who is well known to many American Reformed Baptists, labors. The books include Bible dictionaries and Greek language resources, the works of John Bunyan, and approximately a dozen sets of Bible commentaries.

■ \$3,600 requested by Grace Baptist Church of Carlisle, Pa., to publish three books in Spanish for use by missionary Stan Line in Colombia. The books are “Voice of Authority,” which has been out of print; “Así es Dios?,” a children’s book; and “Bible in the Wall,” another children’s book.

A woman who works with the Lines in the Pastors’ Library ministry is having success getting the children’s books into school curricula in Colombia. The \$3,600 will provide seed money as the books will be sold and the money used to translate and print other children’s books.

■ \$1,000 requested by Trinity Reformed Baptist Church of Kirkland, Wash., to print the 1689 Second London Confession of Faith in Ilonggo or Hiligaynon, a language spoken by some 7 million people in the western central Philippines and another 10 million in the northern part of the country.

■ \$25,000 requested by Heritage Baptist Church of Mansfield, Texas, and Grace Community Church of Topsham, Me., to cover start-up costs for a continuing education program that is being organized by the Institute for Reformed Baptist Studies. The funds will be used for equipment, travel expenses and honoraria for professors who will be teaching courses.

■ \$2,000 requested by Grace Baptist Church in Jackson, Miss., to pay for the move of Isaac Makashinyi to Zambia. This amount was actually approved at the 2008 GA, but during the change of coordinators, from Bob Selph to Gordon Taylor, it was not added to the amount churches were asked to contribute toward and was never funded as part of the 2008 ARBCA commitment.

Makashinyi was one of several national pastors and missionaries who gave reports to the assembly. A former elder at Grace Baptist, he is now ministering at Emmasdale Baptist Church in the north part of Lusaka, Zambia’s capital, under the oversight of Lusaka Baptist Church, the largest Reformed



The congregation sings during an evening session at the General Assembly at Grace Baptist Church in Taylors.

Baptist Church in that nation.

He also teaches biblical languages at two seminaries in Zambia. He reported that the Emmasdale church, which meets in a tin-roofed structure with open sides covered by tarps, is located in an area “with a very strong Muslim presence.”

Missionary Brian Ellis, who is in his 44th year in the Philippines, reported that more than 300 pastors attended this year’s pastor’s conference and that Filipino Reformed Baptists are seeing interest in Reformed theology pastors from other backgrounds, including many charismatics.

“God is bringing many people to a much better understanding of the Word of God,” he said.

Former foreign missionary Don Donnell reported on the work in Carlos Paz, Argentina and introduced Argentinian national pastor Jorge Molina, who spoke to the assembly through translator Sam Masters, who leads the Seminario Biblico William Carey in Cordoba.

Masters thanked the assembly for sending Donnell and Dr. Jim Adams to teach classes at the seminary.

David Vaughn also presented a report, including a slide show, on the work in France, where the church in Grenoble has seen marvelous conversions, though it still faces challenges, particularly as Vaughn plans to move on to found another church in the next two years.

The number of theological discussions were increased this year, and two were held in the afternoons, just before the evening meal. Topics included the question of what was humorously referred to as “the church

shrinkage movement” and the resulting question of when is the time for the congregation to pull the plug – if ever? Dr. Jim Renihan of IRBS noted that one early Puritan concluded that a functional church is one large enough to fulfill the requirements of Matt. 18:15-17 – seven (the accuser, the accused, at least one witness, and four others (because the voting body needs to be an odd number and neither the accused nor the accuser should vote).

The issue of stewardship in trying times was also discussed.

Devotionals were presented by national Pastor Chris Powell of Covenant Baptist Church of Toronto, Ontario, Canada; Pastor Chris Marley, Sr. of Miller Valley Baptist Church of Prescott, Ariz., and Pastor Jeff Crippen of Christ Reformation Church of Tillamook, Ore.

Grace Baptist Church of Taylors provided the exceptional hospitality that has become the norm at the general assemblies, the church ladies providing several local specialties to keep the delegates fed, including southern barbeque (“barbeque” is a noun, not a verb), the Best Potato Salad Ever (and it was), and a true southern dinner of ham, macaroni and cheese, black eyed peas, cornbread, and pecan, apple and derby pie.

Various members of Grace also provided special music, as did the children of U.S. Marine Chaplain Patrick Joyner during the evening meetings.

The G.A. adjourned with the announcement that next year’s assembly, Lord willing, will be held at Trinity Reformed Baptist Church in La Mirada, Calif. April 5 -7.

Church Planting: See the Lord at work in new areas

By Hank Rast

ARBCA Coordinator Gordon Taylor reminded us in the last Update of our Lord's view of lost people. Jesus sees the lost as "harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd" (Matt. 9:36). And He instructs his disciples to "pray earnestly" for laborers to be thrust out into his harvest.

This article is not a call to prayer as such, but rather an encouragement on how the Lord seems to be giving an earnest of the blessing of laborers, and that we should continue to pray for more. Perhaps we are seeing the "cloud the size of a man's hand" Elijah's servant saw before the heavy rains came.

In four different locations around the nation, the Lord is raising up church-planting laborers. Including last year's plant in Asheville, N.C. by Don Donell, new plants have already begun or are on the horizon in Indiana, Colorado, and Tennessee.

These new works are being undertaken by Aaron Hoak, from Grace Fellowship Church in Bremen, Ind.; Tony Jackson, from the Reformed Baptist Church in Boulder, Colo.; and John Miller, from Grace Baptist in Hartsville, Tenn.

The focus of this article is the work undertaken in Clarksville, Tenn. with the support of Grace Baptist in Hartsville.

The work in Clarksville began nearly four years ago with a call to the ARBCA office from a couple living in the Clarksville area desiring a Reformed Baptist work. They were directed to the Hartsville church, pastored by Donny Martin and elder Carroll Carmen.

Grace Baptist began Sunday evening services, led faithfully by Donny or Carroll, who would make the hour-and-a-half drive on alternating Sundays. The group currently is a solid five families.

Clarksville, with a current population of slightly over 100,000, borders the Fort Campbell army base and is also home to Austin Peay University. Grace Baptist has been looking for a man for the Clarksville work for a couple of years now and the Lord has provided John Miller.

John's call to this plant comes after much of the Lord's preparing work in his life. He is originally from the Stone Mountain area of Atlanta, where he grew up in a nominal Christian home, attending church but having no experience of saving grace.

The Lord graciously saved him in the summer of 1994 and in time planted in his heart a desire for ministry.

One particular passage that ministered to John in those days was Eph. 2:15-16 concerning Christ's reconciliation of Jew and Gentile, making one new man, the new humanity in Christ. He saw a particular application to his own thinking about himself, as a bi-racial man living in a mostly white population.

John's desire for ministry was given new impetus in attending Furman University in Greenville, S.C., where he came to know Matt Foreman and began attending Grace Baptist in Taylors, under the ministry of Bob Selph. Through the World Discipleship ministry at Furman, and the influence of Pastor Selph and his "Spurgeon's Club" for budding pastors, John came to clarity about his own call to the ministry, serving at Grace Baptist in various capacities.

He enrolled for formal seminary training at Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, mainly out of a desire to continue those preparations for ministry in the church environment at Grace Baptist. Those valuable seminary years (in addition to acquiring his nickname "John the 1689 Baptist") provided much encouragement for the ministry.

He met and married his wife, Elizabeth, a member of Grace Baptist; made a dear Baptist seminary friend in Chris Powell; experienced a profitable interning summer at Grace Baptist, Carlisle; and was able to begin (with Chris) a Bible study in the Asheville area. (That Bible study is now the church plant led by Don Donell.)

John is nearing completion of a valuable three-year term as pastoral assistant at Grace Baptist Church in Carlisle and comes to the work in Clarksville highly recommended by

Pastor David Campbell and the elders.

John's desires for the church plant, slated to begin officially on Sept. 1, are to immediately begin morning and evening services, and establish more of a presence in the Clarksville area. His goals might best be summarized under three headings: worship, training, and evangelism.

His desire is to preach expository series in Matthew and Genesis during the morning and evening services. Further instruction in practical theology will be done in the Sunday School hour. He desires to promote private worship among individuals and families, and a heart attitude of worshipping God in every area of life (1 Cor. 10:31).

John has a heart to replicate the ministry through the training of men, seeking out and identifying men as potential leaders in the church. His desire is to meet formally and informally with these men, entrusting the sacred deposit of truth with them so that they will be able to teach others (2 Tim. 2:2).

His desire also is to communicate and model an evangelistic mindset among the people, inculcating in them the "go and tell" mindset, entering the world of lost men and women with the gospel of grace.

Two obvious areas of evangelistic outreach, in addition to the neighborhoods of Clarksville, are the military installation with some 30,000 on post, and Austin Peay University, with some 10,000 students.

The churches of ARBCA have the opportunity of participating in all of these budding church plants, through prayer and financial assistance.

The Asheville church plant is still in need of additional funds, and this new work in Clarksville will be in some need as well. Let us partner together to help these works to become self-sustaining, self-governing, and self-propagating churches for the glory of God and the extension of his kingdom.

Hank Rast is associate pastor at Heritage Church, Fayetteville, Ga. and a member of the ARBCA Church Planting Committee.

Shepherd raised up for Argentina church

By Gordon Taylor

Argentina is a key nation for missionary work to the nations, and when Don Donell and his family had to leave the fledgling work God enabled them to plant there, as an association we were concerned and pleading with the Great Shepherd for its future. Even before our anxious prayers began to ascend, God had been at work preparing and raising up a faithful Argentine undershepherd, Jorge (pronounced “Hor-hey”) Molina, who has joyously taken the baton from Don Donell in leading that tiny congregation in Villa Carlos Paz.

We are thankful that our Association’s Administrative Council and Missions Services Committee have approved our churches’ cooperating to gather adequate financial assistance to enable Jorge to give himself full-time to this valuable ministry as a national pastor. Our goal is to supply \$14,000 per year initially. Then, as by God’s grace the church sees growth, we would decrease that amount beginning on the fourth year by 25 percent, and each subsequent year, allowing the church to become independent, supporting its own pastor in six years.

We are thankful that God opened the door for Jorge and his wife Bilma to receive visas enabling them to be with us for this year’s General Assembly in Taylors, S.C. Pastors Don Donell and Jim Adams spent several days about two years ago interviewing Jorge about his views on the 1689 and his own call to the ministry. Jorge’s commitment to God’s Word and his gifts for preaching that Word and for evangelizing give us great joy.

Here are a few words from Jorge himself that will give you a feel for his vision and heart: “Some time ago I said that the Reformed faith is penetrating Argentina



Jorge Molina, right, with translation help from missionary Sam Masters, speaks to the General Assembly in Taylors.

a little at a time. The books and messages that men like Jim Adams and Don Donell brought are unlike anything we have. No bookstore has them. Calvin’s name is now being well received and not refused, unlike before.

“Little by little there is an excellent connection being made between theoretical ‘doctrine’ and an understanding of the practice of the doctrines of grace that these men have planted in this Latin community. We are now preaching it and people are hearing it and becoming convinced that there is no ‘free will’ but rather free grace alone, the pure grace of God.”

You can also view a blog with pictures of Carlos Paz at <http://www.carlospazcordoba.blogspot.com>.

Argentina’s geographical magnitude places it as the second-largest country in

South America and the eighth-largest in the world. Not too far from Carlos Paz, where the Molinas live and minister, is Argentina’s second-largest city of Cordoba, home of the oldest university in the country, with its renowned medical school. A graduate from that university who is presently a surgeon there is praying with his wife that God will allow him to study at IRBS at Westminster in 2011. We believe many of the missionaries of the future will come from what God is doing today in Argentina, Chile, Cuba and other Latin American countries.

We are blessed to be able to continue to have a part in what God is doing in Argentina through our assistance of this godly servant. Please consider what part your congregation might have in this joint effort for God’s glory and the good of His church in Latin America.

Powells

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Bosnian, or Mandarin making the effort to converse and minister to one another cross-culturally, encouraging one another as Heb. 10:25-26 teaches us.

This winter and early spring have been busy in the church. As I write this, we have just finished the Easter weekend. As a church we take advantage of the fact that in Canada, Good Friday is a national holiday (an inheritance from the days when the nation had a state Anglican church).

We encourage our members to invite

family, friends and co-workers to hear a Gospel message and partake in a “pot providential” lunch. This year we had just over 50 adults, even with some of our regular families away. Many of these folks came for the very first time. What was even more encouraging was

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Powells

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to see some of the same visitors come out again on the Sunday morning service.

Indeed, we have much to be thankful for as we have had many visitors over the past number of months and some that have decided to stay with us. One of the men in the discipleship group became a member of the church in January. We praise God for Tony Cavallo and we rejoice in his covenanting to our church body.

We are planning our first ever “new members” training program and we have upwards of 10 potential candidates (both recent additions to our membership and new prospects). Please pray for some of the teens, who have begun to express interest in baptism and membership. Please also pray for the fall 2010 academic year. We anticipate up to six of our members and adherents will be attending various city universities and colleges.

We are hoping to establish an evangelistic Bible study on the campus of the University of Toronto. U of T has one of the largest student populations in North America with 70,000 students (60,000 undergraduates and about 10,000 graduate) most of whom are located in the downtown core about a 15-minute subway ride from our church.

Our attempts at evangelism in our community continue. At the end of 2009 we had our annual church supper, which was well attended and presented an opportunity for witness. One non-Christian couple has come out since then to the church on a semi-regular

basis. Please pray for their conversion.

In the pulpit I have finished an expository preaching series in Genesis that began on the first Sunday morning of my ministry, almost two years ago now. I have now started a short series in the Psalms before beginning a longer series going through the Gospel of Luke later this year. In the evening services we continue expository preaching through the book of Ephesians.

Our men’s discipleship group has grown since we began late last year and we now have five men who meet regularly on Wednesdays for dinner and discipleship instruction before our weekly church prayer meeting. We are going through an overview of the Scriptures with the goal of going through the entire Bible in 66 weeks. We are also in the process of starting a women’s discipling group along the principles of Tit. 2:3-5. My wife Val will head this effort under the direction of the elders.

At home we also enjoy many blessings as a family. Hannah is really enjoying junior kindergarten at a Christian school in the area. Noah has begun to talk and baby Abby has begun to crawl, or more accurately, to climb, over everything and everybody.

Please pray for our children’s salvation – we see much need for the Gospel in their lives. Val is delighting in her role as a homemaker and she has undertaken some serious projects in the home including building a bathroom in our basement (everything from the electrical to plumbing to drywall) so that we can better provide hospitality to visitors in our home.

Pray that the Lord would raise up more to labour alongside us – there is much kingdom work to be done here.

Revival

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of our present spiritual decay. Satan would love for us to fill our prayer chambers with hopeless praying and hopeless repenting. But in Micah’s inspired scene God’s people do not allow themselves that sort of depressed resignation that fixes the eyes on how bad it is around us and how bad it is with us.

As Psalm 42 teaches us, we learn from Zion to fight such misguided thoughts and say to ourselves: “Why are you moaning and lamenting within you? Hope in God, for you shall yet again praise Him.”

Undoubtedly, Satan trembles to hear the saints with this word of God in their hearts and in their mouths: “Rejoice not over me, for if I fall I shall rise again because of who my God is and because of what Christ has done.”

So this attitude of faith is the second thing Micah teaches us about seeking revival from the midst of decline. It is a particular kind of faith in God’s pardoning and restoring grace and power which leads us to look past our present darkness to a hopeful future in which God will intervene with power to turn the tables.

Have we Western Christians awakened to what faith eyes beyond our present distress? Oh, may God help us to be hopeful in Christ!

In the next issue: Learning from chastisement and leaning on Christ’s saving righteousness.