



Winter 2016

God raises up His men in Cuba

By Don Lindblad

The year was 1989. Cuban pastor Daniel Perez was living in Kingston, Jamaica with his family.

He was enrolled in the Caribbean Graduate School of Theology to complete a master's degree.

Previously, he earned a bachelors' degree from the seminary affiliated with the Evangelical Convention of Cuba: Los Pinos Nuevos (LPN). This influential evangelical convention of churches saw this gifted young man as a prospective leader, either in administration or teaching in the seminary. With this in mind, the board sent him to Kingston to equip him for such a role.

Daniel is a serious student and a voracious reader, so in the course of his studies he encountered Calvinism and books published by the Banner of Truth Trust.

Hoping to obtain literature from Banner, he wrote to the American office in Carlisle, Pa. Providentially, the manager was Jim Eshelman, also an elder of Grace Baptist Church in Carlisle. This church had been instrumental in establishing Reformed Baptist Mission Services (RBMS) in 1985.

As Jim gathered literature to send this inquisitive brother, he also shared Daniel's letter with David Straub, coordinator of RBMS. Shortly thereafter, David visited



In Havana, Cuba, from left, Jatniel Perez visits with Pastor Vladimir Mayo, wife Mariela, and daughters Keila and Cheila.

RBMS-serviced national pastor, Oscar Bloise, in Kingston, and was delighted to discover that the school Daniel attended was just a block from the church building!

Contact was made, a friendship was formed, and regular correspondence ensued.

Subsequently, Daniel was able to attend a Banner of Truth Ministers Conference, which reinforced new convictions.

Following his graduation, Daniel

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ARBCA Update

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Commentary: Stay Put!

...in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you are seen as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life... Phil. 2:15b-16a (ASV)

After having cautioned them against leaning too heavily upon him, but rather to work out their own salvation, trembling because this was, after all, God's work, Paul paints their position and posture in the world.

Here we have:

1. The *hostile atmosphere* of this (*a crooked and perverse generation*). Depravity is stagnant and unimaginative, twisted and pleated, cramped and distorted by “a labyrinth of various windings.” (Calvin)

2. The *public interest* of this (*among whom you are seen as lights*) How does the church function in this miasma of culture?

3. The *stabilizing index* of this (*holding forth the word of life*) The church fastens itself against drift and downgrade by attention to a fixed standard.

The English translation, followed by the majority of comment (paper and pulpit), leaps to the conclusion that here we have a prompt to evangelistic enterprise. We, they say, are to shine forth the word of life upon the sorry world in which we live. Whatever value such a program may suggest, this is not the direction of the text.

I draw your attention to four clarifying features:

1. The verb's mood (φαίνεσθε) is indicative, not imperative. Not something to *be done* (prescriptive) but something to *be* (descriptive) — a matter of ontology, not obligation.

2. The verb's voice (φαίνεσθε) is passive (at least middle). That is, you *appear* — not, you *shine* (which would be active, and would expect λάμπω > Matt. 5:16). Not a call to illuminate the world, but to *be seen* in the heavens.

3. The simile (ὡς φωστῆρες) steers the thought.

Appearing, not as the sun (ἥλιος) does, but as *stars* (ἀστέρες) do. And κόσμος here is the heavens: where stars live.

This reduces the width of the simile. Spurgeon suggests stars *reveal, guide, warn, and cheer*.

True, but this over-reaches Paul's intention, which is simple, and moreover not burdened with modern astronomical advances. (Yes, the sun is a star.)

4. The participle (ἐπέχοντες) settles the question.

The action affirmed is not “holding forth”, but literally *fixing upon* (of attention), or *staying put* (of position). A position fixed by confessing a word of life (λόγον ζωῆς).

I offer the paraphrase:

Resisting the wandering agenda of the world around you, be seen, as the stars are, fixed in their position by an immovable standard.

Conclusion.

The ancients were fascinated by the stars. And so are we. (Malcolm Muggeridge opined Gen. 1:16b was “one of the

greatest throw-away lines in literary history.”) They observed, however, certain stars (as they thought) moved from their place night after night. They wandered among the others stars, and so, they called them *wanderers* (planets >πλανῶ, *to wander* cp. Jude 13 (ἀστέρες πλανῆται). Were it not for the fixed stars the five wanderers (Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn) would have never been noticed. The simile (as stars) points to the church's principal contribution. It appears as stars do in the sky, night-after-night, refusing to move.

Stars, however fixed they may be, are of no value if they do not appear. Astronomers lament beclouded and light-polluted skies, and have recoined the children's rhyme: “*Twinkle, twinkle little star, How I wonder where you are...*”

The same may be said of the church, sadly!

Nowadays the church, if it appears at all (and we even celebrate its invisibility?), appears not as a star, but as a planet, wandering with its attention fixed upon the world rather than the word. The church, having lost its place, has lost its lustre, in fact its *raison d'être*.

n.b “The purpose of the church is not to save the world,

but to save God's people from the world.” Hart & Muether

That being said, the hijacking of this text as an appeal for evangelistic enterprise is wrongheaded. (There are other places for that. This is not one of them.)

The people of God are not *here* called upon to illuminate the world but to fix their position as stars above it. What good this may do is secondary to the good that it is. The value of stars is not their *shining* but their *staying*: their reputation for a stubborn refusal to move from their place night-after-night. The call here is to confessional stability. One fixed reality in a world of generational flux. To navigate without wandering, the need is not another program, but a Polaris.

Heraclitus (d. 475 BC) lamented knowledge was impossible in a world where everything moves (πάντα ῥεῖ). Moment-by-moment that which was is no longer what it was. He reckoned that without someone, or something, somewhere, which refused to move, knowledge was asleep dreaming an epistemological nightmare. And although Heraclitus did not know what that might be, we do! There is Someone and there is something: the immutable and impassible God of the Bible, and His church which appears, as stars do, fixed in the heavens, and anchored there by a word of life. The gospel is in the stars after all.

In a day when frenetic activity is celebrated over against plodding consistency — Stay put!

Amidst a generation which tugs the church to wander after it — Stay put!

Against the evil that men do, here is the good we may do — Stay put!

Not to fix the world but to remain fixed above it. Stay put!

— Tom Lyon pastors Providence Reformed Baptist Church in University Place (Tacoma), Wash.

Church Planting: A theology of church planting

By Dr. James M. Renihan

Right living must always be based in right believing.

Or, to say this in another way, orthopraxy must be based in orthodoxy. A correct church planting method must be rooted in sound theology. It will discipline our practice, teach us how to proceed, provide us with a framework for believing prayer, and assist us when we face blessing or trouble.

We should begin with a definition of church planting. Here's one: Church planting is about bringing to birth, by the work of God's Spirit, worshipping congregations.

That's a fairly simple place to start. We want and need to see the Lord do this, and we must proceed intelligently. Let's consider six theological principles from the book of Ephesians to guide our thinking and our practice.

Our practice of church planting must take into account the doctrine of God's plan and purpose, Eph. 3:1-13.

At the end of chapter 2, Paul emphasizes the Lordship of Christ in the church, and the role of apostles and prophets in its growth. This is followed by the words 'for this reason' he says that he has received a revelation about the mystery of Christ as well as the means of revealing it. Three facts are emphasized:

It is God's eternal purpose to save a people from the Jews and the Gentiles. This is the ordained result of the revelation of the mystery. There will be a glorious bride presented to Christ according to the covenant of salvation.

God's eternal purpose includes the two-fold means, the history of salvation and the application of salvation in the life of each individual. The story of the Bible is simple. After the Fall of Adam and Eve, God promised that a redeemer would come and suffer, triumphing over the Evil One. The main theme of the rest of the Old Testament is the expectation of the fulfillment of this promise, culminating in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The New Testament explains and

applies this doctrine, calling people to repent and believe the Gospel. That which God planned in eternity is accomplished in history through Christ, and then must be applied to individuals through preaching.

God's eternal purpose has progressively revealed the mystery, right up to its present culmination. Originally, this was done through families gathered into worshipping units, then through Abraham and the nation descended from him, and finally in Christ. But the goal is not simply evangelism—bringing individuals to faith—it is church planting. In verse 10, we read that the church is central to God's purpose!

This perspective must be at the very foundation of church planting. When we seek to do this work, we are God's instruments in fulfilling his eternal purpose, and the churches planted are the result.

Our practice of church planting must take into account the priority of God's glory. Eph. 3:14-21.

What is the goal of God's eternal purpose? It is to glorify himself. As Paul contemplates this doctrine of the revelation of the mystery of Christ, he worships (v. 14), and then he prays (v. 16-19) that these Christians would know all that there is to know about Christ. Then, he expresses the purpose of it all: God's glory in the church. "Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever (3:20-21 ESV)." Here is doxology. God does these things, and he does them to bring glory to himself, in the church, through every generation.

This is the stated purpose of God—to bring worshippers to himself—men and women who will know him in all of his beauty and majesty, who will be able to comprehend the amazing love of God in Christ, who will be filled with all the fullness of God.

This is a fundamentally important principle with tremendous implications, so much so that everything must be governed

by this fact. The central purpose of the church must be the glory of God! Church planters must bear this in mind, people must bear this in mind, it must be a topic of prayer (as in this very passage). This is our goal!

Our practice of church planting must take into account the reality of the Bible's history, especially as it is centered in Jesus Christ. Eph. 1:15-23, 4:1-16.

The Bible is really a book about Christ. This is what our Lord taught his disciples on the evening of his resurrection (Luke 24:25-27; 44-45). Jesus gave them a lesson in Old Testament theology! Let's consider this in three ways.

The Bible is true history in all it says. When it speaks of creation, fall and redemption, it is trustworthy. The Old Testament is the book of promise and preparation; the New testament is the book of fulfillment. All of the facts recorded throughout its pages are true.

The Bible is not just a book about past history, for it speaks to the present as well. Christ is now Lord, the new age has come in Christ. He is present with the church and he is to be proclaimed by the church. Our message must be totally Christ-centered.

As present Lord of the church, he governs and directs it. We see this especially in 4:1-16. There, Paul speaks to the unity and diversity in the church, All share together the blessings of Christ and are to pursue Christ-likeness, but some serve in special capacities (Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers). This is his will for us.

The importance of this principle may be noted in two ways: 1. The only saving message is 'we preach Christ and him crucified.' We proclaim the truth of the Word of God, for in it is life. 2. We preach and follow Christ who is ascended. He is now Lord, and is present and active with the Church.

Our practice of church planting must take into account the reality of the sovereignty of God's grace. Eph. 2:1-18.

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RBMS missions around the world



Greetings in the name of the Lord, who continues to be kind toward us as we wait for our visa to be approved.

Allen successfully passed his skills assessment requirement and was able to formally lodge an expression of interest with the Australian government.

This past week we received word that the EOI was accepted, so after a long wait we have finally advanced to the last step of the process which involves actually sending in our visa approval paperwork.

Lord willing, this will be lodged by Jan. 18, which means that we will probably hear back sometime between March 18 and April 18.

During the first weekend in February, Allen will travel once again to Perth and will preach four times on several areas of practical Christian living. Hopefully this will be the last time he travels without the family.

Please pray that these messages will be well received and that they will provide further opportunity for private conversations about how believers ought to apply the law and the gospel to their daily lives.

Please pray also for good health and stamina for Allen since he will be preaching at First Baptist the Sundays prior to and following his trip.

This spring will be a time of transition for our family. Currently, our three oldest are being home schooled by Katie and usually they would finish by June.

However, our plan this year is to continue this process through December. The Australian school year runs from February to December, so this will allow us to have some continuity in the children's schooling rather than putting them into a school halfway through the year.

Of course, with moving overseas there will be a built-in break for the kids, but we hope to be able to pick up with their school work fairly soon after we arrive in Perth.

Also, for the past 2½ years Allen has been preaching each Thursday night at

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AUSTRALIA



Australian Meeting Place, Shenton Park Community Centre.

Louisiana State University to a group of young adults and college students. Allen has really enjoyed his time with these young people but this semester had to step away from this responsibility. Please pray for elder Mitch Axsom, whom some of you know from the Lakeshore project, since he is the one taking over this work.

In addition, Allen has had to give up teaching the youth group on Sunday afternoons which is another pleasure he will greatly miss.

The Lord has greatly blessed our church with a good group of serious-minded young people and, unfortunately, our study of the life of David will have to be cut short. We did make it past Saul and Abner and got to his coronation, though!

Please thank the Lord that so many churches have been so generous with our support. A number of churches and individuals within and without ARBCA

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RBMS missions around the world

Year in, year out, our God remains the same as He keeps His Covenant faithfulness. As we face the arrival of a new year, we can say with the psalmist: “I bow down toward your holy temple and give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your faithfulness, for you have exalted above all things your name and your word” (Ps 138:2).

The last three months of the year brought sad news and good news. The sad news has been the closure of our Montreal Church that I planted 14 years ago. For different reasons, Pastor Daniel Durand left to join another association and the church closed down.

The good news is that as that church was having its last service that Sunday, we had our first worship meeting as Église réformée baptiste de la Trinité in Montreal, the new church plant project that I started on Sept. 27. Thus far, we have an average attendance between 18 and 23 people.

On Dec. 20 we had our Christmas dinner for our new church plant and 25 people participated. My colleague Denis Pepin shared the Word of God and we sang hymns Diane and another lady interpreted a song (see the picture).

As I was starting this new church plant, I also taught a course at the Faculté de théologie évangélique in Montreal. I had 13 students for that course on anthropology. I have been invited to teach other courses as well, but for now I want to concentrate on our church plant.

On Oct. 18, I had the privilege of visiting Free Baptist Church of Limerick, to preach on a Missionary Sunday. What a blessing it was for Diane and I to see again the wonderful saints of Limerick and our dear brother Jack and his wife Becky. Brother Jack was celebrating his 40th year as pastor of this congregation.

In October, I also participated in the book launch of our dear Pascal Denault. He wrote a good primer of the Solas in French and the book is selling very well. For that occasion, we had a panel of discussion (see picture) that has been broadcasted on the air

The Perrons

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Diane Perron, right, and Pamela provide music.

of our radio station.

During that same weekend we held a ministerial meeting in St-Jérôme Church. We enjoyed the presence of Micaël Beaulieu, who is acting as an intern in our church in Acton Vale while he is also taking courses at Covenant Baptist Theological Seminary. In fact, we have three students taking classes at CBTS.

In November, after preaching in our church plant in Montreal in the morning, I was invited to preach in another church that

afternoon. One of the pastors of that church is collaborating with me in our church plant in Montreal.

We are very thankful to pastor Marcel Longchamps of our church in Rouyn-Noranda, who graciously offered us to create and to take care of a website for our Église réformée baptiste de la Trinité, our church plant in Montreal. I invite you to visit it at erbt.org

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RBMS missions around the world



The last quarter of the 2015 was spent mostly in preparation for deployment.

During October I spent much of my time engaged not only in regular duties (i.e., unit visitation, counseling, preaching), but also fulfilling the responsibilities of the deputy wing chaplain position.

This entailed a lot of administrative duties, and helped provide some helpful preparation for my next assignment (whenever that may come, likely in 2017 or 2018).

I preached for most of the Sundays in October, teaching on the “Solas” of the Reformation. It was well received by the Chapel congregation, and several members commented that they were glad that it was a season blessed with “strong biblical preaching.” In November, I completed training and paperwork related to deployment, and also spent time visiting with my units. The visitation seemed important to me because I was informed that unit assignments would be changed in January. Knowing that I would be deployed during the changeover, I had to give a good-bye of sorts to folks that I have grown near to over the past year. Fortunately, by God’s kind providence, I was able to spend the week of Thanksgiving with my family. I am very grateful for that time. I departed shortly after the holiday for Afghanistan. I work here with soldiers, sailors and airmen. The days are long, with the work hours ranging from 12 to 16 hours. Most work days last about 13 or 14 hours.

That time is generally spent engaging personnel, counseling, conducting pre-mission briefs, praying for flyers before missions, and leading Bible studies. Right now I am taking a group through Habakkuk. I preached on Christmas Day, and will preach once a month until I leave (the Army controls the Chapel building/worship services).

I have had several interesting discussions with individuals, and have been asked by two for mentorship/discipleship. I also got into an interesting discussion with

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Chaplain, USAF



an “ex-Christian/now-agnostic.”

He told me that one chaplain considered him a “homework project for conversion,” which seemed to make him even more antagonistic towards the faith. I decided to take a much more laid-back approach, simply praying for him quietly and continuing to build a relationship with him.

Before he left for home I gave him, at his request, a list of apologetic works to read. Please pray for Kevin’s salvation.

Since being here it seems that the Lord has given me tremendous favor with the leadership. I thank you for your prayers toward that end, and ask that you would continue to pray in that direction. I ask that you would also pray that I might have opportunities to share the gospel with individuals. In addition to this, please ask the Lord to strengthen the faith of believers in this place.

Every day as I hear the Islamic call to prayer several times, I pray for the people of this land and thank God for His grace and mercy. When I return from deployment I will be the 1st Special Operations Group unit chaplain. I see God’s providence in that because I am now working with many individuals who are part of that group. That means I’m building positive relationships with them before we get back and I’m introduced to everyone as the “new chaplain.”

I certainly miss my family, but I’m glad that that the Lord has me here at this time. Trusting in His wisdom, I have no doubt He has me here at this point for His own specific reasons.

Lord willing, I’ll be able to see many of you in April at the General Assembly. Until then, please continue to pray for the men and women serving in Afghanistan. Thank you for your support. May the Lord bless you!

Perrons

From page 6

Here are some prayer requests:

- The wherewithal of our church plant;
- A couple from our church plant are planning to get married in August and have asked me to do premarital counseling with them;

- For my safety, as I am traveling every week to Montreal (six hours return trip);

- For my wife, as she often comes with me. I am most grateful for her support;

- For a couple in our church in Quebec City as they are on the verge of splitting over a church issue. She is attending a Pentecostal church with the three younger children and he is attending our church with his two oldest sons;

- For Max, a 26-year-old man, married with four children; he and his wife would like to serve in the ministry and they moved to Quebec City was to become better established in the Reformed Baptist Faith. He is now working and also taking courses from CBTS;

- Our son Jonathan’s salvation.

Thank you so much for your fellowship and prayers.



RBMS missions around the world

We have seen slow progress in the two church plants in Bucaramanga and the one in San Gil. There have been and are complications, one of the most difficult being some disagreements among some of the leaders.

In the 40-year-old church in Curití, however, there still has been no growth.

The Christian School in Bogotá in December graduated 20 high-schoolers. We already have enough students and teachers for the 2016 school year beginning the end of January.

Our greatest concern as always is for the work of God's Spirit in our students for faith in Christ.

The nearly 4-year-old peace talks between the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia guerrilla movement and the Colombia government continue with the goal set for June for a national referendum to approve or not approve the agreement that is supposedly soon to be signed.

Of course everybody wants to see the 50-plus-year-old armed conflict come to an end, but there are serious concerns about the nature of some of the concessions made to the leftist movement.

It seems also that the crimes committed over these many years may not receive adequate sentences, and this easily may serve to divide as well as to encourage others in the future in many areas to take

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justice into their own hands, seeing that the ends are accepted as justifying the means.

Not that all the injustices are on just one side. Social and economic inequality, corruption, and idolatry mean problems with the justice system and the health and educational programs.

Colombia, like most if not all of Latin America (and the rest of the world), is in dire straits, although not to the same extent as many.

Efforts continue to prepare pastors for the Reformed churches and for church planting.

It is very difficult to say just how many Reformed churches exist in Colombia. The count depends on the definition of what is a church and what is Reformed. In Bogotá, let's say there are between 15 and 25. And in nearly every large city there is some Reformed witness and interest.

That certainly is of great encouragement.

To God be the glory! This has come about largely in the past 20 years. Two seminaries function in Bogotá, one sponsored now by the seminary in Owensboro, Ky., and the other by Miami International Seminary. Two function in Medellín.

All of these and some smaller efforts are under Colombian leadership, of course. Reformed resources via Internet have been greatly used of the Lord in furthering His work.

Paul Washer of Heart Cry ministries is one of the most-often-mentioned initial contacts for pastors now professing the Reformed faith.

Reformed literature continues to be very, very important. We pray that the good work begun may now be strengthened in solid foundations of a Reformed mentality, all of Scripture for all of life for the glory of God in the preaching of the Gospel of grace.

Beardmores

From page 5

have been consistent in their prayers for us and we greatly appreciate their fellowship. Already this year Allen was able to visit Grace Fellowship Church in Bremen, Ind. whom many of you know is pastored by Jon Hueni.

Although he was re-introduced to snowy weather and reminded again why he does not live in the North, Allen experienced a very warm time of fellowship with Pastor

Jon and the church members.

Their enthusiasm for the work in Perth was very encouraging and it has been comforting to know they will be praying for us. Also, another church which is near by Clinton but not within our association has pledged to financially support the work.

The Lord has been very merciful in providing for our needs through unexpected sources and we thank him for his kindness. It is truly a blessing to see so many churches working together in fulfilling Christ's great commission.

Finally, we would ask that you pray

specifically for our transition to Perth. Once we hear back from the Australian government we hope to make a trip back to Pennsylvania to visit family members before leaving for Perth.

Allen will also try to do as much preaching as he can in Clinton before we leave while Katie works to arrange for our furniture and other household items to be shipped overseas. Please thank the Lord that the believers in Perth are eager to have us come and pray that Satan's attempts

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RBMS missions around the world

In my last report I wrote of the ordinariness of our routine existence as a church.

I concluded with the acknowledgment that, while we are thankful for the ordinary, we cannot but hope for an extraordinary work of God. It is impossible for us to predict the ways of God, and yet in his sovereign providence, and in answer to the prayers of his people, the Lord has graciously woven the extraordinary into the routine of the past four months or so.

This extraordinary work of God has not been a sudden acceleration in our growth in knowledge and grace, nor has he added to our number new converts, and yet we do trust that the work he has been doing exalts and glorifies our Savior.

More specifically, the Lord has brought two families into our congregation who have moved to the area from other parts of New Zealand and boosted the size of our congregation significantly: They share our theological convictions and are eager to serve Christ in their lives and in his church. We would be grateful for our prayers that the Lord would unite them to us in mutual love and commitment.

In addition to these two families, we have also had two retired couples in regular attendance (and often the families of their adult children also). They have encouraged us through their presence, yet their reasons for coming are not as positive as we would like, and we are having to discuss their situation with the elders of the church in which they were formerly members. We would value your prayers for wisdom and grace, so that the Lord is glorified in the manner in which we handle this sensitive matter.

These additions to our regular congregation have necessitated some changes in our physical environment. We lease a space above shops on one of the main streets in the central city. Due to growth 12-14 months ago (two families who moved to the area), in June 2015 we had pulled down a wall to enlarge our main meeting room.

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Palmerston North

NEW ZEALAND

Now, with the new additions to our regular congregation, we have found it necessary to lease the vacant office space next door to our meeting room.

This has not enlarged the room itself, but it has enabled us to free up some space and add some seating, while the tenancy next door provides us with better kitchen and creche facilities, as well as room after the service for people to spread out, mingle and converse with one another. There is the added advantage that the two areas already had an connecting doorway that previous tenants had used.

We are particularly thankful to the Lord for this provision as we had initially put in a lease offer nine months ago which was rejected by the landlord at that time, but in January 2016 the same offer was accepted: God's timing is perfect!

Over the next few months Dafydd has a number of additional ministry commitments that will take up extra preparation time and, humanly speaking, add to the pressure of balancing service in the church with secular work responsibilities and family priorities.

Each year our Fellowship of Churches organizes four training days (we call them Roving Classrooms as they are hosted by different churches around the country) around four traditional branches of theology: Exegetical, Systematic, Historical and Practical Theology. Dafydd will be teaching the Practical Theology day on the topic of hospitality on Saturday March 19.

Then, during the first week of May (following his attendance at the



ARBCA GA, the Lord willing), Dafydd will be teaching once again at an annual Theological Studies Camp in Pune, India. He would very much value your prayers for wisdom and self-discipline as he prepares for these extra meetings in the midst of the usual routine of work, family and ministry.

Thinking of family, we would also very much value your prayers for us as parents as we seek to raise Ajinkya, 10, and Anjali, 8, in the fear and admonition of the Lord. Please pray particularly for Maria as she bears the burden of home-educating the children.

Beardmores

From page 8

to disrupt our work will be overcome by the power of Christ. We take comfort in the fact that even when we forget Christ he does not cease to intercede for us and protect us. It is possible to rest even while we work because Christ has risen from the dead after finishing all the work his Father gave him to do.

We trust that many lost souls in Perth will soon come to know that in Christ God is reconciling the world to himself and they will know the joy of receiving as a free gift the righteousness of Christ. As believers we have experienced these joys on a daily basis and it is our desire to obey the command, "freely you have received, freely give."



RBMS missions around the world

The last couple months of 2015 proved to be some of the most rewarding and challenging I've faced in quite a while.

In November I was selected to attend a five-week course for captains called Squadron Officer's School. The course is designed for mid-career captains and is designed to instill foundational leadership and team building skills for officers.

While I was not initially excited about attending the course, the Lord most certainly blessed my experience and allowed me to gain a new appreciation for all the opportunities the Air Force offers.

I've often said that the military offers the best leadership training in the world, and attending this course reminded me of why that is true.

Not only did we have excellent academics to teach various theories and principles, but almost daily we were given the opportunity to put those lessons in to practice through various leadership-building exercises. In the end, the lessons learned will be a great benefit as I continue in ministry.

The greatest challenge of my time in SOS came during the last couple weeks when I suffered a herniation of the last two vertebra in my neck.

The ensuing pain was, by far, the worst I've felt in my life, and it disqualified me from participating in several of the capstone activities. While this was disappointing, the real challenge came after I returned home.

After returning home I was quickly scheduled all the needed appointments with

The Stoleys

Joshua, Janet, Elisa, Caleb, Katelyn and Lukas
 <Joshua.Stoley@gmail.com>
 10932 Mt. Pendleton St.
 Las Vegas, NV 89179

Chaplain, USAF



my doctor, radiology, and the like.

As this was going on, the enemy really began to use my physical ailments to cause doubt, worry, and unhealthy amounts of anxiety. Yet, the Lord was gracious and his timing was perfect.

At the exact same time I was going this was going on, I was preparing for my next DMin course which was on pastoral self-care and avoiding ministry burnout. Many of the readings and assignments were focused on knowing one's calling and remaining faithful to that calling, trusting the Lord even in the midst of difficulty.

These books and papers were able to minister to me during a time when the enemy was causing doubt and worry. The following couple of weeks of prayer and assurance were among the most blessed I've had in years.

While my physical and spiritual struggles were going on, ministry still continued. The very day I returned from my five-week course my phone began to ring with calls from various commanders and first sergeants asking for immediate help with several crises.

Amazingly, our Lord used the situations they called about to allow me to minister to people in crisis while I was experiencing significant issues of my own.

Those weeks saw one marriage saved from divorce, one couple celebrate the arrival of their first-born son and the Lord's faithfulness in a difficult delivery, a young man come to saving faith and begin attending church and reading the Bible for the first time in his life, and an extended family brought back to faith and prayer in the midst of a life-changing family crisis.

Certainly, these last few months have been physically, emotionally, and spiritually challenging, yet the Lord's goodness and faithfulness remains unchanging.

I am so grateful for the opportunities He gives me to serve him and to share the hope of the gospel to those in hopeless situations, and I am blessed to be a part of a family of churches that regularly lifts my family and I up in prayer.

I'm excited about the opportunities God will bring in the new year and praying that many more will be brought to saving faith.

Theology

From page 4

We may consider this in three ways.

God is consistently portrayed to us in the Bible as one who seeks after people—we might consult many passages to demonstrate this point. Eph. 3:7-9, "Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift

of God's grace, which was given me by the working of his power. To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things" expresses this well. This is the point of being a herald, a preacher, or an ambassador. We represent another, so

that our task is to represent God, bringing his good news to the lost.

God blesses the declaration about himself by imparting new life to sinners (2:1-18). Though these sinners were dead (2:1-3), God makes them alive (2:4-5), and he does this through preaching (v.17). What a great blessing this is to preachers! We are

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Cuba

From page 1

returned to Cuba with his family and took up ministry in a prominent LPN church. By 1997, Daniel had adopted *The Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689* and concluded that his future contribution to the kingdom included establishing churches that were biblical, Reformed, and confessional.

In January of that year, he moved his family to the village of Arroyon, near his birthplace in Las Tunas province, to begin a new ministry. In short order, he founded a house church, established a seminary, and began an association of churches. In December of the same year, David Straub and Jim Adams first visited Daniel.

Though David Straub was never able to return, succumbing too soon to brain cancer, Jim Adams and Bob Selph made several trips together over the next few years. Without David's leadership, contact with Cuba was infrequent, apart from regular correspondence. In 2001, Daniel attended an ARBCA GA for the first time. As a result, an invitation was extended once again for visitors.

To travel legally for ministry, permission is required both from the U.S. and Cuban governments. The U.S. Treasury grants a religious license, and the Cuban government issues a religious visa.

For years, ARBCA had the American license but association pastors also needed the religious visa from Cuba, which requires government approval upon the application of a registered church. In 2007, the president of LPN requested a religious visa from the Ministry of Justice for Don Lindblad.

It was granted, which led to repeated requests from LPN for Don and later others in our fellowship of churches to come for ministry. Specifically, Don has been invited by LPN to speak at summer youth conferences, to teach continuing education courses for pastors, and more recently to lecture in two of the LPN seminaries. Over the years, three RBMS/ARBCA coordinators and at least eight of our pastors or missionaries have travelled to Cuba for ministry.

This brings us to the present. Once again, LPN leadership asked Don to teach in two of its seminaries during November 2015. Trips often begin with ministry to the Reformed Baptist Association, a combined

worship service in Velasco, Holguin, site of the church served by Daniel's son Jatniel (pronounced "Hot-neal").

This occasion was no exception. The first two days were spent there, with an LPN leader and good friend present, giving legitimacy to this visit. It is always refreshing to be with faithful friends and loving brethren.

The next week, Don taught the doctrine of man to 16 incoming students in the Las Tunas extension seminary. The following week, Don taught the doctrine of man and the doctrine of salvation to 18 students in the LPN master's degree program. In both settings, the students were enthusiastic and seemed to understand, if not embrace, biblical and Reformed teaching.

It should be noted that throughout the years of ARBCA involvement in Cuba, Daniel Perez, and now Jatniel, have translated for our men. Both are skilled translators, and both earned university degrees in English. As well, they have a theological education and are acquainted with the necessary terms and concepts for accurate translation in preaching and

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Theology

From page 10

not doing the work of conversion, but God is. What a tremendous encouragement!

For his own purposes, God may choose to keep people in darkness. In 2:1-3, Paul reminds the Ephesian Christians that they were brought to life by God, but there were many others around them who were left in their own sins.

Sometimes, for his own reasons, the Lord leaves people in their sins. We see this in passages such as Isa. 6:9-13, John 12:37-41, Acts 16:6-7, 17:32-34 and 28:25-28.

This ought to be a real comfort to us. If a church is not planted, it does not mean that we are failures, but may simply be that it is not the Lord's purpose to establish a congregation of his people there.

Our practice of church planting must take into account the reality of the immediate purpose of God, which is to

make people Christ-like. Eph. 4:17-6:20.

This is a lengthy section, but it may be summarized simply.

Ministers are given by Christ to teach his people to be holy, to mortify sin and to walk in humble faith. The principle is found in 4:17-24 (believers ought not to live as they did in the past) and fleshed out in 4:25-6:20.

The general categories of wholesome speech, godly families, honest workers and Christian warfare are explored by Paul.

God's purpose for the church is that it be a society full of people who are like their Savior, and this must be the church planter's goal.

He must strive to see growing conformity to Christ in every area of life. We must train Christians to be Christians: good husbands and wives and parents, good citizens, good workers, all by faith resisting the devil.

Church planters must make this a priority—bringing converts to a growing

maturity.

Our practice of church planting must take into account the reality of the ultimate goal of God's purpose, which is to glorify himself in his son. Eph. 1:1-14.

The long sentence recorded in Eph. 1:3-14 is famous. Despite all of the words and ideas used, its message is simple: "Blessed be God." All of the great truths recorded there turn back to one act, which is the worship of God.

Above all things, God is to be worshipped for who he is, Father Son and Holy Spirit, and for what he has done, namely redeemed his people in Jesus Christ.

Church planting is about bringing to birth, by the work of God's Spirit, worshiping congregations. It's not about activism, or personal success, or empire building. It's about God.

These six principles ought to mold our practice. May the Lord teach them to us, and work mightily for his own glory.

Cuba

From page 11

teaching.

Given the relentless graying of every generation and its implications for God's people, ministers and members, the church must be thinking of the future preparation of pastors. This partly drove the establishment of our own Institute of Reformed Baptist Studies and LPN's ministerial training program.

This need is not lost on our Reformed Baptist friends in Cuba either. With hearty thanks to God, Jatniel Perez is having a profound influence for good throughout Cuba.

While Daniel Perez is known throughout the island as a competent and faithful preacher of the Word of God, now Jatniel is beginning to share that role.

Jatniel is also a gifted young man, with both exceptional preaching and administrative skills.

He has big plans! In addition to the church he serves, he has begun a training center for pastors, and he anticipates beginning a seminary in the next two years. His building used for public worship is more than adequate for both, and there is a large house next to the church suitable for lodging and feeding a number of students and pastors.

Jatniel's church, Centro Biblico Crecer (Center for Biblical Growth) in Velasco, Holguin, is 20 minutes from his father. While it is part of the Reformed Baptist Association, it is also connected to the Independent Evangelical Church in Placetas.

This legal church has granted the same to Jatniel's congregation, meaning Jatniel can request religious visas from the government. This he has done successfully.

With visas approved and coming, Jatniel organized three conferences for November in different locations, selecting as theme, "The Five Solas of the Reformation."

Jatniel also secured the right to print in Cuba as many copies as needed for free distribution, "*Enseñanzas Que Transformaron El Mundo (Teachings That Transform the World)*" by Dr. Miguel



In Consolacion del Sur in Pinar del Rio: From left, Don Lindblad, Pastor Frankis Martinez, wife Yajneysy, daughter Ammi (feeling a little camera-shy) and Doug VanderMeulen.

Nunez of the Dominican Republic.

This is a new publication on the five solas and the five points. Copies were given to all who attended the conferences.

Don was already present in Cuba, having taught for two weeks in the LPN seminaries. As planned, ARBCA pastor Doug VanderMeulen arrived in Havana on Saturday, Nov. 28, in time for the first conference, held just outside of Havana in San Antonio de Los Banos, Artemisa, with 36 pastors present.

As in all the conferences, Don preached three of the solas and Doug two. Though their preparations were made independently, it was a sign of God's favor that the two often reinforced each other in their lectures. Jatniel accompanied them throughout the trip.

In Havana, we were privileged to stay in the home of Pastor Vladimir Mayo and his family. Vladimir was trained at the LPN seminary and is starting a church in a very needy area of the city. That evening, we toured Havana and ate dinner at a Chinese buffet!

Sunday morning found us driving two hours to the west into the province of

Pinar del Rio, where Don preached to a Western Baptist Convention congregation (WBC has roots in the Southern Baptist Convention), where Frankis Abad serves as pastor. This is a large congregation of several hundred. He, too, has come to the doctrines of grace and is eager to learn more about the Reformed faith.

That evening, we three made our way to Palmira, Cienfuegos, on the southern coast to meet with Pastors Arindys Aguiar and Ramon Aviles, of another Western Baptist Convention church.

We arrived late but spent several hours encouraging these brothers and talked about cooperating together. This was an encouraging visit.

On Monday morning, we drove two hours to Colon, Matanzas. There we held the second conference on the five solas. About 130 men from five different denominations met to hear the Word. Alberto Marrero is pastor of this LPN congregation and is very sympathetic to the truths Don and Doug preached. He is also a long-time friend of the Perez family.

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Cuba

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A spirited Q&A followed that evening, resulting in much good.

It was a seven-hour drive to our next venue, but we worked our way east and arrived safely at Vazquez, Las Tunas for the third and final conference.

The LPN church building was more than adequate for the 136 pastors, seminary students, and Christian leaders who attended. Once again, enthusiasm ran high. This fine church is served by Amauri Cagide, who also is the assistant administrator of the LPN extension seminary in Las Tunas, where Don often teaches.

It was good to be with this long-time friend once again, along with a number of the students Don has taught over the years.

With one extra day before Don and Doug departed for home, Daniel and Jatniel took them for a day of sightseeing. The first stop was Biran, Holguin.

Fidel Castro was born here on the estate his father owned. Many of the original structures have been rebuilt, and it has become a tourist stop for Cubans and foreigners. Our guide did an excellent job of giving us a tour.

The family photographs themselves were worth the visit.

Then it was off to Santiago, "Cuba's Second City." Santiago sits on the southern coast and is truly beautiful. It is a city rich in history, which we were able to explore for several hours. This day made for a perfect end to an amazing and profitable trip of ministry.

The year is 2016. Time marches on, and much has changed since that early contact with Daniel Perez in 1989. Yet, much is the same. RBMS and ARBCA churches still maintain a friendship with this dear brother. The connection remains strong as ever, and the prospects for ministry are greater than ever.

Jatniel's legal status allows us freedom for ministry. Through Jatniel, the number of contacts and opportunities grow daily. Men from all over the island contact him regularly for help.

Jatniel already has two similar trips scheduled for ARBCA men in 2016, one



In Palmira, Cienfuegos: From left, Doug VanderMeulen, Pastor Ramon, Pastor Arindys and Don Lindblad.

in June and another in October, plus two more in 2017. In addition, he hopes to see a seminary established by 2018.

It is through regular invitations by the Cuban church, the generous permission of the Cuban government, and ultimately the kind providence of God that ARBCA continues to have occasions to serve the Cuban people. We can be thankful for this great privilege to visit a neighboring country with gospel truth.

Thanks are due to ARBCA churches for the generous support of regular special projects that make these trips possible. Without the help of sister churches, these trips could not take place. The faithfulness of God's people in prayer is certainly a factor in this positive report of God's blessing.

Let us pray together and continue to work together in support of the great opportunity afforded our association. Clearly, our association has a past, present, and hopefully, a future interest in cooperating with dear brethren in Cuba.

– Don Lindblad pastors Trinity Reformed Baptist Church in Kirkland, Wash.



April 26-28
Grace Reformed Baptist Church
Rockford, Illinois

"The Works of Christ"

For info and to register:
<http://www.reformedbaptist.net/arbcaga/registration.htm>

In The Books: Series features riches from past

By Steve Martin

Our Christian lives would be nothing like they are today, not as rich, not as full, not as knowledgeable, not as strong were it not for the faithful men and women of the past who walked with Christ and left us a deposit of truth.

Christ promised never to leave His church nor leave them to themselves. Even during the so-called “Dark Ages” of 500-1500, Augustine, Ambrose, Hillary of Poitiers, Bernard of Clairvaux and Thomas Aquinas graced the medieval church with godliness and helpful writings.

Some might wrongly think that Luther and Calvin and the other Reformers threw out the early and medieval church with the Roman Catholic bath water. Nothing could be further from the truth. They swallowed the meat of the earlier giants while spitting out the bones of their predecessors and peers in the Catholic church. One has only to read the Name Index of Calvin’s or Luther’s or other major Reformers works to see how reliant each Reformer was on the leading lights of church history.

Crossway Books has done the Christian world an immense favor with its new series featuring past giants teaching on the Christian life. I have been dipping and sampling and working my way through the ones in print so far and they are fantastic.

Crossways’ ‘Theologians of the Christian Life’ series

■ **Carl Trueman** – “**Luther on the Christian Life: Cross and Freedom**”

Learn how Luther thought and acted and how much we owe to him. Carl Trueman opens up Luther for Reformed Christians.

■ **Mike Horton** – “**Calvin on the Christian Life: Glorifying and Enjoying God Forever**”

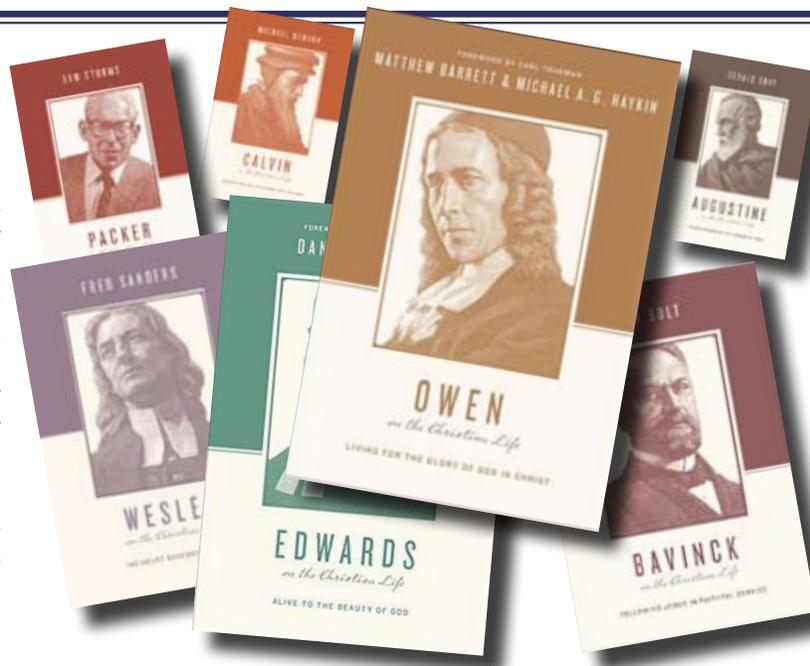
A great man of God whose legacy goes on and on. Horton is a great synthesizer of Calvin and shows us his theology in the right proportion and perspective.

■ **Michael Barrett and Michael Haykin** – “**Owen on the Christian Life: Living For the Glory of God in Christ**”

The greatest Puritan theologian and, arguably, the greatest theologian England has ever produced. You may have heard pastors and theologians rave about Owen but have not read him. Or worse, you heard Owen was hard to read and left him alone. This book will help you get over that.

■ **Dane Ortlund** – “**Edwards on the Christian Life: Alive to the Beauty of God**”

See why he was a great man who we can learn from still today



– both his greatness and his weaknesses.

■ **Fred Sanders** – “**Wesley on the Christian Life: The Heart Renewed in Love**”

Yes, even the great Wesleyan Arminian, John Wesley himself, has a great amount to teach us if we can humble ourselves to learn from him.

■ **Tony Reinke** – “**Newton on the Christian Life: To Live is Christ**”

The great sinner and slave-ship captain became, by grace, a pastor to pastors in showing them Christ. An outstanding book by an

outstanding pastor to pastors.

■ **Fred Zaspel** – “**Warfield on the Christian Life: Living in Light of the Gospel**”

The pride of Princeton is seen in his greatness and goodness.

■ **John Bolt** – “**Bavinck on the Christian Life: Following Jesus in Faithful Service**”

The greatest of the Dutch Reformed theologians is on display for us to appreciate and learn from. If you appreciate Berkhof, then you will love Bavinck, his mentor and role model.

■ **Stephen Nichols** – “**Bonhoeffer on the Christian Life: From the Cross, From the World**”

What does a man fleeing the Nazis and liberalism have to teach us? You may have heard about Bonhoeffer and his opposition to Hitler. Learn the rest of the story.

■ **William Edga** – “**Schaeffer on the Christian Life: Counter-cultural Spirituality**”

See why so many owe him they spiritual lives and their intellectual health. See how he helped the 20th-century church to see with new eyes.

■ **Sam Storms** – “**Packer on the Christian Life: Knowing God in Christ; Walking by the Spirit**”

A humble giant who is one of God’s greatest gifts to the churches of the 20th and early 21st centuries.

■ **Gerald Bray** – “**Augustine on the Christian Life: Transformed by the Power of God**”

The fifth-century giant upon whose shoulders most of western Christendom stands! Bray gives us his life and teachings in a most readable format.

How edifying and mind-expanding they have each proven!

Pastors and elders, you will want them for your home and for your church library. But mostly for your heart!

– Retired pastor Steve Martin chairs the ARBCA Publications Committee.

Church Planting: Putting 'missions' into home missions

By Rob Cosby

When foreign missionaries are sent out, a question that is rarely asked, if ever, is “are there enough Christians in the community that you are going to for a core group to establish a new church?”

We do not ask this question, because that is not the purpose of foreign missions. Our purpose is to establish churches where there are none, to reach the unreached for Christ.

But, when we send out home missionaries, this is the typical first question. They are typically sent to oversee the planting of churches where there is already a core group in an area near an already established church.

This process is not a bad thing, in and of itself. Part of the goal of home missions is to be continually planting churches by starting from a base church and multiplying within a given area.

But within the context of home missions, it is important that we, as an association, begin to be more and more mindful of the need to plant churches where there are none.

Several years ago my pastor at that time, John Giarrizzo, noted how many large metropolitan areas in the United States did not have a single confessionnal Reformed Baptist Church.

Since that time, two of the cities that were mentioned have had Reformed Baptist Churches planted. Pastor John Yoder has planted the first confessionnal Reformed Baptist Church in the Chicago area, and I planted the first confessionnal Reformed Baptist Church in Tucson, Ariz. But, there are still numerous regions and major cities around our nation that do not have a confessionnal Reformed Baptist Church.

One region that has been brought to my attention over the past few weeks, by a member of our Tucson church, is southern Florida. To our knowledge, there is not a single (English-speaking) confessionnal Reformed Baptist Church in all of South Florida. This includes large metropolitan areas such as Miami, Orlando, and Fort Lauderdale.

This is just one region, and there are many more around our nation. While I do not desire, in any way, to discourage what has been the normal pattern of church planting, I do want to encourage us, as an association, to begin to be more actively and strategically minded towards planting churches in areas where there are no confessionnal Reformed Baptist Churches and no core groups of

Reformed Baptists.

To my knowledge, the church plant in Tucson is the first such church plant by our association. When the parent church, Grace Covenant Church of Gilbert, Ariz., approached me about planting a church in Tucson, we did not have a single contact there for a core group. And at this point in time, there is only one couple that

is still with us that was part of the Bible study we led before services were started.

But the Lord has blessed the church plant. Though the work was slow and difficult for a couple of years, God has seen fit to plant a thriving church in Tucson, a city that is one of the most non-Christian cities in the entire nation.

The Home Missions Committee has asked me to work on a more detailed strategy for such church plants, and

I will be working on that over the next few weeks and months. In the limited space here, I would like to set forth a few things for us to be thinking about as an association.

Firstly, we need missionaries. To summarize Paul, how can they hear unless someone is sent? We can have all the ideas we want about the need for church planting; but, if there are not men raised up by God and sent forth from the churches, they are just ideas.

Secondly, we need churches. We need churches who desire to plant other churches. Who will step out sacrificially to send men, to support them, and to see that these churches get planted? We need churches, who are willing to work together in groups of two, three, or more, to sponsor a church plant.

Thirdly, we must, as an association, recognize that, to plant churches in this manner, our home missionaries are going to need aggressive support. Since there will be no core group, they will need to be treated more as missionaries and less as pastors of small churches. When we send missionaries overseas, we do not expect them to support themselves when they get there and then establish the church in their free time. In the same manner, we need to make sure that home missionaries, who are planting churches, are fully supported.

Lastly, but in reality over all, we need to be in prayer. May we pray for the men, churches, and support, but also the cities that need churches, and the people who need to be reached.

– Rob Cosby is founding pastor of Tucson Reformed Baptist Church.

